

**Date: 03/07/2016**

**For attention: Mr. Raymond Yeung**

**From: Mr Benjamin Judah**

**Re: Proposed change of use and redevelopment of 1A Glastonbury Street London NW6 1QJ application reference No: 2016/2896/P**

As the owner, since 2003, of 38 Ravenshaw Street London NW6 1NW which abuts the site to the rear, I am well familiar with the specifics of the site and thus well qualified to assess the proposed development's impact a) on the surrounding area in general, and b) on neighbour amenity for Nos. 34-42 Ravenshaw Street specifically.

I write to **OBJECT** to this proposal.

While I appreciate applicant's efforts to downscale, unfortunately the primary objection in my letter of 26/01/2015 re his previous proposal (application reference No: 2014/7654/P) still stands, namely the detrimental effect to **neighbour amenity**. The key point here is the nature of the plot of 1A Glastonbury Street: it forms the apex of a triangle shape formed by the meeting of the terrace of Glastonbury Street with the terrace of Ravenshaw Street. Consequently the rear of the proposed development is *at one garden's remove* (i.e. a mere 5.5m), rather than the usual two gardens' remove from the rear of my property. With the current garage on the plot, I have a windowless 15-foot wall at the rear of my garden; should the development go ahead as proposed, this wall will triple in height, with all the detrimental consequences that will have in terms of privacy and overlooking; overshadowing and outlook; sunlight and daylight levels. As such, from my perspective the current proposal is no less contrary to Planning Policy DP26 than the previous one was, and I cannot possibly support it. If the current structure *must* be replaced by a two-storey structure, the most I could possibly support would be a flat-roofed structure with a second story that slopes away from my property. Also I would have to insist on a guarantee (now and into the future) of no windows overlooking my garden.

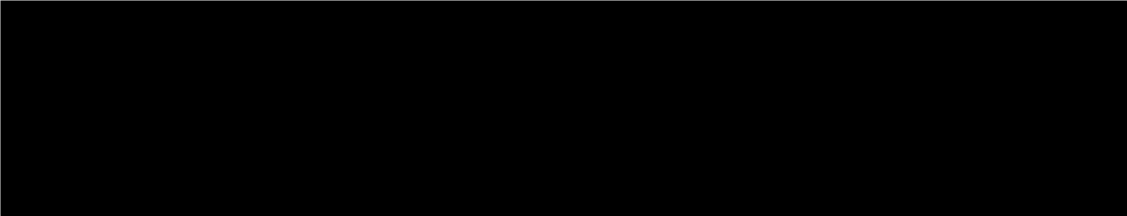
The new proposal also alarms me on the grounds of **security**: currently the rear of numbers 34-42 Ravenshaw Street are well protected from unwanted intrusion. This would no longer be the case if the proposal to replace the current 15' high brick wall to the rear of 36 Ravenshaw Street with a shoulder-height fence were to go ahead.

While I understand that with the proper precautions and guarantees in place (as they appear to be here), the proposed **basement** is not a planning issue, I would nevertheless like to remind you of a point I raised in my previous letter: namely that three of the five houses on Glastonbury Street have required underpinning works

over the last ten years. This would suggest that any excavation works at 1A Glastonbury Street might pose a significant risk to the surrounding properties.

Please confirm receipt of this correspondence. I would be grateful if you could keep me advised on the progress of this matter.

Benjamin P. Judah



**Address of site:** 1A Glastonbury Street, London NW6 1QJ

We are writing to **object** to the proposed development.

This objection concerns the application for change of use and redevelopment of site, including works of excavation, to provide a 3 storey 2-bedroom dwelling house with basement (following the demolition of commercial garage premises).

**APPLICANT:** Mr. Brian Taitz of Cape Property Holdings Ltd, 16 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS

**LOCAL RESIDENT CONSULTEE:** Michael Simkins & Julia Simkins (Deakin).

**CONSULTEE ADDRESS:** 36 Ravenshaw Street, London NW6 1NW

We have read and studied this proposed development in consultation with **our consultant, Ms Jennie Norwood of Otway Norwood Ltd.**

We have lived at 36 Ravenshaw St since 2001 and are very directly affected by the above planning proposal. Our property shares a boundary with the garage at 1A Glastonbury St. We are aware of Mr. Taitz's ambitions and have expressed personally to him our acceptance, in principal, to a 'modest dwelling', so long as it is in keeping with the surrounding properties in both design, mass, bulk and height.

Yet having studied the latest proposal and all accompanying documents, and having taken account of Mr. Taitz's revisions from his initial proposal in 2015, as expressed at a meeting with him and his architects in December 2015, we feel we would nonetheless still be considerably impacted by this development, mainly due to its mass, volume, height and proximity. We wish therefore to lodge the following objections:

1. **The scale, bulking, mass and height.**

We again object to the to the proposal to an empty pitched roof space.

The plans indicate what would in effect be a 4-storey building; i.e. – basement, ground floor, first floor, and what appears to be a pitched roof space (please see *Appendix A, drawing number GLAST-S2010*). This means that our property, along with numbers 34, 38 and 40, will be dominated by the construction. This would be significantly overbearing and give a real and perceived sense of enclosure.

These latest plans again include a pitched roof enclosing an empty void space. We strongly object to this, on the grounds that it needlessly increases the overall height of the construction.

