2 Elsworthy Terrace

London, NW3 3DR

Nora-Andreea Constantinescu Planning Development Management London Borough of Camden

 21 September 2016

Dear Nora-Andreea,

2016/3495/P – 1 Elsworthy Terrace

Thank you for sending us the August 2016 Audit Report from Campbell Reith (CR). This letter amplifies our letter of objections of 5 August which we understand CR did not have when they wrote the Audit Report and refers to the Basement Damage Assessment and Basement Impact Assessment Report.

Basement Damage Assessment

1. There appears to be confusion about what is a rear wall and what is a side wall. All 7 houses on the east side of Elsworthy Terrace (ET), including No. 1, retain the original historic pattern of rear elevations. The entrances to 2-7 ET are on ET; the entrance to 1 ET, however, is on Elsworthy Road. What is in substance the rear wall of 1 ET seems to be referred to as a side wall. Para 3.1 of the Building Damage Assessment (BDA) refers to the side wall of 1 ET and the rear wall of 1 ET and 2 ET. Where is the rear wall of 1 ET?
2. The potential for structural damage to 2 ET, a ‘Neighbouring Structure’, is at least as great as that to 1 ET and to 23 Elsworthy Road. 1 ET and 2 ET lie at about the same distance from the proposed double basement. 2 ET is less than 6 metres from the proposed basement. Similar considerations apply to 23 Elsworthy Road. 2 ET has a balcony and a basement.
3. Para. 4.2 assumes that there would be ‘good construction control’ and a ‘formal monitoring strategy’. Who would monitor? To whom would the monitor be accountable? See at 16 below the reference to the development of the land behind 15 ET (Garages site).
4. The proposal would inevitably involve the demolition and rebuilding of the party wall between 1 ET and 2 ET. The demolition of the party wall with the curving Victorian wall referred to in the Elsworthy Conservation Area Strategy would also materially damage the balcony of 2 ET, also referred to in the ECA strategy. This does not seem to have been taken into account and is we submit highly relevant.
5. The floor of the basement of 2 ET is at the rear one metre below ground

level.

Basement Impact Assessment Report

1. The BIA report refers to two mature trees. There are three trees covered by TPO’s on the site. For the relationship between the preserved trees and the proposed double basement development please see paragraph 4 of Boyer Planning’s letter of 5 August (on the Camden portal). Please also see the enclosed tree survey by CSG Usher, dated 4 August which concludes that there is insufficient detail in the Arboricultural Report of Simon Pryce for the proposal to be approved.
2. Para. 2.1 of the BIA report refers to a desk-top survey. Why does it not refer to the bore-hole excavation carried out on 17 December 2015?
3. Para. 2.4 of the BIA Report refers to Elsworthy Terrace having been built in 1896. This is materially incorrect; it was about 20 years earlier. Eton College has informed us that the original lease of 2 ET was granted on 20 July 1876 for 89 years from 29 September 1875. Was not 1 ET built at the same time?
4. CR has drawn attention to the unsatisfactory answers to the hydrogeology questions. We refer you to paragraph 4 on page 2 of the Elsworthy Residents’ Association’s letter of objection of 3 August which refers to local knowledge of water run-off from Primrose Hill. Primrose Hill is less than 100 metres from the site. In order to verify what we have experienced in 45 years of living at 2ET, we have been in touch with the Royal Parks Office who tell us that the northern slope of Primrose Hill was never drained even when the land was allocated for development in the nineteenth century. . There is a line of winter springs along the north facing slope, whose run-off can adversely affect properties further down the slope, including Elsworthy Terrace. For example, there has been flooding of the basement car park of 17/19 Elsworthy Road.
5. CR recognises that a massive proposed double basement (or any basement) along the line of the party wall between 1 ET and 2 ET would increase the impermeable area around the site, and change the path of the surface water run-off. Our garden can be very wet in winter and we submit there would be a serious impact on it and in particular our mature trees and shrubs. More importantly, what could be the effect on our basement? We have lived at 2 ET for 45 years. We have experienced rising damp and some subsidence (eg cracked window panes). It appears to us that the risk of substantial damage to our property would be material. It is significant that after the construction of the Garages site (see para. 16.) the basement area of No. 25 Elsworthy Road experienced flooding.
6. Para. 3.1.2 of the BIA report refers to there being no slopes greater than 7 degrees. The site is less than 100 metres from Primrose Hill and about 400 metres from the top of Primrose Hill. The ground falls continuously from the top of Primrose Hill to Elsworthy Road below the site. Would CR please consider the effect of the slope on hydrology and stability?
7. CR is understandably querying the negative answers to the questions in 3.1.3.
8. Para. 5.0 of the BIA report. 2 ET is less than 6 metres (not about 10 metres) from the proposed basement development. These measurements were carefully checked by architects before our objection was submitted to Camden on 5August.
9. Para. 7.2 of the BIA report. There is no certainty that construction would follow without delay after any excavation.
10. Para. 8.3 of the BIA report. The increase in drainage requirements and the creation of basements in Elsworthy Road in recent years have resulted in the existing drains becoming inadequate. Major works were carried out last year by Thames Water to improve the situation. The new drains terminate to the west of Elsworthy Terrace and we understand that there are no plans for further works.
11. The applicant refers to the house built on the Garages site. The planning considerations are totally different. The Garages site is brown field land, and the 1 ET site is green field land. Nevertheless, the problems which have arisen on the Garages site are relevant. The construction work has taken over 3 years, and is only now just about finished. Neighbours are constantly reiterating allegations and complaints about, for example, shuddering, shaking, cracking, unacceptable noise, disturbance and loss of amenity over the past 3 years, together with water problems and currently light pollution. Presumably the works were authorised by Camden? They have caused much harm and bitterness within the local community.

We have written the above as lay people whose family home has been at 2 ET for 45 years; consequently, we have local knowledge and experience.

Please acknowledge receipt and confirm that this has been forwarded to CR. If you have any queries please let us know.

Yours sincerely,

John and Hilary Bach