

15a Crossfield Road: screening and scoping basement impact assessment

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report presents the outcome of a basement impact assessment for the proposed development of 15a Crossfield Road, Camden (Figure 1; postcode NW3 4NT, national grid reference TQ 2691 8458).



Figure 1 Location of 15a Crossfield Road

1.2 Proposed basement works

The site comprises No.15A Crossfield Road, Hampstead, which is a terraced, four-storey house, including a lower ground floor, on the east side of Crossfield Road. To the north, east and south of the site are neighbouring residential properties.

The proposed development involves excavating down to a depth of 3.0m below existing ground level, to construct a basement level rear double bedroom and small front living area beneath the existing front steps.

1.3 Scope of Report

This report presents a basement impact assessment that complies with CPG4 screening and scoping stages. Site investigation results are presented in Appendix B.

1.4 Authorship of Report

This report has been prepared by the following qualified persons:

- Dr Stephen Buss MA MSc CGeol. Dr Buss is a UK-based independent hydrogeologist with more than 15 years' consulting experience in solving groundwater issues for regulators, water companies and other private sector organisations. **Dr Buss is a Chartered Geologist with the Geological Society of London.**
- Rupert Evans MSc CEnv C.WEM MCIWEM AIEMA is a UK-based independent hydrologist with more than 10 years' consultancy experience in flood risk assessment, surface water drainage schemes and hydrology/hydraulic modelling. **Mr Evans is a Chartered Water and Environmental Manager (C.WEM) and a Member of the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management.**
- Alan Watson BSc[Eng] CEnv CEng MICE is a UK-based geotechnical engineer with 28 years' experience of ground investigations, geotechnical interpretation and contamination assessments. **Mr Watson is a civil engineer with the "CEng" (Chartered Engineer) qualification from the Engineering Council and specialises in ground engineering.**

2. Basement Impact Assessment Screening: Surface water

Surface flow and flooding screening follows the procedure outlined in Figure 3 (surface flow and flooding screening flowchart) of the Camden Planning Guidance 4 (CPG4) entitled Basements and Lightwells dated 2013.

1) *Is the site within the catchment of the pond chains on Hampstead Heath?*

NO. Figure 14 of the Camden geological, hydrogeological and hydrological study – Guidance for subterranean development dated 2010, confirms that the site is not located within this catchment area.

2) *As part of the proposed site drainage, will surface water flows (e.g. volume of rainfall and peak run-off) be materially changed from the existing route?*

NO. There will be no surface expression of the basement development, so surface water flows and drainage will be unchanged. Furthermore, the basement will not extend into an area of the plot which is currently vegetated (i.e. the above surface comprises an impermeable patio) so the surface water regime will not change as a result of the proposed basement. As there will be no net increase in man-made impermeable area, there will also be no increase or material change in runoff rate or volume as a result of the proposed basement.

3) *Will the proposed basement development result in a change in the proportion of hard surfaced / paved external areas?*

NO. There will be no surface expression of the basement development. The basement will extend into an area of the plot across which the surface currently comprises an impermeable patio so there will be no net increase in man-made impermeable area.

4) *Will the proposed basement result in changes to the profile of the inflows (instantaneous and long term) of surface water being received by adjacent properties or downstream watercourses?*

NO. There will be no surface expression of the basement development, so the surface water flow regime will be unchanged.

5) *Will the proposed basement result in changes to the quality of surface water being received by adjacent properties or downstream watercourses?*

NO. There will be no surface expression of the basement development, so surface water flows and quality of runoff will be unchanged.

6) *Is the site in an area identified to have surface water flood risk according to either the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy or the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment or is it at risk from flooding, for example because the proposed basement is below the static water level of nearby surface water feature?*

NO. The Camden Flood Risk Management Strategy dated 2013, North London Strategic Flood Risk Assessment dated 2008, and Environment Agency online flood maps show that the site has a low flooding risk from surface water, sewers, reservoirs (and other artificial sources), groundwater and fluvial/tidal watercourses.

3. Basement Impact Assessment Screening: Groundwater

Subterranean (groundwater) screening follows the procedure outlined in Figure 1: Subterranean (ground water) flow screening chart of the Camden Planning Guidance 4 (CPG4) entitled Basements and Lightwells dated 2013. These findings have been informed by a ground investigation undertaken at the site in April 2014 (Appendix B).

