

**Martin Colloms C.Eng MIEE MIET MAES NUJ PRESS (London Freelance)**  
**29 Flask Walk London NW3 1HH**

To Tendai Mutasa c/o Camden Planning

Re Application: 2015/3753/P  
Address: 36 Flask Walk, NW3  
Date 20 August 2015

Dear Mr Mutasa

I would like to object to the above planning application for 36 Flask Walk on the following grounds.

**1. Overlarge scale of site development:**

I object to the excessive development which is out of proportion to this small terrace house in a narrow historic village street with many listed buildings. There is already a granted application for extending this house at roof level.

**2. Sustained Environmental Damage** to a famous Hampstead location of outstanding importance to Camden and to London, namely narrow, largely one-way Flask Walk, visited by tens of thousands of tourists a year, and the only road from the busy High Street leading directly to the 500 acres of Hampstead Heath.

Here I object to the sustained impact of noise, traffic access, vehicle pollution, congestion and dirt on the street and neighbourhood during the construction. The plan involves a substantial dig out, plus many pilings, skips, concrete pouring and related works. Given the errors and omissions in the plan it could take well over a year to completion, fitting out etc.

**3. I consider the Construction Management Plan CMP** to be wholly inappropriate as it is based on incorrect data and indeed much of it is unworkable. While I appreciate that it may be edited and reworked in the future, as it stands its inadequacies point to a failure to properly appreciate what has to be done. It seems that much of it has been copied over from a different and inappropriate application. There are several important issues which I will summarise below.

a: **An extended closure of Flask Walk south pavement at no 36** and the long term diversion of pedestrians to the upper level footpath, which has restricted and in places stepped only access to the roadway.

b: **The consequence of a:** in terms of the at times, massive volume of pedestrians, also access for buggies, wheel chairs and the infirm.

c: **The patently unrepresentative road traffic survey** on which much of the traffic management plan is devised. In fact there are periods during school terms and

evening rush hour from 4pm, where Flask Walk is full of traffic, even backed up its entire length if the Back Lane exit is slow, due to congestion on Heath Street.

d: **The failure to appreciate the 6 foot 1.85 width limit for Flask Walk** Until this was in place, several delivery lorries a day would get stuck and spend upwards of half an hour reversing out, often damaging parked vehicles

e: **In devising a detailed plan with a sequence of many months of heavy lorry movements** of which literally none of the specified vehicles in the plan can actually traverse Flask Walk.

f: **Failure to survey swept vehicles paths in Flask Walk.**

Flask Walk is a sinuous village lane of varying narrow width, passing a small village Green. Past the Green it narrows substantially towards the site, and then beyond the site it narrows further. Problems experienced by lorries at this point led directly to the Council's 6 foot overall width restriction. In addition there are three tight corners for lorries to navigate to access the works. These are the right turn from single lane 'New End Square' into Flask Walk; the right turn at the very busy and pedestrianised corner at the Flask Public House, then up to narrow, cobbled Back Lane which will add to their already high traffic pollution level, never mind the traffic generated noise levels on this steep hill; and finally the sharp left hooker, inconveniently only going south on the busy 'A' road, namely Heath Street. Heath Street flow north and south has to be interrupted to allow a large lorry out of this tight turn. The likelihood is that the lorries will then rat run through the back of Hampstead village to regain a North route out of the Borough.

g: **Further to f:**

The applicants' CMP has considerable detail on how traffic would pass the site, in particular when cranes, grab lorries, concrete lorries etc are parked at the site, also suggesting that removing one parking space opposite would allow for passing traffic.

In fact careful site assessment shows that this cannot work except for the smallest cars and not larger cars, 4x4s, vans and similar traffic. Taking an overview, the CMP would only work as planned if all the parking was suspended in Flask Walk, at least from just North West of the village green section, both North and South of the site.

**The flow passing diagrams provided in the plan are simply incorrect and unworkable.** In addition the passing difficulty would mean that when larger lorries were parked as indicated outside the site, the road would effectively be closed for the duration.

h: **The CMP indicates that '200sqm'** (likely to be cubic metres in practice) of excavation will be required and calculates the related lorry movements on that basis. Two points are questionable, one the 5% retained for landscaping, but there is no landscape on the site, and the mere 10% estimate for bulking where 30% is nearer the mark. Thus the lorry movements for spoil, based on their calculations, may be underestimated by as much as 35%. If as is likely, that much smaller lorries will be necessary, the smaller lorry movements will be several times greater in number and continue over a much longer period than suggested.

