

21 Downside Crescent, London NW3 2AN

Rachel English
Regeneration and Planning Development Management
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Judd Street
London WC1 8ND

5th January 2015

OBJECTIONS to Planning application 2014/7587/P
(Associated planning 2012/13000/P, 2103/7333/P, 2013/8078/P)
23 Downside Crescent, London NW3 2AN

Dear Ms English

We have read the planning application, the applicant's report and 'Camden's Guidance on Basements and Lightwells' (September 2013) concerning the proposed application for:

- a) An excavation of a basement under the planned rear extension, which is outside of the original 'foot print' of 23 Downside Crescent
- b) and extending this same proposed basement under the rear garden.

We have a number of comments and objections:

1. Pre-existing ground water or perched water problems will be made worse

The applicant's technical report (page 16) identifies an 'unknown' source of ground water. This proposed basement structure and the basement under the house already approved under permitted development (but not yet built) will create a massive subterranean structure. This structure will displace the ground water identified in the report to the neighbouring houses in Downside Crescent. These Victorian houses are of a traditional structure with shallow foundations and are, therefore, very susceptible to any change in ground water levels or diversion of ground water. The full extent of ground water has not been identified and therefore the severity of its potential impact is unknown over time.

2. In particular, ground water is likely to build-up behind the basement walls of 21 and 25 Downside Crescent properties causing harm to these structures.


3. London Clay 'high shrinkability'

'London Clay has a high volume change potential, which can result in significant ground movement in response to changes in moisture'. (Page 18 Technical Report)
This type of clay, under the houses of Downside Crescent, is most prone to high contraction and expansion and movement problems and with an increase in 'ground water' (due to such a large volume basement) these problems will cause further damage to surrounding and neighbouring properties. The problem of subsidence has already been experienced by 23 Downside Crescent from the existing ground water and clay situation – this is prior to any basement works being started.

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This is our initial response to this planning application, however, we are not planning or geological experts and reserve the right to comment further once we have had the opportunity to understand the implications of the application more fully.

Yours sincerely


Josie Lane and Gary Lane