1a) *Is the site located directly above an aquifer?*

NO. The geological map, on site boreholes and the nearest off-site boreholes indicate that permeable superficial deposits are not present beneath the site. Site investigation boreholes show between 1 and 2 m of made ground lying on 0.4 – 1.4 m clayey head deposits, over London Clay. None of these can be considered an aquifer. Beneath made ground a considerable thickness of London Clay isolates the deeper aquifer units of the London Basin aquifer from the surface.

1b) *Will the proposed basement extend beneath the water table surface?*

NO. There is no aquifer directly beneath the site, and a consistent water table was not observed during the site investigation. There was a small, temporary, seepage in one borehole that is not considered to be related to a body of groundwater.

2) *Is the site within 100m of a watercourse, well (used/ disused) or potential spring line?*

NO. There are no current surface water bodies within 100 m of the site. The site lies between two former tributaries of the 'lost' River Fleet. Both are quite high up in the catchment of the river. One flowed southwards about 100 m east of the site, and (if it exists) is most likely now culverted along Strathay Gardens. A second flowed southwards about 200 m west of the site.

There are no known water wells within 100 m of the site; there is one at 300 m south east of site, which is operated by the London Borough of Camden, and which exploits groundwater from the Chalk.

Geological conditions indicate no potential for development of a spring line here.

3) *Will the proposed basement development result in a change in the proportion of hard surfaced / paved external areas?*

NO. There will be no additional surface expression of the basement development, so surface water flows will be unchanged.

4) *As part of the site drainage, will more surface water (e.g. rainfall and runoff) than at present be discharged to the ground (e.g. via soakaways and/ or SUDS)?*

NO. Discharge to the ground is not in the proposal.

5) *Is the lowest point of the proposed excavation (allowing for any drainage and foundation space under the basement floor) close to, or lower than, the mean water level in any local pond or spring line?*

NO. The nearest water body is Hampstead Number 1 Pond, about 1250 m to the north east, while the Grand Union Canal is 1350 m to the south. These are both too far from the site to be a concern, especially given that there are no permeable superficial deposits beneath the site.

4. Basement Impact Assessment Screening: Slope stability

Slope stability screening follows the procedure outlined in Figure 2: Slope stability screening chart of the Camden Planning Guidance 4 (CPG4) entitled Basements and Lightwells dated 2013. This has been undertaken by Soil Consultants Ltd and the screening and scoping assessment is presented in Appendix A of this report. Its findings have been informed by a ground investigation undertaken at the site in April 2014 (Appendix B).

The development is considered to be at low risk of stability problems, if undertaken by reputable experienced specialists, and if the temporary and permanent works are adequately designed and implemented with due consideration to the geology and hydrogeology of the site and surrounding areas.

5. Conceptual Site Model

5.1 Drainage and topography

Ground surface around the site slopes gently southwards. Elevation of the ground is about 58 m above Ordnance Datum. There are no current surface water features near the site. Historically, two tributaries of the River Fleet passed by the site (Figure 2). These rivers are now ‘lost’ and mostly culverted beneath the city¹.

