Consultation Objection from 4 Parkhill Road

We have read the report from structural engineers Webb Yates on the proposed demolition and excavation at 4b Parkhill Road and have discussed it with architects and structural engineers. We have two objections arising from this additional submission:

1. Possibility of structural failure
2. Length of time of redevelopment

1. Possibility of structural failure

According to our engineers "Structurally, this is not a 'simple' project and there certainly would indeed be a significant risk of the proposed excavation for the new double basement for No. 4b causing ground movement and consequential damage to the neighbouring properties. " We recognize that many projects of this type are completed satisfactorily, however in view of the potential impact we want to be as confident as we can be that every risk is being properly addressed. While it appears that Webb Yates have carried out investigation into ground water, the work that they have performed to investigate structural distress in the area has been very limited and they have neither consulted us (on one side of the property) or the school on the other. As a result we consider that more work is needed to conclude whether building collapse is possible.

In their report they state that:

> *No evidence of structural distress was noted in the surrounding properties, nor was there any evidence of leaning/bent tree trunks or street furniture that indicated any potential slope movement.*
>
> *As a result it was determined that the expected damage category was "negligible" to "very slight". This is below the "slight" category which is defined as acceptable in the Camden Planning Guidance for Basements and Lightwells*

When we moved into 4 Parkhill Road in 2000 there was significant evidence of structural distress and movement in our property: our top staircase, attached to the party wall with 4b, has a significant lean, and we needed to insert building ties at both first and second floor level to strengthen the party wall at that level.

Ties inserted at first and second floor level

We subsequently carried out further internal strengthening because of concerns about building movement. All of this work was performed on the basis that the existing building at 4b was providing support to that side of our house. We are very concerned that if the building is demolished and a substantial excavation is carried out below a wall that we know is old and prone to movement that there is a real risk of building collapse.

Note that following cracking and water ingress we repointed the entire party wall in early 2014 and repaired cracking in our hall and stairwell. Hence it currently looks in good condition.

Cracking in wall of top bedroom by party wall

As a further note on the Webb Yates survey we see that borehole testing has not revealed any concerns but that they conclude that "the depth of the water table is unknown. Site Investigation works will be required". We know from living in the area that there has been frequent surface flooding. No. 6 often had a 'lake' on their back lawn until drainage and soakaways were installed. We had the same problem with our lawn and the bed next to 4b's patio gets so flooded in wet weather that only 'bog plants' can be planted there.

Unless the construction is carried out in a long dry period it is very likely that there will be flooding which could further undermine the ground on which our wall is standing. Serious pumping will be needed to prevent this. The ongoing flooding risk of having a second basement with lightwell must be significant particularly because drains frequently block due to leaves from several large trees in the area.

We understand that Camden is strict on these double basement projects and that you may well ask your own structural engineers to assess whether the application meets with your requirements. We would be grateful to know if you plan to do this.

2. Length of time of redevelopment

This is a significant redevelopment and so we will find ourselves living next to a noisy/dusty/disruptive building site for a considerable period of time. However there is nothing in the submission on the length of time that the redevelopment will take or the impact that it will have on ourselves and on the school. Page 14 of the Yates & Webb report states:

A Construction Management Plan will be produced including information about the site, the construction process including the proposed methodology, health and safety, disturbance to the surrounding properties such as noise and vibration, construction traffic and the proposed waste management strategy.

We would like to understand why this Construction Management Plan has not been submitted for neighbours to view as the entire demolition of the house and construction of the 2 storey basement is going to take a considerable period of time and be very disturbing to both ourselves and the school.

Finally we note Camden's recent announcement to curtail deep basement projects like this one. If you do give permission for this work we would expect 4b to take substantial insurance against the risk of our being homeless for a considerable period of time while our house is rebuilt, as has happened to Clare Latimer in nearby Elsworthy Road. Before agreeing to the necessary party wall award we would also expect the wall to require adequate shoring while any work is carried out. This might need to extend into the adjacent schoolyard. Should any collapse occur this would also potentially cause injury to the children in the school next door.