Ground Floor Flat,

73 Fordwych Rd,

London NW2 3TL.

To:

Planning & Development,

Camden Council,

Judd Street,

London WC1H 9JE. 9th June 2016

Attention: Emily Whittredge – Planning Officer

**RE: Objection to Planning Application 2016/0309/P - 71 Fordwych Road**

I am writing in my capacity as Leasehold owner of the Ground Floor Flat at No 73 Fordwych Rd, which is the property immediately next door (north-westwards) to No 71. I am also joint Freeholder of No 73 Fordwych Rd.

I would list the serious following concerns regarding these proposals:

1. **Re Flooding in existing “Basement “ (coal cellar) at No 71**

I have attached a report commissioned by Camden Council in 2013, which followed a number of unprecedented flooding incidents in various basements (old coal cellars) along this particular stretch of Fordwych Road. The various incidences are cited in this report – but include No 71, 73 and 75. The level of flooding in No 71 was so bad that it actually seeped out through the earth in the front garden and poured out onto the pavement through the brick wall running along the front of the property. Following investigations, it was reported that there was a pipe running underneath the cellars, which was also found to be running underneath No 75.The exact route and extent of this pipe is unknown, and what role it may or may not play in flooding, or drainage, is not clear, but if the basement is to be excavated to the extent indicated (below the depth of this pipe) – clearly this would have to be further investigated as it links to other properties in the road.

In order to prevent damage from further possible flooding, a sump pump was installed in the cellar of No 71, which is referenced within the application documents, indicating that further flooding was indeed a recognised risk. Therefore, given the existing known tendency to flood – with the cause still unclear – digging further down and opening up a whole subterranean living section under this property would seem highly unwise.

Additionally, there was a recent application for a basement under a property nearby at No 81 Fordwych, but there was a clear stipulation that such a basement should **not** house any “habitable” rooms. This was in a property which had no history of flooding – although the property in the adjoining semi did experience flooding incidents around the same time as 71, 73 and 75. (cited in the Camden report 2013).

1. **Surface Water Flow from garden**

In the Basement Impact Assessment – there is recognition that the surface water flow will be materially changed. I am greatly concerned that when the natural ground-water drainage from the gardens hits such a wall of concrete of the new extension (on the natural drainage slope from Mill Lane) that it will back up into the garden of, and underneath, the property of No 73. This will have implications for the ground floor property at No 73, but also potentially the foundations of No 73. Since the flooding incidents back in 2013, the ground of the garden at No 73 has certainly altered, indicating some kind of underground water saturation as the grass and ground surface appears constantly more muddy than previously. This may or may not be due to a new development in Mill Lane (these flooding incidents have all happened since this build was completed) but the impact of concrete in altering natural ground water drainage flow cannot be ruled out as a potential threat.

1. **Sewage and Drains Capacity:**

I would also have serious concerns as to capacity for the existing sewer and waste water drainage systems to be able to cope with the substantial increase in demand. The creation of subterranean toilets, bathroom and kitchens will place significant extra demand on the existing systems and it is unclear whether the depth of the new basement toilets and waste-water drainage systems will need a pump to ensure that that water/sewage is adequately flushed away. This could present serious problems if there is back-flow.

I have recently received a letter from Thames Water (copy attached) which admitted to some internal sewer flooding to No 73 back in 2013. Whilst this unclear in its exact detail, and may only relate to one of several unexplained flooding incidents in 2013, it indicates that Thames Water are admitting to a sewer-related flooding incident at 73. As this is next door to No 71, this cannot be ruled out as being pertinent to potential flooding caused by a problem withThames Water related services.

.

1. **Threat to Structural integrity to No 71 and adjoining (69) or immediately neighbouring properties (No 73)**

I have serious concerns regarding the impact on the structures of our property at No 73 and also the attached no 69 (No 69/71 are 2 semi-detached old Victorian Properties built in the late 1890’s). Many properties on this stretch of Fordwych Rd have suffered from subsidence as it is on a hill. In 1995-1997 No 73 and 75 were the subject of substantial underpinning and (in the case of 75) a partial external-wall rebuild. Given the fact that the proposals for 71 include removing a vast amount of earth both underneath the existing property and substantial further earth removal at the front and rear of the property immediately downhill from No 73, this could have implications for the foundations for our property. Given that it also involves digging down below the existing spinal wall levels, this could also have structural implications for the adjoining property of No 69 – presumably requiring some form of consent or party wall agreement?

