



The Heath & Hampstead Society

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The Society examines all Planning Applications relating to Hampstead, and assesses them for their impact on conservation and on the local environment.

To London Borough of Camden, Development Control Team

Planning Ref: 2015/4485/P

Address: Grove Lodge, Admirals Walk, NW3

Description: Extensions including basement (revised).

Case Officer: Gideon Whittingham

Date 27 August 2015

It is clear that, following local consultations, this proposal is an improvement on the previous application designs 2015/0886/P 2015/1032/L, on which we commented on 6 March 15 and 18 March 15. The view of the house from Admirals Walk retains more of the existing house, in particular the majority of the 1920's so-called Galsworthy wing.

However, we must continue to oppose the application, on these grounds:

1. Basement.

The suggestions made by us in our comment dated 18 March 2015 concerning the merits of draft Policy A5 of the Draft Local Plan now under consultation are relevant and urgent. Draft Policy A5 precludes the excavation of basement extensions under listed buildings. The Policy is sensible, in line with a proper conservation of our architectural heritage, and (what is perhaps more pertinent) publicly popular. There have been few Planning issues that have united public opinion more comprehensively and vocally than this, and a decision based on this Policy would be welcomed with acclaim.

Grove Lodge is the ideal site for such a decision. It is a notable C18 house, of both architectural and historic importance; it is sited in one of Hampstead's most important Conservation Areas, indeed is its very core; it is adjacent to very many other listed buildings, and the character of Hampstead is epitomised by it and its setting.

We call therefore for the decision to be made on the basis of Draft Local Plan Policy A5.

That is to say: no basement under the existing house.

2. Basement Impact Assessment

Although revised, and containing a number of statements intended to be reassuring, this BIA still does not give a clear assessment of the potential damage the basement excavation and construction would cause, either to Grove Lodge itself, or to adjacent houses, giving a Burland Scale assessment. We remain concerned that these structures could be harmed. The purpose of Policy DP27 is to give such security. As it stands, no security is given.

3. Well under Admirals House.

We are surprised that the applicants seem reluctant to recognise the existence of this plainly very active well. We are concerned that interference in ground water flows arising from the basement excavations could have a damaging effect on this old and historic feature.

4. Architectural detail

We are still concerned at the lack of proper architectural study of detail on the proposed extension. Applications for work on listed buildings require that they be presented in some detail, to ensure that the character of the listed structure is not compromised by poor detail.

In this case, this point should be extended to cover unnecessary interference with existing features, in plan and section. There has been comment over the retention or otherwise of the entrance porch; this is a matter which needs heritage assessment.

5. Trees

We are very worried about the security of the line of lime trees along the Admirals Walk boundary adjoining the roadway. One of these is shown as to be felled; we believe this is unjustified; the others could be seriously compromised by the basement excavations, and by construction traffic (see 6. below) It is essential that these trees are given full protection.

We are consulting our Tree Officer, who will revert to this issue as soon as possible.

6. Construction Management Plan

The prognoses made on heavy vehicle tracking and turning seem very optimistic. The margins of error are small, and potential damage to the boundary trees (see above) and the boundary wall of Fenton House would be serious. We call for smaller vehicles to be used, and for very close supervision of the work by Camden (who would do this? Enforcement? Highways?)

7. Footpath

There has been discussion on freedom of access to the footpath around the Admirals Walk and Upper Terrace boundaries, seemingly centring on whether it is in public or private (i.e Grove Lodge) ownership. We ask that public access be retained if at all possible.

We call for refusal