



13th March 2017

FAO Charlotte Meynell
Planning Department
London Borough of Camden
5 St Pancras Square
London N1C 4AG

Re Application 2016/6426/P - Flat A 13 Crossfield Road London NW3 4NS

Dear Ms Meynell

We wish to object to the proposals set out in planning application 2016/6426/P, at Flat A 13 Crossfield Road on behalf of our clients, who are neighbouring residents at No. 37 Adamson Road (full details attached at the bottom of this letter). We set out the detail of our objections below.

Site and Surroundings

The application relates to a four-storey (plus roof accommodation) end-of-terrace property on the west side of Crossfield Road, on its junction with Adamson Road (No. 37 being the adjoining property). The property has been divided into five self-contained flats, and the application relates specifically to the ground floor flat. The prevailing character of the area is residential.

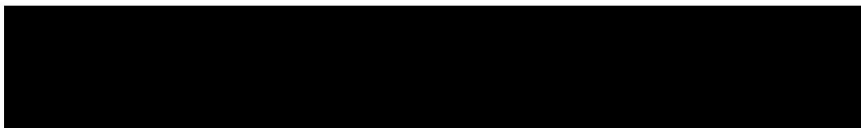
It is important to note that while the building is not listed, it is recognised as making a positive contribution to the Belsize Conservation Area (Belsize Park sub-area). The property already benefits from a rear extension.

Relevant Planning History

PW9802775R1: Erection of single storey rear extension to provide accommodation for existing self-contained flat. Granted permission 22.12.1998

Relevant Planning Policies

The main local planning policies and supporting guidance relevant to this application can be summarised as follows:



Core Strategy Policies (adopted 2010):

CS14 Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage
CS16 Improving Camden's health and well-being

Development Management Policies (adopted 2010):

DP16 The transport implications of development
DP24 Securing high quality design
DP25 Conserving Camden's heritage
DP26 Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours
DP27 Basements and lightwells

Camden Planning Guidance

CPG1 Design
CPG4 Basements and lightwells
CPG6 Amenity

Belsize Conservation Area Statement (2002)

Proposed development

The description of the proposal provided by the applicant is as follows:

'Excavation of basement, erection of single storey rear conservatory and replacement of side windows to lower ground floor flat.'

While this is considered to be largely accurate, it is also pertinent to note that the application includes the formation of a rear lightwell and staircase providing access to the rear garden. This is important for design reasons, since it involves further development into the rear garden of the property, which is already been extended beneath considerably as a result of the proposed basement.

Summary of objection

The grounds for residents' objections are set out below:

1. Impact of the proposed basement excavation in terms of flood risk and structural stability of adjoining properties

Policy DP27 of LB Camden's Development Policies states:

'The Council will only permit basement and other underground development that does not cause harm to the built and natural environment and local amenity and does not result in flooding or ground instability. We will require developers to demonstrate by methodologies appropriate to the site that schemes:

- a) maintain the structural stability of the building and neighbouring properties;*
- b) avoid adversely affecting drainage and run-off or causing other damage to the water environment;*
- c) avoid cumulative impacts upon structural stability or the water environment in the local area.'*

Further advice is provided in CPG4: Basements and Lightwells. Section 3 of this documents sets out in detail the stringent requirements for Basement Impact Assessments (BIA) which must be submitted with applications for basement excavation, and para. 3.33 sets out that an independent

assessment of the BIA should be undertaken in one of the following circumstances:

- Where a scheme requires applicants to proceed beyond the Screening stage of the Basement Impact Assessment (i.e. where a matter of concern has been identified which requires the preparation of a full Basement Impact Assessment);
- Where the proposed basement development is located within an area of concern regarding slope stability, surface water or groundwater flow; or
- For any other basement applications where the Council feels that independent verification would be appropriate (e.g. where conflicting evidence is provided in response to a proposal).

The applicant has submitted a Basement Impact Assessment, prepared by Stephen Buss Environmental Consulting Ltd, which has been reviewed. It should be noted that Appendix A, which includes the majority of the detailed findings regarding the ground investigation and slope stability, was only made publicly available on 7th March 2017. Therefore while this pivotal information was accessible at the time of writing, the responses of three neighbours and the local amenity group have not been informed by this information. We would therefore urge that all interested parties are informed of this fact, and the consultation period extended in order to allow further comments to be made where necessary,

We note from the BIA Audit Instruction Form that the site is located within an area of concern regarding slope stability and groundwater flow. It appears that an independent review of the BIA has been instructed by the LB Camden, which is welcomed. We would urge that officers make the findings of this review publicly available for further scrutiny by neighbouring properties, and to give neighbouring residents the further opportunity to comment on the findings of this review.

