98 Priory Road
London NW6 3NT

Planning Department
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Judd Street
London
WC1H 9JE

22nd June 2015

Re: planning application reference 2015/1302/P
Address: The Coach House, 98A Priory Road, London NW6 3NT

Dear Sir/Madam,

We wish to make you aware of a number of strong objections that we have with regard to the proposed development of a proposed Basement, Rear and Side Extension and Loft Conversion and Alterations to Site Access at 98A Priory Road, NW6 3NT, Camden application number reference 2015/1302/P.

As immediate and adjoining neighbours to the site of the proposed development, we are of the view that the proposed development will have a serious impact on our standard of living, particularly the **Basement, Rear and Side Extension**. Our specific objections are as follows:

1. Basement extension application

- **Camden Development Policies – Section 3, DP27 Basement and Lightwells. In determining proposals for basement and other underground development, the Council will require an assessment of the scheme's impact on drainage, flooding groundwater conditions and structural stability, where appropriate. The Council will only permit basement and other underground development that does not cause harm to the built at natural environment and local amenity and does not result in flooding or ground instability.**
- **Camden Development Policies – Section 3, DP27 Basement and Lightwells, Paragraph 27.4 Many potential impacts to the amenity of adjoining neighbours are limited by underground development. However, the demolition and construction phases of a development can have an impact on amenity and this is a particular issue for basements. The Council will seek to minimise the disruption caused by basement development and may require Construction Management Plans to be submitted with applications.**
- **Camden Development Policies – Section 3, DP27 Basement and Lightwells, 27.5 When considering applications for basement extensions, Building Control will need to be satisfied that effective measures will be taken during excavation, demolition and construction works to ensure that structural damage is not caused to the subject building. (Demolition is only a planning consideration for listed buildings and buildings which make a positive contribution to conservation areas.)**
- **Camden Development Policies – Section 3, DP27 Basement and Lightwells, 27.7 Some parts of Camden contain unusual and unstable subsoils, along with many underground streams and watercourses, making drainage and**

structural safety key concerns (including around Hampstead Heath). In such areas, applications for basement developments may be required to show through hydrological modelling whether it will be possible through the inclusion of drainage systems to prevent any significant harm from changes to groundwater levels or flow.

- **Camden Planning Guidance, Basements and lightwells, Paragraph 2.39. The Council will expect all basement development applications to provide evidence that the structural stability of adjoining or neighbouring buildings is not put at risk.**
- **Camden Planning Guidance, Basements and lightwells, Paragraph 2.2. While basement developments can help to make efficient use of the borough's limited land, in some cases they may cause harm to the amenity of neighbours, affect the stability of buildings, cause drainage or flooding problems, or damage the character of areas and the natural environment.**
- **Camden Planning Guidance, Basements and lightwells, Paragraph 2.4 (PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT BOX) In certain situations such 'Permitted Development' rights are removed, such as: Within a conservation area if there are any trees which will be affected by the development;**
- **Camden Development Policies – Section 3, DP27 Basement and Lightwells, 27.10, Consideration should also be given to the existence of trees on or adjacent to the site, including street trees, and the root protection zones needed by these trees. Where there are trees on or adjacent to the site, the Council will require an arboricultural report to be submitted as part of a planning application.**

We have serious concerns about the impact the proposed works could have on the stability of our property. These are major works to be carried out on a structure circa 1884 and we have serious concerns about the impact that such works could have on our (immediately adjoining) property. When the house (98B-F) and coach house (98A) were redeveloped from a single property in 1984, a shallow slab foundation was installed between the main house and coach house to provide a base for flats 98B and 98D, which were built out (and joining) between the house and coach house. At this point, 98A was designated as a single freehold house and 98B-F were left on a separate joint freehold.

From September 2014 to March 2015, interior and exterior repair works were carried out at 98B-F Priory Road to remedy subsidence, caused by clay shrinkage subsidence exacerbated by the presence of tree roots below the level of foundations emanating from nearby Robinia tree vegetation. The trees were felled in February 2014. The subsidence claim was made in November 2011. Over three years of monitoring and excavations concluded with the removal of the trees as well as remedial internal and external decorations. During the monitoring period, exploratory excavations around the foundation of 98B-F showed a flared foundation around the main building. When the house (98B-F) and coach house (98A) were redeveloped from a single property in 1984, a shallow slab foundation was installed between the main house and coach house to provide a base for flats 98B and 98D, which were built out (and joining) between the house and coach house. Any excavation work could have a serious adverse impact upon the stability of the existing structures.

