

Ground floor flat • 77 Canfield Gardens • London NW6 3EA

Application Comment
London Borough of Camden
Development Management
London WC1H 8ND

FAO John Diver

3 October 2016

Application Ref: 2016.2822/P
Address: 80 Greencroft Gardens, London NW6 3JQ (the "Property")
Objection to planning application (the "Application")

Dear Mr. Diver

We are writing to object to the Application, specifically the basement excavation, rear extensions and rear terraces/balconies. Our property's garden is one building away from backing onto the Property.

In the last few years, we have had to endure recent basement excavations at number 71 Canfield Gardens and number 44 Canfield Gardens and have suffered basement flooding, all of which inform much of our concerns.

1. Proposed design of basement excavation

We are extremely concerned by the risk of:

- a) Structural impacts to neighbouring houses, including our own; and
 - b) Flooding to neighbouring houses, including our own,
- in each case as a result of the proposed works to the Property.
- a) It is obvious that excavating a basement will impact the structure of the relevant house. We leave those living next door to the Property to comment on the risks to their individual flats and the integrity of the houses. Our concern is that excavating a basement is a major work that creates vibrations across a wide area which also affects foundations and the fabric of neighbouring houses.
 - b) Our biggest concern relates to the risk of flooding. South Hampstead has a long history of flooded cellars/basements as well as periodic oversaturation of water in gardens. The ground soil and water table are unstable. It is clear that excavating a basement interferes with both, and is entirely unsuitable in an area which has a history of flooding. Diverting existing groundwater flows by replacing earth with foundations and structures is known to increase the risk of flooding (the water has to go somewhere).

We have direct experience of this – it is very common when there is heavy rain for our garden, and those of our neighbours, to become completely sodden with rising groundwater which usually takes days to drain away. More significantly, our cellar flooded twice in February 2011 following the excavation at 71 Canfield Gardens – first with water and then a few days later with sewage. The same happened to the cellar at 75 Canfield Gardens. Obviously these floods were extremely distressing to us, are unsafe to our health and are costly to us to clean up.

Camden is aware of the history of flooding in the area, including cellar floods. If the Application is permitted by Camden and our own cellar floods again during or after the proposed works to the Property, we shall not hesitate to take tortious legal action against Camden.

2. Extensions and rear terraces/balconies

Whilst we appreciate that London needs more housing and property developers are entitled to maximise profits by creating ever more units out of the same footprint, Camden needs to assess whether doing so within a Conservation Area is the right place and we do not believe it can be. The houses in the South Hampstead Conservation Area are beautiful and generally pretty similar. We have looked at the plans and this development looks out of line with existing properties particularly because of the full width rear extension, split level garden arrangement, terraces/balconies at multiple levels and because of the split at ground floor level into 2 flats which necessitates a visible vertical division at the back of the Property. The Pre Application Advice from Camden of 6 April 2016 does not seem to make reference to the new vertical wall that will be inserted into the ground flat terraces to split the 2 new flats at ground level. Camden identifies there that as planning consent has previously been given to a ground floor extension and loft extension, they are effectively ok and there is no impact on amenity. But surely Camden should be looking afresh at the overall plans – each item individually may have little or no impact but the whole development creates something very different to what is there currently and may well have an impact.

3. Conclusion

We would be happy to discuss any aspect of this letter with you. We are not objecting for the sake of objecting – and we ourselves have benefitted from Camden allowing us to refurbish our flat - but specifically the basement excavation and, as a whole, the rear extensions and rear terraces/balconies. This is because if the Application were permitted, we have no doubt that it would adversely impact our property and the neighbourhood. We are obviously extremely concerned by that possibility and ask that Camden reject the Application.

Please keep us informed of the Council's decision.

Yours faithfully


Eleanor and David Trunkfield