Since this site has never previously been of a residential nature there are no grounds to suggest that either a flat roof, or a pitched roof with a far shallower pitch than the one currently proposed, would be at all incongruous. Indeed, there are several examples of flat – roof new builds at the bottom of Ravenshaw Street.

At our one consultation with Mr. Taitz and his architects we were told categorically that the roof they now propose was in order to comply with Camden Council's preference for a roof matching the pitch of 1 Glastonbury St. We now know this is not the case.

We are suspicious of a pitched roof that purports to house nothing at all within it, and suspect that this design may be solely to allow for the future possibility for extending the build upward and or reconfiguring use of rooms in a way not suggested on the current plans. There is no imperative for this additional storey.

## **2. We object strongly to the proposed alteration to the nature and composition of our party Wall**

Re *Appendix A, drawing number GLAST-E201*, the latest plans propose replacing our 100-year-old brick wall, which forms a boundary between our garden and the current structure, with a much lower and less substantial wooden fence. This is totally unacceptable to us, both in terms of its affording reduced security, noise reduction, and overall aesthetic (please see enclosed photos which we hope will illustrate just how integral our existing wall is to our dwelling in the aforementioned regards).

Any replacement wall must be of a similar height and solidity as the current wall (we would agree to a decrease in height of around 2 feet); and erected to a similar height and in a style of brick acceptable to us (such as London stock brick).

We reference Planning Design Access Statement 3.5 "which "should respond to local character and history, reflect identity of local surroundings and materials, and to create a safe environment where crime and disorder and the fear of crime do not undermine quality of life, or community cohesion." We require assurance that negotiations as to the precise nature, composition and size of the wall is resolved before any building commences.

We welcome the proposal to plant trees to mask the build at the back of number 38, but would require assurances that the trees be of a reasonable height so as to afford privacy but not block light from eastern aspect (e.g.: our morning sun), and that their roots will not affect our houses.

## **2. We object strongly to the excavation of a basement.**

We are aware of recent problems with subsidence in at least two of the five adjacent properties in Glastonbury St. A third is awaiting the underpinning process. Quite simply, the Impact Assessment for the proposed basement excavation is not reassuring.

This is an area of soft 'London clay' soil, and there is some evidence of an underground river nearby. Several houses in nearby Broomsleigh St. with small half-basements are constantly prone to flooding due to the change in the water table. Additionally we have no tradition of extensive basements in this area. If this proposal goes ahead, it will set a dangerous precedent for basements being excavated in this estate in the future.

The proposed basement excavation also goes right into the tight apex at the Ravenshaw St end (i.e.: under the proposed 'garden, which is in addition a light well). While the Basement Impact Statement undertaken as part of the proposal attempts to offer various assurances as to the likely impact of any excavation, we are naturally extremely concerned this may cause subsidence in our own garden and thus impact the stability of our own dwelling.

Re the report from Ashtons Bennett: 14.5 highlights the risk of 'excessive horizontal ground movements': while 14.7 recommends the foundations be lower in the ground to cope with bearing pressure. 14.8 suggests enquiring into the depth of foundations of adjacent properties and their structural conditions. 'The results indicate the clays are of very high plasticity and very likely to shrink and swell under varying moisture conditions in the ground' declares the report in 12/3.3.

It is difficult to overstate our anxiety in this regard, as damage to our properties may not become evident for some years and we do not welcome lengthy litigation with external insurance companies. Please note that this excavation is to be only 5 metres from our back door. In this corner plot we do not have the luxury of abutting gardens in Glastonbury St (as they do further down the terrace.)

### **Change Of Use**

The Planning, Design and Access Statement by Drawing and Planning Ltd mentions the 'National Planning Policy Framework' and encourages approval of the application 'where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose' i.e.: employment use. We note that despite his declared intention to sell or rent out the existing property for commercial use if possible, Mr. Taitz's principal aim was fundamentally different.

Recently one resident of Ravenshaw St (who is willing to be contacted) alerted us to the fact that she contacted the letting agent some months ago to enquire about renting the space for a business she was setting up, only to be specifically told during the phone call that she was 'wasting her time, as the owner had expressly no desire to see it rented out.' While the lady in question did not record the conversation she was sufficiently concerned to minute it in detail immediately afterwards.

### **In conclusion:**

We do not object to the change of use to allow a small residential build that gives attention to the proximity and nature of the neighbouring dwellings. A 'modest dwelling for one family', in the words of Mr. Taitz, would be a ground and first floor only, with a flat roof, or one pitched gently away from our properties.

We recognise Mr. Taitz's somewhat delayed efforts to meet up with concerned neighbours, and are appreciative of the fact. Nonetheless, we feel that Mr. Taitz has still failed to grasp the extent to which such a building will have on us all. We remain extremely concerned that his primary motive remains one of maximising profit, and that the proposed dwelling still remains unsuitably large and extravagant.

Finally, we would like to emphasise the real sense of dread that is currently hanging over the immediate neighbourhood. This is in part exacerbated by the fact we have repeatedly contacted Mr. Taitz over the last 3 years to invite some negotiations, following Camden Council's refusal of the previous plan and their advice 'to invite neighbours for a design consultation before re-submitting', in order to avoid any wasted time or expense on his behalf on plans to which we would ultimately object. He failed to accept these invitations. We look to Camden Planning Department to offer some protection to householders who have maintained both their houses and neighbourhoods to the best of their abilities for many years.

Please confirm your receipt of this objection

Yours, in good faith

MICHAEL SIMKINS AND JULIA DEAKIN.





