

OBJECTIONS LODGED BY ADJOINING OWNERS PATRICIA AND EDGAR LEVY

Planning application no 2015/3525/P, lodged with Camden Borough Council.

Development Site: 4 Frognal Rise

Applicants : Mr and Mrs Sonnenthal

Case Officer: Elaine Quigly

General

1. My wife and I are an elderly couple – 79 and 85 respectively, who live in the connected house no 2 and will be substantially affected by the development. Both 2 and 4 Frognal Rise were originally stables to the Main House, as illustrated in the copy 1829 picture attached, extracted from “The Streets of Hampstead Revised Edition” by Christopher Wade. They were both substantially converted in the 1930s.
2. There are confusing references throughout the application documents as to the increase, or otherwise, in the footprint of the building. Inspection of the drawings shows that there is a very large increase in both the footprint and the overall floor area. It seems odd that this is not made clear, and proportionate increases stated, on the face of the application. It may well be that the Borough’s overall planning philosophy does not favour such large increases to a property of this character and location.
3. The Construction Management Plan (CMP) states that Mary Herberg, the UCS Junior School and I have been in consultation which is ongoing. I am informed that Mary Herberg has never been consulted and that the school has had no meaningful consultation. Some five months ago I was visited by the Applicants’ architect to inform me of the proposed development – to which I objected. I have heard nothing since.

Basement Impact Assessment (BIA)

4. The most difficult part of the basement construction to carry out safely, and the part involving another party’s property, is the proposed underpinning of my house. It can only be by wilful mischief that this subject is so little covered in the BIA. For example, in 8.1.1, a north/south section is shown, illustrating the ground strata, but there is no east/west section making clear how these impact upon my property and the proposed underpinning.
5. Paragraphs 3 and 4 on page 19 graphically paint the risk of prejudice to the works from ground water flows. Secant piling is suggested as a solution. But this leaves unanswered the hazard of ground water flow in relation to an attempt to underpin my house.

6. Paragraph 2 of 8.0 makes clear that because of the groundwater issue, careful consideration must be given to underpinning methods. One might have thought that the paper would then give this subject that careful consideration and tell us all what the solution is. But no, it does not. The whole subject is left hanging in the air. It could well be that the only safe engineering solution will be to drill into and grout the ground beneath my property. I make clear now that consent for such trespass will not be given. The Applicants could find that their whole project has to be aborted.
7. Mrs Sonnenthal has assured me that the Applicants have no intention at all of constructing the enlargement for which they seek consent. In the light of the hazardous nature of these proposals, it would seem to be prudent to decline consent.
8. In BIA 3.4 it is stated that water flows will be discharged into the combined sewer. This, I believe, runs under my property. The least amount of ground movement could fracture this drain. Will there be increased flow as a result of the new development? These matters are not addressed in the documentation.

Structural Engineering Report

9. In the non-technical summary, it is asserted that, if properly undertaken by suitably qualified contractors, these works should pose no significant threat to the structural stability of my house. The multiple qualifications make clear that there is a threat to my house. Being a threat to my house, the development should not be allowed to proceed.
10. In 1.3 it is stated that, “ the Contractor is to accept full responsibility for the stability and structural integrity of the works during the Contract”. Throughout the report it is made clear, eg in 11.0 that the methods and sequence illustrated might not be those eventually adopted. So this huge number of pages describe methods which might not be adopted – and, if they are adopted, the Structural Engineer accepts no responsibility for their safety or success. It is hard to see how this helps the planning application.
11. 5.6 purports to cover the underpinning of my house. It entirely glosses over the problems of groundwater flow as mentioned above. This section ends by saying that measures might be taken, “to mitigate possible cracking” of my property. With respect to the Structural Engineer, I am not interested in ideas for mitigating the damage to my house. I want an absolute assurance that there will be no damage.
12. These concerns are enhanced by the apparent intention to underpin with a structural reinforced concrete wall. This is a much more complicated proposition than would be simple underpinning with mass concrete, propped as necessary, followed by the building of a

reinforced wall inside it. The work cannot be done so rapidly and the dangers arising from water movement are increased. This is not a prudent proposal.

13. In 10.4, we are told that, “the likelihood of damage to the adjacent properties should be limited to Category 2 in CIRIA Report 580 – which deals with retaining walls in stiff clay, not in silty sand. This is another masterpiece of non-assurance.
14. Construction Method Statement. In this thirteen stage statement, nothing at all is said about the underpinning of my house. Extraordinary. This is consistent with 4 above. The underpinning my house is the elephant in the room – ignored.
15. Drg. no. 1000. This shows contiguous bored piles. What sort of equipment will be used to construct these? Without that information, I cannot properly evaluate the disturbance of noise and vibration. Whatever equipment is used, it seems doubtful that a pile can be drilled in the position of the most easterly pile shown. It seems that this corner is deserving of its own special study – not provided.
16. Drg. no. P013. Section C-C is not consistent with the equivalent section on drg. no. 2004, again pointing to the uncertainty in respect of the proposed underpinning of my property.

Vehicle Movements/ Schoolchildren

17. During term time on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, approximately 200 students of young age from University College Junior School walk down Frognaal Rise and congregate virtually outside the Site to board large coaches taking them for sports. This raises many issues. Although the Construction Management Plan imposes some limits on lorries and deliveries during the times when the children assemble outside the Site to board the waiting coaches, it does not cover the times when the coaches return to the Site when the children, having alighted, assemble waiting for collection by parents or for their accompanied return to school.

General Disturbance

18. Though the documents attempt to suggest otherwise, it is evident that if this project is allowed to go ahead, we shall suffer from more than a year of general disturbance arising from noise, dust, traffic, vibration and the other delights of major construction works. At our time of life, this is not good.

Conclusion

19. This planning application should be rejected.

EDGAR LEVY

November 2015

PATRICIA LEVY

November 2015