



# *The Heath & Hampstead Society*

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The Society examines all Planning Applications relating to Hampstead, and assesses them for their impact on conservation and on the local environment.

## **To London Borough of Camden, Development Control Team**

Planning Ref: 2014/7292/P

Address: 4 Wedderburn Road, NW3

Description: Basement extension and other alterations.

Case Officer: Gideon Whittingham

Date: 17 December 2014

This major basement proposal, taken with other alterations, is completely unacceptable, on these grounds:

### 1. Basement development

The proposal does not comply with the provisions of your Policies DP23 and DP27, nor with CPG4 Guidelines, nor with the recent Ministry decision in response to policy clarification by the LB Kensington and Chelsea.

It exceeds the dimensional limits placed on basement development by all these policy statements, in length, width and depth. It amounts to overdevelopment on all counts. It is also especially damaging in our Conservation Area.

Its length, extending to virtually the full length of the rear garden of the house, effectively sterilises the garden area, leaving only space and depth of earth for some grass, and small shrubs. (see 3 below on tree removal). The 50% limit on garden development is flouted.

Its depth, at 6 metres plus (the depth of structure below floor level is ill-defined) also exceeds the 3 metres advised depth set in SPG4. The depth of piling below this level is not stated, but is unlikely to be less than a further 10 metres. It is in fact an engineering operation of some complexity—a fact reinforced by the fact that the application is made by a structural engineering consultancy, the architect being relegated to a minor subsidiary role.

The Kensington /Chelsea decision is of great importance to us in Camden; we have suffered enough during the past 10 years and more from harmful basement development. This decision sets a major precedent, and should be considered in relation to all basement applications. It sets a standard, and a range of remarkably detailed policy principles, which must be employed in considering all basement applications. There need be no fear that decisions based on the Kensington/Chelsea decision could be overturned on Appeal; the decision was made by PINS.

On this ground alone, this application should fail.

## 2. Architectural design and context.

Most of the application drawings are of a structural engineering nature, and it is unclear what internal planning is proposed. There are elevational drawings, but no contextual images of any sort, showing how the proposals relate to adjoining or adjacent houses. Is this not a requirement for validating applications?

A further unacceptable feature of the design is the Ground Floor rear extension, shown as a badly proportioned out-of-scale all-glass box, indicating no relationship to the fine Arts and Crafts architecture of the existing house.

The house is in fact Locally Listed ( listed in your Conservation Area Statement as contributing to the character of the CA). This plainly is of no interest to the applicant. The rear extension would harm the character of the house significantly.

## 3. Trees

There are 8 trees on this site; all would be felled.

These include a large eucalyptus, of considerable local presence and character, and several other healthy specimens.

This is simply unacceptable, especially since many, including the eucalyptus, would survive if policy limitations on basement development were to be complied with (see 1 above).

We will have more to say on this subject by our Tree Officer. In the meanwhile we insist that your Tree Officers consider the matter.

## 4. Basement Impact Assessment

This indicates that collateral damage to adjoining and adjacent houses would be “negligible”. In view of the extent of excavations, the presence of the water table at around 3-4 metres depth, and the ground stratification, we call on this to be verified by an independent engineer.

Note that no mention of any sort is made in the documents of the existence of adjoining buildings; No 4 is semi-detached with No 6.

## 5. Construction Management Report

We do not think that the impact of this engineering project on neighbours, or the local road network, has been fully considered. 5,900 tonnes of excavation muck has to be removed. And at least 1,200 tonnes of concrete imported—apart from the rest of the conventional materials and rubbish associated with a project of this nature and size (all applicants’ figures).

Wedderburn Road is notoriously narrow and congested ordinarily; the impact of the fleets of 15 tonne muck lorries that would descend on it would be extremely serious. This subject needs to be taken seriously; it is’nt at the moment.

Please refuse