Camden Planning Guidance, Basements and lightwells, Paragraph 2.83 Party wall agreement For most basement developments you will need a party wall agreement with your neighbour(s). This includes when excavation is

- **within 3 metres of a neighbouring structure;**
- **would extend deeper than that structure's foundations; or**
- **within 6 metres of the neighbouring structure and which also lies within a zone defined by a 45 degree line from that structure.**

Camden Planning Guidance, Basements and lightwells, Paragraph 2.84 The Council is not itself involved in Party Wall agreements, but a guidance note explaining the procedures can be found on the Council's website or from the Planning Portal website www.planningportal.gov.uk.

The Party Wall Agreements website, states that 'you must tell your neighbour if you want to:

- **build on or at the boundary of your 2 properties**
- **work on an existing party wall or party structure**
- **dig below and near to the foundation level of their property'**

In addition, 'You must give notice (in writing) to your neighbour between 2 months and a year before you plan to start building works.'

The documents accompanying the planning application contain no mention of whether the applicant proposes to strengthen or safeguard the foundations of the building or structure belonging to 98 Priory Road Ltd (Flats 98B-98F form the freehold property), and no reference that the basement walls should be subject to neighbour agreement and structural engineer design (there is a reference in the planning application documents for the other side of 98A, for the works on the wall adjoining 96 Priory Road).

The application makes no reference to the shared drainage field of the Main House (98B–F) and Coach House (98A), which is integral to all six properties. The drainage for all properties in the main house and coach house runs in a clockwise direction around the Main House with a regular "fall", ending by running under the Coach House in a 8ft deep drain in the coach house driveway, which then runs into the main sewer under Priory Road. In November 2011, Flat 98C (whose maisonette includes the cellar of 98C) suffered extensive sewage flooding when the U-bend link between the main drain in the coach house driveway and the main road sewer blocked, resulting in broken pipes (from four properties) and allowing hundreds of gallons of sewage leaking into the ground, through the floor and into the cellar over ten days. The pipes themselves were repaired in 2011 and are presently in good condition (we have a recent report from June 2015) but it is nonetheless clear from these incidents and mapping of the drainage field that part of the drainage field runs under the coach house and significant works would be required to re-route the drainage field. We are waiting for a detailed map of the drainage field to be provided by TAPCO, our drainage contractor, and should be able to provide this after 1st July 2015. Given the integral nature of the drainage field linking six properties (including 98A Priory Road, we have concerns about the impact of the proposed development on surrounding properties in terms of drainage as well as ground stability. Indeed, we have not been contacted at all by the owner.

We have grave concerns about the adverse effect the proposed development would have on the large tree at the front of the property.

The tree (shown on Plan S1006PL01-1 supplied by the applicant) is a Robinia tree measuring 20m high, with a diameter of 88cm, crown spread of 18m and a distance of 6.5m to the Main House and Coach House. It still has a control order on it following the review of trees when permission was granted to fell the trees surrounding the main house (98B-F). It is the only remaining tree on the property; five other mature trees on the property were felled in the last two years owing to their effect on 98B-F.

Our concerns relate to the potential damage that heavy excavation equipment and the extent of excavation for the development would have on the root system of the tree, a species known for having far-reaching root systems, as we discovered with the other five trees felled for their effects on our structure Having recently completed subsidence works, caused by the roots of Robinia trees, we have serious concerns about the effect that any changes to the last remaining Robinia tree roots could have on the foundations of our property. The applicant has not shown (in the plans supplied) the root protection zone required by the Robinia, or even supplied an aboricultural report, which is required as part of the planning application.

This Robinia is considered to provide a high level of visual amenity within the street scene and to make a positive contribution to the character of this part of West Hampstead, which is a conservation area.

