

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 March 2016 09:25
To: Planning; Miller, Hugh
Cc: rob.hagemans@gmail.com
Subject: comment on 2015/5144/P at 262 Finchley Road

Dear Planning Officer,

I am writing to send you my thought on application 2015/5144/P at 262 Finchley Road. I am a nearby neighbour of this proposal.

This section of the Finchley Road is seeing a large number of developments at the same time. Basement applications have been approved and are currently being built at 38 Heath Drive (the corner with Finchley Road), the former terrace directly to the north of this proposal (I believe it is 264-268 Finchley Road). A basement has been dug recently replacing the back garden of that terrace at what is now 270 Finchley Road. At 252 Finchley Road, still within the same section of Finchley Road as these developments and the proposal at hand, a large new-build scheme was recently given the go-ahead.

Heath Drive is known to be the location of the river Westbourne which flows underground from Hampstead Heath to Hyde Park and the Thames. This river may have been culverted, but its presence means that this is a location where water naturally flows to. Many smaller underground streams coalesce into Heath Drive, a fact evident by the wetness of the ground in the area. A cluster of underground obstructions to these streams has now been built right next to this proposed new underground development, forcing the water to find other ways to go. This has already caused many problems – for example, a landslide causing the loss of mature trees in adjacent gardens was documented after the construction of 270 Finchley Road. Even at our distance, a few tens of metres away from this proposal, we are finding our gardens becoming increasingly soggy. This is likely because the ground water can no longer find its way to the Westbourne due to these new obstructions. I further note that the proposal includes the felling of several mature trees - felling of large, thirsty trees will worsen the saturation of the ground with water, further aggravating these problems.

While the previous proposals had basement impact assessments, these assessments narrowly focused on the proposal at hand and did not consider cumulative effects. As a consequence, while each development by itself might have been shown to be safe had it been executed in isolation, these developments put together may very well create an obstruction to ground water flow whose effects are well beyond what has been forecast in these isolated impact assessments. I cannot find any basement impact assessment for the proposal at hand, so in this case once again we have no information on whether this is a safe proposal.

This is starting to get very worrying. I feel there is significant and increasing danger that these ground water obstructions will cause flooding in basements of the existing or newly built properties. In that context, the current proposal to create no less than three underground bedrooms is too dangerous for its future inhabitants. Camden should take its responsibility to protect residents and not allow this conversion.

Camden's planning regulations state that Camden needs to consider the cumulative effect of basement proposals prior to allowing further basements to be dug. In this corner of Finchley Road, I feel the cumulative effects are already extremely onerous. It is unjustifiable to allow more underground development in an area with such sensitive hydrogeology.

Finally, I note that the site of this proposal is locally listed. Should Camden (unwisely, in my opinion, given the above considerations) consider granting planning permission, this means it should be awarded protection as if it were in the neighbouring conservation area. In this context, I feel the felling of large trees is particularly inappropriate given the importance of these trees on the setting of the protected property and on the amenity of the neighbourhood as a whole. The recent large-scale developments have already been a significant hit to the once rich biodiversity of this

contiguous area of back gardens and this will take a further hit. On this site, removed from public green space and on the busy Finchley Road, contiguous privately held green space is of extreme importance and deserves Camden's particular protection.

Kind regards,

Rob Hagemans
254A Finchley Road

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