

**Providence Corner**  
**Well Road**  
**London NW3 1LH**

Camden Planning  
London Borough of Camden  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
5 Pancras Square  
London N1C 4AG  
By email

13 December 2016

Dear Sir/Madam

**26 Christchurch Hill London NW3 1LG: Proposed basement extension etc**

**Planning/Listed Building Applications 2016/5974/P and 2016/5975/L (“the Application”)**

I write in relation to the above planning and listed building applications and submit the following representations.

**Introduction and background**

I am the owner of, and reside at, Providence Corner, Well Road. This is the property directly facing 26 Christchurch Hill across the other side of Well Road.

The Application states that the Applicant has consulted neighbours on his proposals. However at no stage, has the Applicant or any of its advisers, contacted me about the Application. Given my proximity to the site and the very substantial nature of the proposal, I am disappointed that they have not done so. Nevertheless I welcome the opportunity now to put forward my representations.

First, I invite particular attention to the topography of the land at the site and at my property, and in particular the fact that the land in general is on a steep hill from north down to south. Please also note that on the north side of Well Road, my property is bounded by an old listed retaining wall, which bows outwards. That wall in turn retains a substantial amount of ground and soil upon which my property stands (at a higher level).

Secondly, as you will be aware, over the past number of years there have been numerous planning and other applications made in respect of 26 Christchurch Hill. A central issue on those applications has been the importance of maintaining the trees which run on the inside of the Well Road boundary of 26 Christchurch Hill and in particular the lime tree, designated T2 on the current plans. In the course of these earlier applications, I, together with at least one other neighbour, have expressed concern about the importance of retaining these trees. This concern has at all times been properly recognised by Camden Planning and by the Council’s tree officers. (This is against the further background of the loss, a few years ago, of a very large horsechestnut tree at the site, on the pavement just on the other side of that Well Road boundary).

Thirdly, it is clear that the proposed extension is a very substantial development indeed, both as regards its potential impact and as regards the works themselves. No doubt Camden Planning will scrutinise the application with great care and proceed with all due caution.

Fourthly, there are, or will be, going on in the neighbourhood two other major developments involving very substantial works, namely the Nurses Home on New End and the development at 14 Well Road – each of which have detailed traffic/construction management plans

Against this background, I raise three concerns arising from the proposed development: Impact of basement upon ground and land stability; impact upon trees; and impact of the works themselves upon traffic and the neighbourhood.

### **(1) Excavation and Basement Impact Assessment**

The basement proposed is large and extends all the way up to the Well Road boundary of 26 Christchurch Hill. As a very close neighbour, I wish to be assured that the proposed basement will have no adverse effect (1) upon the stability of the ground/land either on Well Road itself or upon which neighbouring properties (including my own) nor (2) upon issues relating to water and the flow of underground water. For example, because of the steepness of the slope of the land, at times of rain, water runs down the hill and presumably down through the land in substantial quantities. I also wish to be assured that there will be no adverse impact upon the stability of the retaining wall to my property on the north side of Well Road. The stability of that wall is an issue of public safety, given the position of the pavement and the road.

In this regard, I note the lengthy Basement Impact Assessment Report (“BIA Report”), prepared by Geotechnical & Environmental Associates (“GEA”) submitted in support of the Application. I now understand that your department is carrying out or commissioning a Third Party audit of that Report. In this regard, I would like confirmation that indeed such an audit or report will take place and that it will be carried out by suitably qualified and independent experts.

Secondly I cannot see from any of the documents supporting the Application (whether in the Design and Access Statement, the BIA Report or otherwise) that specific consideration has been given to the impact of the proposed basement and excavation works upon the land upon which Well Road stands nor upon my property at Providence Corner (including but not limited to the retaining wall). In this regard, I therefore request that Camden Planning seeks reassurance from the Applicant’s engineers and from GEA that they are satisfied that there is no risk to the land on Well Road nor to the land at Providence Corner.

### **(2) Trees**

I have a substantial concern about the impact of the development upon trees. I do not repeat representations I have made on this issue in relation to earlier applications for 26 Christchurch Hill. I refer to them and can, if need be, send further copies of those earlier representations. I recognise that this is an issue which Camden Planning’s tree officers have always considered with appropriate care and attention.

I have read both the Design and Access Statement in relation to trees and the Arboricultural Report of Wassells of 27 October 2016 submitted in support of the Application. I note that most particularly that the proposed development has a potential impact upon trees T2 and T6. Given the loss of trees in the neighbourhood over recent years, I suggest that it is essential that the proposed development does not result in the immediate loss, or weakening over time, of any trees at all.

As regards lime tree T2, I note that very special basement tunnelling is proposed so as to ensure no damage to the roots or any other part of that tree. I understand that some London authorities have specific guidance about the impact of basement developments upon trees and have specific depth limits to allow for sufficient depth of ground between the surface and the top of the basement, to ensure no root damage. I understand that in the present case 1.5m to 1.8 m depth is being allowed. I was unable to find such similar limits in CPG 1 Design. Does Camden have any such policy?

In any event I ask Camden Planning to ensure that it is entirely satisfied that the depth of ground being allowed is sufficient to ensure the integrity of tree T2, with no risk of damage to the tree or its roots.

Secondly, I ask Camden Planning and in particular its tree officers to scrutinise with care the proposed works and in particular the construction methodology which is said to protect tree T2. In due course, I would wish to have the opportunity to see the comments of the tree officers and their analysis of the proposals to safeguard that tree. In this regard I note with some concern the observation of Wassells at page 7 of their report that there should be monitoring over 3 years of changes in condition and growth of T2 following construction of the basement. This suggests that the development may have an adverse impact upon T2. I respectfully suggest that by that time it is likely to be too late to rectify such adverse impact.

### **(3) Impact of the works themselves**

Here, I address the issue of the works themselves, the excavation of the land and how the excavated earth will be removed. I have been advised that there is a serious concern about the trucks which will be taking away the excavated earth and how they are going to manoeuvre around the very narrow roads of the neighbourhood and where the trucks are going to be parked whilst awaiting loading etc. For example, turning areas, if any, are very limited. The junction of Well Road and Christchurch Hill has had its own stability issues in the past. I believe there are water courses/drains running under the road. There is little if any space to turn at the junction of Well Road and Cannon Lane. Well Road itself is very narrow, as is Christchurch Hill as it comes up from Well Walk.

You will no doubt also be aware of the traffic management issues which the neighbourhood is already facing, and will face, from existing developments at the Nurses Home and at 14 Well Road. As regards the latter, I understand that the traffic management plan already envisages using the junction of Well Road and Christchurch Hill as a turning point. I therefore invite Camden Planning to consider the traffic management issues in relation to this Application in conjunction with the existing issues arising on those other two developments.

I recognise that the impact, upon the neighbourhood and upon those living and working in the area, of works from development are, at worst, usually temporary. Nevertheless I do ask that you consider that in the present situation, the neighbourhood may be subjected to such a period of prolonged disturbance that it is not reasonable for it to be imposed, and that at all times all relevant neighbours are fully consulted on an ongoing basis.

### **Conclusion**

If there is further information which I can usefully provide, do not hesitate to contact me.

In the meantime, I thank you for your kind attention.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Morris