The BIA concludes that it is likely that the groundwater level will rise as a result of the basement construction. Boreholes were constructed at 13a Crossfield Road in December 2016 which encountered water seepage; if granted permission, the BIA concludes that the basement would need to be water-proofed, as well as dewatering. This indicates there is an underlying issue regarding groundwater and drainage in the local area, and is therefore of great concern to the neighbouring residents at 37 Adamson Road. We urge that the independent review focuses closely on this issue.

Having reviewed the scoping study relating to slope stability, the BIA concludes in para. 7.6 that *'from the available information we consider that the risk to ground stability from this development should be LOW, however, most ground movement problems occur due to construction issues thus the works must be undertaken by reputable experienced specialists and the temporary and permanent works are adequately designed, with due consideration to the geology and hydrogeology of the site and surrounding areas.'*

Neighbouring residents are concerned that this does not give any assurances that the works would not cause any issues of land instability during the design process – again we would urge LB Camden to require further technical details relating to the design of the basement, as well as taking on board specialist advice in this area, **before** a decision is made.

Paragraph 3.35 of CPG4 states that *'in some circumstances the Council may require a basement construction plan secured through a Section 106 Agreement. The Council may require provision of a basement construction plan when the proposed development involves excavation or construction that if improperly undertaken could cause damage to neighbouring properties.'*

We would argue that such circumstances, as illustrated by the applicant's BIA, clearly exist in this case. Therefore if planning permission is granted, this should be subject to a legal agreement to secure a detailed construction plan as outlined above.

We would also urge that LB Camden to seek the views of Thames Water, if not already having done so, on issues of drainage and sewerage. Concerns were raised by Thames Water with regard to a proposed basement development of The Hall school, in the immediate vicinity of the site, regarding drainage and again this is a matter which should be carefully considered. No drainage plan has been submitted, and we note LB Camden's preference for a Sustainable Urban Drainage System to be employed in such circumstances.

2. Impact on residential amenity as a result of construction noise, dirt and highways impact

Section 4 of CPG4 focuses on the impacts of basement construction on residential amenity, including the importance of Construction Management Plans. Paras. 4.3 and 4.4 of the document state:

'The Council will generally require a construction management plan for basement developments to manage and mitigate the greater construction impacts of these schemes. Construction management plans will generally be required for schemes on constrained sites, in conservation areas, on sites adjacent to a listed building, or in other areas depending on the scale of the development and the conditions of the site. Construction management plans include:

- *provisions for phasing;*
- *provisions for site management, safety, and supervision,*
- *management of construction traffic and parking;*
- *management of noise, vibration, dust, and waste;*
- *provisions to ensure stability of buildings and land;*
- *provisions for monitoring movement, and*
- *provisions for a construction working group, where appropriate.*

Construction management plans should take into consideration other developments taking place in the local area with a view to minimising the combined effects of these construction works. The Council encourages applicants to inform and engage with affected neighbours at an early stage.'

Our clients are highly concerned at the lack of any reference to impacts on neighbouring amenity caused by basement construction within the application documents, and can confirm that no prior engagement or notification with them has taken place to date.

The lack of a construction management plan means that the Council has not been provided with the site-specific information required in order to be confident that the development, if approved, would be carried out in a manner designed to protect neighbouring amenity.

This lack of information means that the Council cannot be certain as to the frequency of vehicular movements, nor the size or numbers of vehicles at the site at one time. There is also no precise details on measures to be implemented to control noise, dust and dirt. This is basic but vital knowledge which our clients, as well as other neighbours, need before being able to comment appropriately on the impact of the development on their living conditions, which would be affected for at least a year should permission be granted for such a development. The issue of on-street parking is particularly acute in this area, with demand already at a critical level.

The lack of such a document means that the proposals fail to adequately demonstrate that the basement development would mitigate harm to neighbouring residential amenity, and therefore the application should be refused as it fails to comply with Policy DM DC5 of the Development Management Plan (2011).

3. Scale of development beneath rear garden and impact on trees

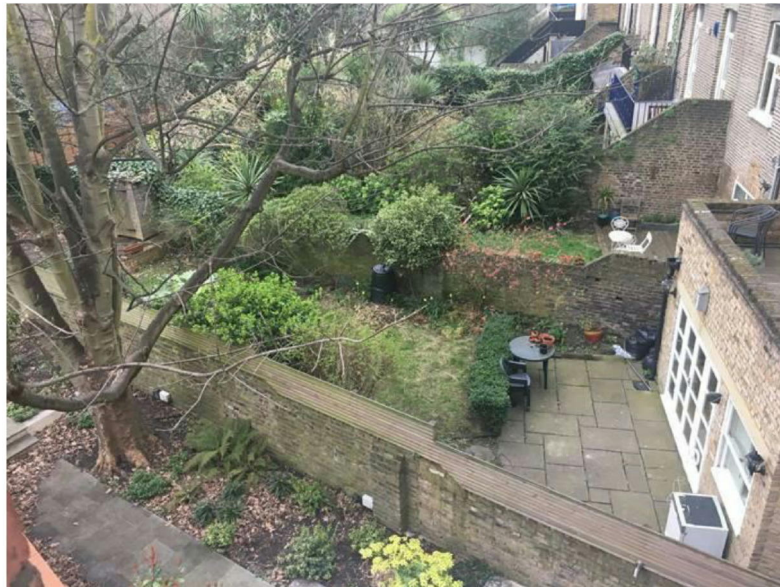
Paragraph 2.5 of CPG4 states that:

