

## **Comments on Planning Application 2016/4146/P dated 4 August 2016**

### **12 & 14 Savernake Road NW3 2JP**

As an interested party, I wish to comment on, object to and/or question the application 2016/4146/P submitted jointly by 12 and 14 Savernake Road.

1. I realise that there are certain issues that are very important for neighbours but unimportant for consideration in the granting of planning permission. Just as there are matters that are not illegal but are selfish, unethical and uncaring, such as putting dirty luggage wheels or shoes on the seats in trains. In this first paragraph, however, I wish to state my objections on grounds that Camden will discard, but that I believe should be on the record because people have to accept that we live in a high density city in a shared house divided into flats, and not villas in the country.

(i) I wish to object to the unnecessary disruption and suffering in my life this work will cause. I cannot move or escape to a hotel or relatives.

(a) My freelance occupation means that I work from home which will impossible with the drilling and hammering 8 hours a day 5 or 6 days each week for weeks. I often have to attend evening functions and write about them, which means I will be awoken when the builders arrive and will be trying to concentrate while they are drilling and hammering. If I started hammering at 11PM when people some people go to bed the police would be called, but no such consideration is given to alternative lifestyles. The increased level of noise may remain after the work is completed by the use of the extended social spaces under my windows (and those of flat C and B of course).

(b) I am allergic to dust and I spend a lot of money cleaning carpets, and using dust mite protective linen etc. The plaster, dirt and debris entering my flat through the windows and doors will be intolerable. Although a minor concern, the exterior of the rear of my flat, decorated last year, will have to be decorated at more expense.

(c) ECOLOGY: We are at the edge of Hampstead Heath and should be making our gardens welcoming to native species, not chasing them away or/and aiding in their extinction. We should be protecting our soil that is the major defensive to flooding. We are continually being appealed to by Sir David Attenborough on these issues.

I realise the Council does not consider the above grounds for objection. However, anyone buying a terraced flat should know what communal living is in this high density city. In the 100 years since the houses were built no owners of 10, 12, 14, 16, or 18 Savernake Road have seen fit to concrete over rare green spaces that provide flood controls and play a role in our ecosystem. That changed last year when flat A at number 16 extended and put us through torture although it was next door. Now there is a 'keep up with the Joneses' reaction ('If they can, I can') and two more already small gardens will be reduced. The idea of someone moving into a flat knowing that it is too small for them when much larger houses and flats exist for the same price; and coming in with plans to alter the building causing nuisance, suffering and perhaps expense and devaluation to one's neighbours should be discouraged by Councils not approved automatically.

## COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

2. NOTIFICATION OF INTERESTED PARTIES: The owners of flats B and C are interested parties but do not live at or near the address for them indicated on the application. Have they and their tenants each received notices? August is a holiday period and many people go away for 3 weeks or a month. I did not go away but received my Notification 8 days after the date on the letter, giving me little time to reply. It is odd that the owners would not have commented at all, either to approve the Proposed Works or express concerns about their investment or on behalf of their tenants. One tenant had told me in confidence that they are as hesitant to comment on an application as they are of complaining about anything to their landlord as flats are hard to find and they have no security of tenure.

3. DRAINAGE/CONDENSATE PIPES: The Proposed Work must not affect or alter in any way the configuration of the various pipes below flat D's window or those on the side of flat B. These were configured by a Gas Safe Register engineer under the instruction and supervision of Gas Safe (formerly Corgi) when my heating stopped due to a poor and dangerous configuration of pipes. Flat B's drainage pipe was incorrect hooked into mine and that was repaired as well.

4. PRIVACY: There must be no skylights or windows or terraces in or on the roof of any Proposed Work or of the 'courtyard' that could infringe on the privacy of other flats causing them to be overlooked. There should be nothing on or in the proposed work that would facilitate access to flats B, C, D from the rear garden area without the respective owners' knowledge and permission. The roof of the new extension will be very close to my bedroom window and that of flat C and could pose a security risk in an area currently plagued by burglaries according to Neighbourhood Watch.