There is also the question of “damage” to the pathway area in between No 73 and 71. The brick wall between the two side entrances was taken down some years ago after some of it fell down due to dampness erosion. I am concerned as – due to the fact there is no dividing wall – on many occasions people or contractors going to the rear of the property often step onto No 73’s pathway, and previous owners of No71 requested use of our pathway as the only option for erecting scaffolding. This resulted in some of our paved pathway becoming cracked (which despite promises they never repaired). The volume of building work gives me great concern as to a prolonged construction and earth removal programme adversely affecting our property and quality of life for the duration of such invasive works.

1. **Rubbish**

I am particularly concerned regarding the new proposals for the storage and rubbish collection. The proposals are to create a new rubbish store towards the rear garden, a considerable way up the side pathway as far as the new ground floor extension. My concerns are:

1. **Location of Rubbish Store:** that this will be outside our kitchen and bathroom windows, and be unsightly and unhealthy. It is unlikely that the tenants living in the front ground, 1st, 2nd and 3rd Floor flats will take their rubbish all along this pathway and are far more likely to dump their rubbish in or around the front pathway area (as they do now). The added number of residences will mean a considerable volume of rubbish accumulating at the rear of the property in a less accessible location. On the presumption that the property continues to be for private rentals, the inevitable frequency of tenants coming and going means constant extra “end-of-tenancy” rubbish being dumped in and around the existing rubbish bins. It is likely that this will accumulate “out-of-sight” as it will not be the “weekly collectable” type of rubbish. Current patterns of attention by the current owner have shown that such left-over rubbish can stay there for weeks (I have photos to prove this) and gradually rot. If this is to be the pattern with the relocated bins storage, then the rear part of the property immediately adjacent to No 73, will become an unsightly, unhealthy rubbish dump and attract rats. This area is also subject to foxes regularly raiding the bins whenever they can, and trailing the rubbish into the gardens. Whilst the proposed bins are wheelie bins, once again, if there are insufficient bins (including recycling) any spill-over will attract both foxes and rats.
2. **Arrangements for rubbish collection**: in recognition of the fact that these bins will have to have an arranged transportation to the front of the property – it is stated in the planning application that rubbish removal will be arranged weekly by the landlord. Given the existing poor track record of attending to left-over rubbish – this “promise” must be viewed with scepticism. Full wheelie bins are also heavy, and transporting a full wheelie bin down the slope to the pavement level for collection may be difficult to control if it is really heavy. The person doing this may have to stay around for some time until the bins are emptied and then return them to the store, otherwise it will be a lot of bins to leave lying around on a public pavement.
3. **There is also a further** **issue of structural integrity** as the rear (but not side) drawings seem to indicate that the rubbish store will be located under the wall of the ground floor extension – partially underneath where the existing external wall holds up some of the rest of the building. Once again, this could create structural problems.
4. **Light**

The photographs at the end of the Basement Impact Assessment (section 2) demonstrate how dark the passageway and rear part of the property is between No 73 and No 71. The proposed ground floor extension will raise the height of the existing wall against the kitchen and bathroom of No 73. This is not taken into consideration at all but will definitely affect the light entering our kitchen which is already dark. The bathroom currently is not affected as it extends partially beyond the current property – but will of course be materially affected by the new proposed extension. This will seriously lower the amount of daylight at the rear of our property adjacent to no 71.

1. **Loss of Privacy**

In addition to the loss of light, there will be considerable loss of privacy. The pathway in between No 71 and 73 passes the windows to a bedroom, as well as the kitchen and bathroom. At present, there is only usually a single person who enters the rear small studio flat from the rear garden. However, with the new extensions, access to the new shared garden area and rubbish store, this would significantly affect the amount of people using the pathway which would certainly affect our privacy. It is not clear whether the new roof area above the proposed ground floor extension is to be considered a usable external patio for the first floor rear flat, but if this is the case, then many more people would certainly have direct close visual access into our bathroom meaning we would have to have blinds up all the time.

In short – I would consider this to be an over-dense and seriously flawed planning application – which would have a detrimental impact on the structure and quality of living environment for the ground floor flat at No 73.

I am therefore **OBJECTING** to this application.

Yours sincerely,

Leasehold owner of Ground Floor Flat, No 73 Fordwych Rd.