'Larger basement developments, such as those of more than one storey in depth or which extend outside of the footprint of the building, can have a greater impact than smaller schemes...Basement development that extends below garden space can also reduce the ability of that garden to support trees and other vegetation leading to poorer quality gardens and a loss in amenity and the character of the area.'

The proposed drawings indicate that the excavation would project significantly into the rear garden, which includes the part beneath the conservatory, which is also proposed as part of this application. As has been identified by the applicants themselves, this would be the first basement excavation within this part of Crossfield Road, and therefore its extensive depth would be out of scale and character with the Belsize Conservation Area. We note the comments of the Belsize Residents Association with regard to the footprint of the basement, and echo their thoughts that it extends too far into the garden space.

Although located to the rear of the property, introducing a lightwell would be uncharacteristic of the area, and this feature adds to the loss of the rear garden, further diminishing its amenity value and therefore harming the character of this part of the conservation area.

We also note that no arboricultural report or survey has been submitted with the application, despite the presence of a large mature tree to the rear of No. 37 Adamson Road which clearly has amenity value and makes a positive contribution to the conservation area (see figs. 1 and 2 below). The proposed excavation would clearly have some impact on the roots of this tree, but there is no detail on the extent of this impact, and how this tree would be protected during works. In the absence of this information, its potential loss would be clearly detrimental to the visual amenities of the area.





Figs. 1 and 2: Photos showing large mature tree to rear garden of No.37 Adamson Road

On this basis, our clients also object on the grounds that the proposals would fail to comply with Policy DP25 of LB Camden's Development Policies, and the aims of CPG4.

4. Scale and design of rear conservatory

Paragraph 4.10 of CPG1: Design states that:

Rear extensions should be designed to:

- *'be secondary to the building being extended, in terms of location, form, scale, proportions, dimensions and detailing;*
- *respect and preserve the original design and proportions of the building, including its architectural period and style;*
- *respect and preserve existing architectural features, such as projecting bays, decorative balconies or chimney stacks;*
- *respect and preserve the historic pattern and established townscape of the surrounding area, including the ratio of built to unbuilt space;*
- *not cause a loss of amenity to adjacent properties with regard to sunlight, daylight, outlook, overshadowing, light pollution/spillage, privacy/overlooking, and sense of enclosure;*
- *allow for the retention of a reasonable sized garden; and*
- *retain the open character of existing natural landscaping and garden amenity, including that of neighbouring properties, proportionate to that of the surrounding area.'*

In specific relation to proposed conservatories, paragraph 4.19 goes on to state that these should normally:

- *'be located adjacent to the side and rear elevations of the building;*

- *be subordinate to the building being extended in terms of height, mass, bulk, plan form and detailing;*
- *respect and preserve existing architectural features, e.g. brick arches, windows etc;*
- *be located at ground or basement level. Only in exceptional circumstances will conservatories be allowed on upper levels;*
- *not extend the full width of a building. If a conservatory fills a gap beside a solid extension, it must be set back from the building line of the solid extension; and*
- *be of a high quality in both materials and design.'*

In this case, the proposed conservatory would project approximately 6m from the principal rear elevation of the host property. This represents a significant distance into the rear garden and would be out of keeping and character when seen in context with the surrounding terrace. Furthermore, the proposed glazed nature of the conservatory would not be in keeping with the traditional brickwork form and detailing of the host property, jarring awkwardly with the existing brick built rear extension when seen from surrounding properties. There are no other examples evident of this type of conservatory to the rear of properties, and permitting such an extension would set an unwelcome precedent for similar extensions elsewhere in the conservation area.

Summary

For the reasons set out above, the proposals are considered to raise significant structural stability, highways, design, conservation and residential amenity concerns. We respectfully request that LB Camden takes full account of the objections raised by the neighbouring occupiers at No. 37 Adamson Road, and refuses planning permission for the proposed works.

Yours sincerely,

AFA Planning Consultants

On behalf of

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Mr and Mrs Guy and Cheryl Fraser-Sampson | Flat A, 37 Adamson Road |
| Mr and Mrs Alan and Doris Kwong | Flat B, 37 Adamson Road |
| Mr and Mrs Matthew and Lara Morgan | Flat C, 37 Adamson Road |
| Mr Iljaas Adboella, Ms Elena Londardoni | Flat D, 37 Adamson Road |
| Dr Shamim Daya | Flat E, 37 Adamson Road |