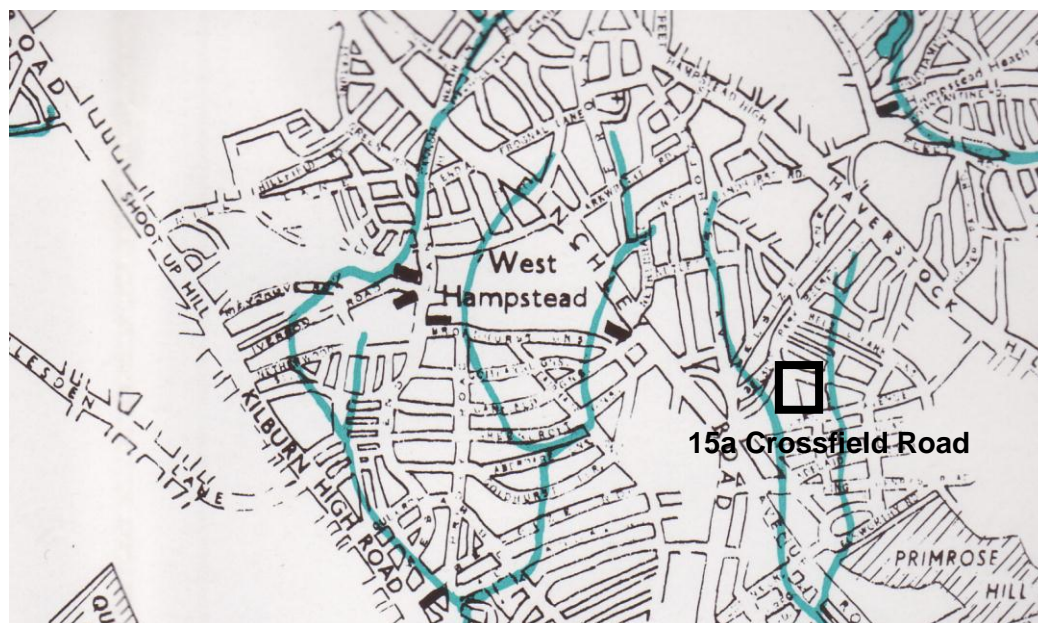


Figure 2 Location of the River Fleet tributaries relative to 15a Crossfield Road

5.2 Geology and hydrogeology

Bedrock at the site comprises London Clay. This is about 83 m thick at the Swiss Cottage open space borehole² (about 300 m to the south west of the site) and isolates the main aquifer of the London Basin from the surface.

Nearby borehole records available from the British Geological Survey also show no superficial deposits, just thin Made Ground over London Clay. (Borehole TQ28SE2337³ is the closest from a site investigation centred around 3, 5 and 7 Fitzjohn`s Avenue 350 m north west of the site; and the Swiss Cottage open space borehole also shows no superficial deposits.) These are considered to be representative of geological conditions around the site. A thickness of clayey head was observed in two of the site boreholes.

All of the boreholes were dry on excavation, as were the boreholes with records in BGS GeoIndex. This is typical of the London Clay.

Referring back to the screening, a detailed assessment of the near-surface geology reinforces the view that there is not an aquifer directly beneath the site, and there is no water table in the low permeability near-surface formations.

¹ Barton, N.J., 1993. The Lost Rivers of London 3rd edition.

² http://scans.bgs.ac.uk/sobi_scans/boreholes/15020820

³ http://scans.bgs.ac.uk/sobi_scans/boreholes/18393270

5.3 Slope stability

As identified in Appendix A the slopes within influential distance of the site are all shallow [$<7^\circ$] and no significant impact is anticipated on sloping ground in terms of land stability provided that the design and construction of the scheme ensure that ground movements are kept to an absolute minimum.

Presence of London Clay near the ground surface is unlikely to be a significant issue due to the depth of the proposed basement being below the root affected zone within the clay. The advantage of this stratum is that groundwater is unlikely to be a significant issue affecting construction and any impact on groundwater caused by the construction should be minimal. Soil volume change is unlikely to be a significant issue despite the presence of nearby trees as the founding depth for the proposed basement should be well below the influence of any vegetation. Some measures may be necessary to cater for potential clay swell exerting pressure on the basement retaining walls if trees are removed and desiccated clay is proven to be present.

The depth of the aquifer in relation to the basement is assessed in Section 5.2; and the London Clay does not usually contain significant groundwater within the likely construction depths. Uplift/heave pressures due to soil heave following excavation, and hydrostatic pressures will both have to be considered in the design and should not impact on land stability if properly designed and constructed.

With regard to the impact on adjacent highways / pedestrian right of way, the proposed basement construction will be within influencing distance of Crossfield Road. The construction methodology must be carefully considered to ensure that adequate support is maintained at all times and significant ground movement does not occur. The differential depth of the proposed foundations in relation to neighbouring properties is such that underpinning of party wall foundations will be required.

6. Conclusions

Potential environmental impacts of the proposed basement development at 15a Crossfield Road have been considered. The following summary conclusions are made:

- There will be no change in the area of impermeable surface at the site so that surface water drainage will not be changed from present.
- Available geological information strongly indicates that there is no aquifer directly beneath the site. This indicates that there is insignificant risk of changing groundwater flow patterns beneath 15a Crossfield Road. This finding is based on a recent intrusive site investigation and other local geological information.
- The development is considered to be low risk of stability problems, if undertaken by reputable experienced specialists, and if the temporary and permanent works are adequately designed and implemented with due consideration to the geology and hydrogeology of the site and surrounding areas.

These conclusions are considered to be robust and no further investigations are recommended.