5. NOTICE UNDER THE PARTY WALL ACT 1996: I assume that all owners will receive the statutory written notice two months before the Proposed Work is due to start should the Council approve it. The Act states that "An Adjoining Owner cannot stop someone from exercising the rights given...under the Act, but may be able to influence how and at what times the work is done."

6. CAVITY PARTY WALL: There is insufficient description of the cavity party wall in the application and the wall could damage the structure of other flats. This is a major concern not addressed in the application and one that will concern the insurers as well. I am not a builder but builders have told me of the complications in working with party walls.

7. CONSISTENT STYLE/MATERIALS IN CONSERVATION AREA: The bricks and all material must be of good quality and same colour and style as existing material.

8. FLOOD ZONE: The application states that the building is not in a flood zone. Yet Camden Council recently approved the erection of a £24 million flood prevention project a few hundred meters away on the Heath agreeing with the Corporation of London that homes in Gospel Oak area at the foot of the Heath were in danger of flooding. Many claim that the sewers failed in 1975, not the ponds, but houses were flooded then. The basement of flat A has flooded on several occasions. Moreover, the soil is chalk based and prone to subsidence. My flat is uneven due to subsidence

as is, I have been told, flat C. The impact of the building on subsidence is inadequate.

9. PROPOSED WORK NOT VISIBLE: The application states that the Proposed Work will not be visible from any public place etc, but that is not so. The work will be very visible from Hampstead Heath and from the heavy traffic on the footbridge and ramp onto Hampstead Heath from Savernake Road, a few meters from the two properties. At my suggestions, many years ago, Camden erected a discreet, low wooden fence between the gardens of no. 10, 12 and 14 and the footpath due to burglars entering the gardens from the footpath but the fence is too low to block the view of the rear gardens. This is a conservation area and already the uncharacteristic and tasteless dormer window on the rear top floor of no. 16 is an eyesore visible to passing trains on the over ground line and too all those on the Heath or footbridge.

10. COURTYARD (no. 12): There is insufficient detail on 'courtyard' (no. 12) and kitchen extension (no. 14) for Camden or the other owners to assess the noise (and smell, for example, outdoor cooking) from social activity in these reception areas which will be directly below the windows of flats B, C. and D. Perhaps these are of no interest to Camden, and if so, I apologise and would ask that this point be placed in paragraph 1, along with the other human concerns that do not factor into planning permission.

11. ROAD SAFETY ASPECTS: Delivery and contractor vehicles will block a disabled parking space in front of no. 14 and will block or render dangerous a major entrance/ exit to Hampstead Heath via the neighbouring footpath. There are children, dog walkers and joggers crossing frequently within a few meters of the two properties. There is a children's playground and wading pool just behind the two properties and parents and children walk past the properties daily in large numbers to access these facilities as well as the Heath in general. Last week, I assisted a cyclist knocked off his bicycle by the door of a parcel van opening as the cyclist went by in front of no 14.

12. APPROVAL OF LESSOR TO ALTERNATION OF FLAT: The Directors of the 14 Savernake Road Freehold Association voted not to alter the existing Lease for the time being in 2013 so it remains in force as a legal document. All owners are (according to the Government-funded Leasehold Advisory Service), also Lessees. On page 12, paragraph (14) the Lease states that no Lessee may: *'make any structural alterations whatsoever nor to make any non-structural alterations or additions to the Flat or any part thereof without having obtained the Lessors prior written approval. The Lessee being responsible for all the Lessor's legal costs and surveyor's fees.'*

The Lessor or Freeholder is now each owner. No prudent owner would approve the work without an independent Surveyor's Report to which we are entitled under the Lease and a Party Wall Surveyor's report to which we may be entitled in law and/or Indemnity Insurance. It seems the lease would have to be altered to take into account the new enlarged footprint of flat A.

End of Comment. August 25, 2016