

The Development Management Team  
Town Hall Extension  
Argyle St WC1 H8ND

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15 APR 2014

CULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Dear Sirs or Madam

I am writing to you in connection with the following planning references:  
No 33 South Hill Park NW3 2014/1943/P...and  
No 35 South Hill Park Nw3 2014/1938/P

I object to the above projects on the following grounds:

That basement excavations beyond those which were originally made in order to make sub-basements possible for most of the houses in these roads, almost inevitably leads to subsidence problems for the properties adjoining the excavation works. Obviously the Victorian contractors of these houses did not envisage the prospect of deeper excavations being made, and in any case lacked the technical means (and motivation) to bring these about. As it is the foundations of the houses must be wooden beams driven into unstable London clay, since reinforced concrete was not generally available until a much later date. Another point worth noting I think, is that numbers 33 and 35 are houses built on the steeper section of the hill from which our addresses derive their name. Clearly the subsidence effect is likely to be more even than those houses built on the flatter area above.

There is an outstanding example of these problems in this area, quite near to numbers 33 and 35. I refer to No 94 South Hill Park, and its obvious effect upon the structure of its neighbour No 92, which has had to have its front facade propped up by wooden beams. As I live quite near these houses I can affirm that the excavation of a deep basement for an indoor swimming pool, together with a Games Room and re-establishment of the garden area, and what seemed like major works to the house as such, continued for more than two years. I also note that about two years later the owners have since put their renovated house on the market for around seven million pounds – undoubtedly a handsome profit when this sum or something near to it is realised.

The environmental mal-effects in terms of noise and exhaust pollution from the proposed work to 33 and 35 are likely to be considerable. We could expect builders lorries and vans to be frequently travelling up and down the road to the sites in question. This is bound to be for quite a considerable period of time, whether the work to the two houses is done more or less simultaneously or in sequence. Inevitably from my experience of these projects, delays occur for a variety of reasons, from unavailability of particular materials as these are required, to constructional problems etc. Lorries and vans imply diesel pollution over a considerable period of time, and this is obviously undesirable, particularly in an area where there are quite a number of young families as well as elderly people with health problems.

There is a further observation which I think is worth making – although I realise that this may not be material to the proposed applications. This is that if more permission is granted to carry out works of this kind, one can expect that there will be an increasing number of these kind of applications, which because of increasing precedents it will be difficult to refuse.