

29 Flask Walk London NW3 1HH

Gideon Whittingham
London Borough of Camden

27/08/15

Re: 2015/4555/L and 2015/4485/P
Grove Lodge, Admiral's Walk London
NW3 6RS

Dear Mr Whittingham

We wish to object to the above planning applications for Grove Lodge.

Overdevelopment

Since withdrawing the first application, the owner has reduced the area of the basement he seeks to create. However the new area of 220m² still represents an overdevelopment of the site. The building programme will last for at least 18 months involving over 1,400 lorry movements. In the experience of Hampstead residents who have endured the disruption caused by such large scale developments, the build time will over-run and the number of van and lorry movements serving the site will be far greater than estimated.

Hydrology

The issue of underground water has to be meticulously investigated. Admiral's Walk sits above a deep bowl of land west of and at a lower level than the Whitestone Pond. In effect, there is an underground aquifer of groundwater beneath much of Hampstead that lies above the 90 metre contour. Almost every property constructing a basement in Hampstead will be setting it partially into the aquifer and will almost invariably affect movement of groundwater beneath adjacent and nearby properties. Whether or not this affects the structural integrity of those properties will depend upon the nature of the measures taken in constructing the basement.

Traffic disruption

The project will cause traffic disruption not only in the immediate environs of the build but over a much wider area of Hampstead, given the regular and large number of car commuters (morning and evening); school run vehicles (morning and afternoon) and general traffic, seeking to use a well known short cut, that bypasses Hampstead centre, running from Whitestone Pond, via Lower Terrace (at the rear of the Grove Lodge site) then down Froggnal to Finchley Road and Swiss Cottage.

This regular daily traffic does not take into account a number of other building projects local to the site, which will result in their own lorry movements and thus exacerbate traffic problems. Of great concern is the fact that permission has been granted for another and adjacent property on Admiral's Walk - Fleet House - to be

demolished and rebuilt. To facilitate this project, it is proposed to close Admiral's Walk to all through traffic, for eighteen months. The two massive projects may well be in conflict and competition for access to their adjacent sites.

Listed building

The basement will be built under a listed building and garden. Camden is currently drafting policy to disallow such developments, which should be a material consideration in refusing permission for the current application. In drafting the upcoming policy, Camden is acknowledging that such developments should be stopped.

The setting and appearance of Grove Lodge

The heritage report put in on behalf of Grove Lodge, states the following: *'The John Galsworthy extension will be retained and remain completely intact and visually unaltered from the front elevation.'* However, the applicant seeks to demolish the existing porch and create a new front door. This should not be allowed. Contrary to listed building guidelines, changes such as those proposed will harm the special interest of the listed building. The eastern fascia of Grove Lodge contributes to what was described in 1960 as *'an unspoilt corner of the village'* and with some modifications, so it remains today. The approach from the east, towards the broad sweep of pavement in front of Grove Lodge and Admiral's House, is one of Hampstead's most attractive vistas, with views beyond, over the Lodge's garage roof towards Lower Terrace. It is much visited, admired and photographed by tourists from all over the world. Rather than allow this to be damaged, Camden Council should do its utmost to preserve this view.

'Hampstead: London Hill Town' (1981) describes Admiral's House, as *'a curious and engaging building with an attractive side-kick,'* a reference to Grove House. It goes on: *'The two houses are unique and worth studying in detail. Consider the essential homeliness of Grove Lodge against the inspired crankiness of Admiral's House.'* The current plan to alter the exterior of Grove Lodge will destroy this unique symbiosis.

For all these reasons, we urge that you reject the application.

Yours truly,

Martin Colloms C. Eng MIEE & Dr Marianne Colloms

Sources

Dorothy Bohm (an eminent photographer) and Ian Norrie (local historian, business man and book shop proprietor), 1981, *'Hampstead: London Hill Town'*, High Hill Press.

M. & I. Norrie, 1960, *'The Book of Hampstead'*, High Hill Books.