

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Consultees Addr:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2014/1938/P	Michael Ledger-Lomas	37 South Hill Park Flat 4	12/01/2015 23:41:07	OBJ	To whom it may concern,

I wish to reiterate express my very strong objections to Planning Application 2014/1938/P, 35 South Hill Park NW3 2ST. Together with my partner, I rent a flat on the fourth floor of the adjoining property, 37 South Hill Park NW3 ST and will therefore be directly affected by these proposals.

Our first ground is objection is that this application directly threatens the stability of the property in which we live and therefore contravenes Camden's policies on the construction of basements as well as our amenity. DP27 stipulate that basements must not 'cause harm to the built and natural environment and local amenity; result in flooding; or lead to ground instability'. 37 South Hill Park has a flank wall with 35 South Hill Park which is supported by five wall ties and in my original objection to 2014/1938/P (of 8/4/14), I expressed my anxieties that the massive excavations contemplated to build 35's basement would menace its stability. I will not restate those anxieties again here at length as they can be read in my original letter of objection. Clearly the applicants have supplied what are intended to be highly detailed assurances that their works will not damage the stability of 37 South Hill Park or its water environment. When I read the Independent Review of BIA produced by LBH in January 2015 however, my confidence in these documents falls away. Instead I find a bland statement that 'the assessment of ground movements associated with traditional underpinning is inevitably subjective and cannot be qualitatively predicted by modelling.' Furthermore, in writing on BTA's report of May 2014, it goes no further than to say that BTA have acknowledged that 'this junction is a sensitive position and that the works will have to be carried out with great care.' We have not therefore got much further than the original planning application of 2014. The construction of a basement extension to no 35 poses risks to the stability of no 37 that cannot be quantified. The residents of no 37 are asked to forget our very real concerns and to trust to the care of those undertaking these works. I see no reason why we should expose ourselves to these needless risks.

My second continued ground for objection is that these proposals will harm the appearance of the South Hill Park Conservation Area. I assume that the purpose of a conservation area is to conserve the properties it contains from further development. The impressive number of letters in support of this application assume that the needs of a conservation area must give way to a mysterious thing called the requirements of 'modern family life' and that by virtue of long possession the owners of large Victorian houses should be able to do pretty much what they want with them. Alternatively, they argue that because there has been a lot of bad, obtrusive development in South Hill Park in the past and that the proposed basement here is marginally less obtrusive, it ought to be nodded through. I do not see that this an argument for permitting further development in a conservation area, particularly at a time when public opinion and Camden Council's policies are turning against large basement extensions.

My third ground of objection is to the noise, vibration and traffic which will lessen, even destroy our enjoyment of our property over the next year or so – this being an estimate, the applicants apparently not attempting to assess the likely duration of the works. The applicants still make no attempt to describe convincingly in any of their submissions the serious and prolonged disturbance that their immediate neighbours will inevitably suffer as a result of these works. It is difficult to see how they propose to completely remake their roof, demolish and rebuild the rear of their property and excavate

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(together with their neighbours in 33 South Hill Park) an enormous basement room without creating a huge amount of noise and disturbance to us as neighbours. I am a university lecturer and my partner is a student: we depend on a moderate degree of quiet for our work during daytime hours. In moving to South Hill Park we had naively assumed that such quiet might be obtainable – it is after all a Conservation Area.

Many of those who originally commented warmly in support of this application do not live particularly near to 33-5 South Hill Park. They make much of their personal acquaintance with the applicants and the personal assurances they have received that there is nothing to worry about in these plans. At no point during this procedure have the applicants attempted to make any contact with us, who would bear the brunt of any works, to describe how they would seek to mitigate their impact. They have provided no assurances or information whatever about the times of day that construction is likely to begin or end – assurances that might have materially softened some of our objections to these proposals.

We continue to object in the same spirit to the construction of the rear dormer window and associated ‘pocket garden’ at the level of our property, whose construction will have significant impacts on us in terms of noise and vibration and which will once complete have a substantial impact on our privacy. It should be noted here that the clarification sheet submitted by David Mikhail Architects on 5 January 2015 acknowledges our concern on this point, arguing that ‘the green / sedum roof proposed beyond the ‘glass box’ and closet wing extension at second floor level will not be used for sitting / standing out purposes, with access only allowed for maintenance and upkeep.’ It is difficult to set any store on this assurance. How will access be prevented? Once planning permission had been granted, how would this provision be enforced?

The planning rebuttal submitted by Howard Sharp on 15 May 2014 casts opposition to these proposals as got up by Ms Gailey ‘and her associated tenants’ in an attempt to ‘protect her private interests’ in 37 South Hill Park, ‘an adjoining property, which has been converted into flats’. I would like to see evidence for this claim. I am surprised at the implication that flat-dwelling tenants are somehow not individuals whose rights to amenity must be respected. I have set out in this objection why I believe that these proposals threaten the stability of the property in which I live – Camden DP27 clearly points out that proposals must not strengthen the stability of adjoining properties – and also why I believe they will gravely harm our amenity, which DP27d directs to be protected. A cursory inspection of the other letters will show that we are not alone in raising these concerns.

I had understood that Camden Council is supposed to question the necessity for needless and disruptive basement extensions. The applicants, owners of a large Victorian house, want to live in an enormous one without having to move. That doesn’t sound like enough of a necessity to warrant severe disruption and unquantifiable risk to their neighbours or further damage to this conservation area.

I therefore encourage the Council in the strongest possible terms to reject this proposal.