
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 19 August 2015 17:07
To: Planning
Subject: 17 Branch Hill London NW3 7LS (ref. no. 2015/3377/P), withdrawn from (ref. no. 2015/0457/P)

Mr David Peres Da Costa

West Area Planning Team

London Borough of Camden

Town Hall

Judd Street

London

WC1H 9JE

By post and email

19th August, 2015

1. **17 Branch Hill London NW3 7LS (ref. no. 2015/3377/P), withdrawn from (ref. no. 2015/0457/P)**

Dear Mr Peres Da Costa

We are the recent new home owners of The Chestnuts, Branch Hill. The proposed above mentioned scheme is at the rear of our garden.

We have taken a long, thoughtful and considered approach in reaching the decision to object to the build. This is based on discussing the scheme with Mr and Mrs Kaye and their architect Graham Harris, reading the documentation concerning the build online and trying to understand the views of the local community.

There seem to have been some considerable and fundamental issues with our communications with Mr and Mrs Kaye / Mr Harris.

Build Time

In consulting with both Mr and Mrs Kaye and separately with Mr Harris we were informed that the overall build completion would be finished within one year.

However, this is not the case — the programme says 91 weeks, which will inevitably go over that period.

When I contacted Mr Harris this was his response -

"In the context of our discussion you may recall that we were talking about 'heavy construction works' demolition excavation pouring concrete etc on the programme I was referring to the completion of the 'shell & core' which is basically the completion of the building structure and external envelope as a watertight building. This would normally take around 9-12 months to complete the 'fit out' element which does not primarily involve any noisy or disruptive works would take a further 6 -8 months to complete."

Mr Harris might have been referring to "shell and core" — we were not.

Further, from looking into the timescale the "core and shell" element suggests March 2017 with a further seven weeks to strike the scaffold — so in reality the "core and shell" will not be complete until April 2017, if it remains on schedule.

When we discussed the timing with both parties we were informed that work would only be carried out during the week, and not at the weekends and that the "heavy construction" elements would be done during "vacation periods".

However, Saturday's are included in the time scale.

Whilst we recognise it is unrealistic to do the bigger work during the "vacation periods" there really wasn't going to be any consideration to when the heavy construction would take place as the whole 91 week scheme is already planned, with a clear meticulous itinerary.

The reason we looked further into the proposed scheme was due to above mentioned misunderstanding on the build time, which in turn opened up further issues which had been previously discussed below.

Now our worry is that if there were some simple misunderstanding issues at the beginning, what is going to happen if the build gets approved?

Parking

We asked about the impact of parking, and would any bays be taken over. We were informed that this would not happen.

The drawings clearly outline that one bay will be taken with no indication for how long whilst the Construction Management Plan mentions there will be future parking bay suspensions(note plural). Further, there is no reference to where all of those carrying out the work will park?

Westbourne River

We specifically asked Mr Harris about the issue of flowing water under the proposed scheme. Again the implication was that this was not an issue and that there was “flowing water all over London”.

We have subsequently looked deeper into this issue and there are many references to the flowing river...and no tests, including any major fluid dynamics or soil mechanics analysis have been carried out near our property despite how deep the build (5-7 meters) will be to accommodate the basement and swimming pool.

Demolition

We specifically asked Mr Harris if there was going to be a “tracked excavator” with a concern regarding noise. He said there would not be. Point 2.3 from the Construction Management Plan clearly highlights there will be.

We are extremely frustrated about why these issues were mis communicated to us...in particular from Mr Harris. Unfortunately it feels like we were be told what we wanted to hear, to gain our support for the scheme to be passed.

View from our house

The build on the Eastern elevation will not only take away clear views and sun light, but give the appearance of being “boxed in”.

We have not looked into legal issues but would presume that matters such as privacy, loss of light, overlooking, over bearing and a sense of enclosure are subject to planning permissions?

We understand in the latest scheme the corner has been reduced with some suggested greenery but that will hardly compensate the fact that the building will extend along the whole of the back garden of Holme Vale House - a little bit of greenery is hardly going to compensate for the current view - It will still be a building!

Photos

We are also confused by the photos that have been supplied in the Design and access Statement. They are clearly from a different period of time. There are no longer big trees that imply “seclusion” — the area is completely open. Therefore the statement that implies language such as “discreet”, “backland”, “no measurable street presence” is not the case from our house, our neighbours at Oakhurst, Leavesden, Leavesden Cottage and Holme Vale House as well as the numerous local residents at Savoy Court, St Regis Heights and Firecrest Drive.

Branch Hill Road

Having now lived in The Chestnuts for the past month, what we thought was a quiet road at the front, contrary to the description of "low traffic density" (3.2), and is quite clearly used as a "short cut" through road to get to West Heath Road - the nature of the not only the aggression and arguments, but the language used between drivers trying to get through has been quite shocking! The road also has a restricted width. What will happen once lorries, cement mixers are coming back and forth over a 91 week period?

We were under the impression, and lead to believe, that the proposed scheme was going to be a simple rebuild without realising the magnitude of the build both over ground and underground. The technical drawing makes it very difficult to determine the increase in square metres, and appears to be inconsistent and there is going to be massive pit — 5–7 metres deep. Then, of course, there is time it is going to take to do it, the noise it is going to cause; the inability to open windows due to dust, the disruption to outside parking and traffic on Branch Hill itself...and all of this is in a conservation area! Has anyone looked into the impact on the wildlife? We currently enjoy the sound of the owl at the back each evening!

We are new to the area, and do not wish to upset any of our new neighbours, not least Mr and Mrs Kaye. But unfortunately from looking on-line the build is not about upsetting one or two neighbours — it is about upsetting a whole community that not only surrounds this scheme but also uses Branch Hill as a through way for local restaurants, walks to Hampstead Heath, the tube station and also to the numerous local schools. The online feedback from so many people in the community clearly emphasises an extreme passion that this build should not happen...and we agree with them.

We would please request that you refuse the application.

Mr and Mrs Jason Iley

(I have not been able to sign this as I am currently away on holiday. I will send a second signed copy on my return at the end of this month)