2. Rear extension application

- **Camden Planning Guidance, Design, Paragraph 4.10 Rear extensions should be designed to: not cause a loss of amenity to adjacent properties with regard to sunlight, daylight, outlook, overshadowing, light pollution/spillage, privacy/overlooking, and sense of enclosure;**

We believe that the proposed side extension development is a direct contravention of Policy 4.10 and will cause serious loss of amenities to 98B Priory Road, which is the ground floor flat adjacent to the proposed rear extension.

The proposed rear development, which extends beyond the wall of the neighbouring property, will lead to an unacceptable loss of light from the only window at the adjacent property (98B).

Having reviewed the plans submitted with the planning application, we believe some of the information supplied to be incorrect and/or inaccurate. The proposed ground floor plan does not show the position of the window at 98B, or accurately reflect the relationship between the window, dividing garden wall, and the reach of the proposed extension.

The reach of the proposed rear extension (0.8m), combined with the height of the dividing garden wall (2.55m), will both remove a considerable amount of natural light and, create a sense of enclosure, to the adjacent ground floor flat (98B), causing a significant loss of amenity for the living standards of the current and future occupants of 98B Priory Road. The only windows in the property 98B are at the rear of the building and would change the interior character of the property considerably.

The original plot of land for 98 Priory Road has already been reduced. In 1960's the rear section of 98 Priory Road was sold, and two additional properties were built on this land, with the gardens extending to the rear section beyond 98 Priory Road. Prior to this sale, this land was open space but it is now the site of two properties, thus reducing the sense of space from the original property. The proposed development would create an even greater sense of enclose and loss of light, particularly to the adjoining flat 98B.

3. Side extension application

- **Camden Planning Guidance, Design, Paragraph 4.16. Certain building forms may lend themselves to side extensions. Such extensions should be designed in accordance with the general considerations set out above in paragraph 4.10.**
    - **Camden Planning Guidance, Design, Paragraph 4.10 Rear extensions should be designed to: respect and preserve the original design and proportions of the building, including its architectural period and style;**
    - **South Hampstead Conservation Area, Trees and Private Open Spaces, Trees, Paragraph 5.25 Views along rear garden vistas and into areas of dense tree cover are characteristic of the conservation area and should be protected. Views of mature trees between buildings from the public highway provide a sense of space and openness and give the impression of properties with large rear gardens.**
    - **South Hampstead Conservation Area, Heritage Audit Paragraph 6.2 There is a strong presumption to retain buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the area. Detractors are elements of the townscape that are considered to be so significantly out of scale or character with their surroundings that their replacement with something of a more appropriate scale and massing or detailed**

architectural treatment would benefit the character and appearance of the area. Detractors may also include gaps in frontages that disrupt the prevailing street pattern. Elements identified as neutral are those that broadly conform with the overriding scale, form, materials and elevational characteristics of their context. The integrity and nature of the context are consequently influential in making this judgement.

We believe that the proposed side extension development is a direct contravention of these policies. It does not respect local context and street pattern, and would be entirely out of character of the area, to the detriment of the local environment.

The properties along Priory Road are characterised by large plots with considerable spacing between. The proposal to build above the current front door and directly onto the neighbouring wall will be in direct contrast to all surrounding property, does not reflect the historic origins of the Coach House, as a stable to the main house (98B-F Priory Road) and so the scale and design of the development will be entirely out of keeping with the area.

In addition, the proposed side extension would remove any views of the dense tree area behind 98A and 96 Priory Road. As stated in the paragraph 5.25, views of mature trees between buildings are a key characteristic of the conservation area and should be protected.

The proposed development would not result in a benefit to the environment and landscape terms; to the contrary it would lead to a change in the characteristics of the original house, the area, and the loss of a valuable sense of space and openness.

We believe the proposal to contravene the policies listed is to the detriment of the quality, character and amenity value of the area, as outlined in the points above.

We would also like to request that, should the application be approved, the council consider using its powers to enforce controlled hours of operation and other restrictions that might make the duration of the works more bearable.

In conclusion, we would be grateful if the council would take our objections into consideration when deciding this application. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with a representative of the planning department at to illustrate our objections in person.

Sincerely,

The Owners of Flats B-F, 98 Priory Road

Katie Rosen, Owner, Flat B

Margaret Gadow, Owner, Flat C

Graça Almeida, Owner, Flat D

Samantha Swithenbank, Owner, Flat E

Anton Curtis (on behalf of Ben Curtis), Owner, Flat F