



# *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: 2015/5298/L

Address: Terrace Lodge Admirals Walk, NW3

Description: Extension; basement (retrospective).

Case Officer: Nanayaa Ampona

Date 29 October 2015

This follows our previous comments on application 2015/5301/P dated 8 October 2015; we believe that this application should have been validated together with the earlier one; they plainly are intended to be read in conjunction.

The situation is thus quite different to that which seemed to exist 3 weeks ago, since the work concerned was not carried out in accordance with 2004/1213/P.

We always take a very serious view of retrospective applications, especially when they concern unauthorised work on Listed buildings in sensitive areas of Hampstead, such as here, in Admirals Walk.

We have read this Planning and Heritage Statement and examined the drawings with some care, because we are still greatly puzzled as to how this potentially damaging situation could have arisen.

The unauthorised work concerned followed the receipt of permission 2004/1213/P for alterations and additions earlier in 2004, only months before the work was started. It now included an additional basement, plainly involving quite complex construction for which a structural engineer was employed, as well as architectural design.. We do not understand why it was thought that this did not need Planning and Listed Building permission; ample professional advice was on hand. Yet they pushed ahead. Did they think that because it was below ground level, it was free of Planning control? Surely not. Did they think that because the site is well hidden behind trees and a high boundary wall, no-one would notice? We hope sincerely hope not. The Planning/Heritage Statement refers to a priority they considered overriding, to preserve the existing listed house (the basement being sited apart from the house's footprint); an interesting point, but irrelevant.

We take the view that if they had proceeded in open disregard of Planning control, hoping to "get away with it", then you are both formally and morally obliged to refuse, and call for enforcement; i.e. demolition.

If it was all a dreadful mistake, unchecked by poor professional advice, however, a different view can be taken, and the impact of the work on the listed house and its

setting can be assessed. Does it damage the character of the architecture of this charming Gothick cottage, or not?

On the basis of the evidence presented, on balance we think, thankfully, that little damage has been done, and the application might be agreed.

However, the principle remains, that unauthorised work, especially on listed buildings, is a very serious breach of Planning control. We suggest that any permission granted is accompanied by conditions. Are not financial sanctions, possibly by way of CIL contribution, feasible and appropriate? This might act as a deterrent.