- i: In fact smaller van type vehicles will be necessary for nearly all of the planned works which will further extend the overall project to a wholly unacceptable degree.

#### **4. Inadequate Light Provision**

The south wall of the proposed basement is blank as it backs onto an underground garage shared with three other properties and is sealed from the garage. It is proposed that a relatively small light well be the only source of natural light for the narrow basement room, located adjacent to the pavement in front of the house. It will be at pedestrian level where it may be looked into, if it is not obscured glass. The light well is essentially north facing with the consequent illumination loss, but also what open sky area is available is restricted by the tall buildings opposite and equally tall (equivalent to 4 storey high), dense foliage trees opposite the site on this narrow road.

The light well does not give directly onto the new room but onto a small sunken patio with furniture which then gives on to the room via internal French windows. There will be significant loss of light intensity due to the separation of the light well from the new basement room but also from the interposition of double glazing sliding doors and framing, and the likely further absorption of light by the intended patio furniture arrangement.

#### **5. The highly experienced assessment team at the Heath and Hampstead Society have examined the proposals:**

- i. They have commented that the basement build presents special difficulties and will need skilful management in respect of hydrology and the safety of the adjacent buildings' party walls, noting that each of these are multi-storey, to ensure the sequential underpinning and foundations are carried out to the particularly high standard required on this difficult site.

- ii. They also noted that the applicant's own BIA states:

*The Assessment concludes that collateral structural damage would be "negligible", but are concerned for the stability and safety of adjoining properties, and believe that an independent review of this aspect of the proposals is justified*

- iii. In addition they commented:

*>Local residents would suffer unacceptable inconvenience, and pedestrians put at risk for many months.*

*>Local parking, already strained to its limits, would become intolerable. The impact of noise, dust, mud and vibration would be unacceptable*

*>Public safety would be locally compromised.*

They concluded that :

*>The project is unbuildable in this context, and we therefore call for refusal.*

I strongly agree with these Heath and Hampstead Society comments.

6. **I would also point out that No 36 has certain constructional aspects** adding to the difficulty. The current first floor and above elevations to the rear are suspended on a horizontal beam over the ground floor French Windows, this beam bearing on the party walls and foundation.

The applicant also now proposes additional new full width, or nearly so, French windows at basement level to the front. Thus the front elevation of the property must also be carried entirely on the party walls.

Thus there is a greater possibility of differential settlement with resulting damage to the adjacent buildings. This needs to be addressed at a higher accuracy by fully worked and approved recalculation of the underpinning procedures, also loading and predicted ground displacement.

7. For all the noise, loss of amenity, dirt and obstruction to traffic, it seems the benefit from the resulting gloomy basement room is pitifully small. In particular when the staircase and fire safety access area is taken into account, the room appears to be only 9 foot wide (this including some unknown construction/installation on the west side which may restrict the useable width still further).

For all these many grounds I earnestly request that this application be refused in its entirety.



Formatted: Font: 26 pt

Martin Colloms 19 /08 /2015

See three images attached below



Photo 1: showing number 36 (center, beige door) in its cramped setting with the small but locally valued front area planting which will largely disappear. At the lower edge of the photo, the change in tarmac colour from black to red, marks the Lakis Close entrance drive which is private property, with no right of public access. A lorry parked outside number 36, as we have all experienced, blocks Flask Walk and Lakis Close, and also the four households who have rights to the underground parking under Number 34 located to the right, i.e. adjacent to the development at Number 36. (The garage entrance is under the grey building, number 34).



Photo 2 :Lorry in Flask Walk outside number 34: a medium size lorry got stuck, now attempting to turn round by (unsuccessfully) reversing into Lakis Close opposite the proposed development at 36 Flask Walk. Note the queue of traffic behind the lorry.

Photo 3: Flask Walk outside number 30: medium size lorry has got stuck, driver is climbing on the bonnet of a resident's car, which he damaged, trying



to unhook the car's wing mirror. This is the proposed exit route for all lorries servicing number 36.

End.