

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Consultees Addr:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2017/3214/P	Marguerite Morton	44 Well Walk	20/07/2017 23:11:50	OBJEMAIL	170720 Letter to Camden Council re Planning Application 2017/32214/P

For the attention of Mr Robert Lester, case officer.

Dear Sir,

I write to object to the above planning application. Flat A 15 Well Walk 2017/3214/P

The first point I wish to make is that the documents submitted are not as complete as those for an earlier application at the end of last year: 2016/6491/P.

Most documents date from 2012 and there is no Basement Impact Assessment, no Construction Management Plan and no Detailed Basement Construction Plan. Given the sensitivity of the local geology, the long-running saga of the application, changes to Camden's own planning rules, surely the plans should be accompanied by up-to-date scientific reports demonstrating that this application would not harm neighbouring properties, or cause flooding or ground instability.

Although this application has reduced the size of the basement excavations sought in planning application 2016/6491/P, my objections remain the same:

1. The proposals may cause damage to neighbouring properties, as well as to 15 Well Walk itself.
2. They may also cause damage to the local infrastructure and landscape.
3. The design would be obtrusive, is not sympathetic to the original house and is not suitable for this historic area of Hampstead, which lies, moreover, in the Conservation area.

I have lived in Well Walk for 40 years, in number 44, adjacent to number 46, a historic house, which has been suffering from subsidence, and opposite the southern end of Well Passage. 15 Well Walk is diagonally opposite.

I am very concerned that any excavation on the site of 15 Well Walk may affect the soil structure and watercourses on that site, with adverse effects on neighbouring properties, both downstream and adjacent.

The enlargement of the basement will displace the flow of ground water in the area. The water will have to find another course, perforce downhill, and may have an impact on both the road and properties south of the road, such as 44 and 46. These houses are in a predominantly Georgian, listed terrace; damage to one of the houses is likely to affect others.

The excavations could bring the risk of running sand. Water flowing along service pipes erodes the sand on which they rest, causing them to collapse and fracture. The effect on the

Application No: **Consultees Name:** **Consultees Addr:** **Received:** **Comment:** **Response:**

road is clearly seen. Since I have lived in Well Walk the carriageway has subsided many times because of ground water flows.

The Arboricultural report refers to sand in the boreholes. See para 6.5 –The sub-soil in the trial holes from approximately 300mm deep was sandy and saturated at the bottom of the pits. Water was rising to within 50cm of the top of the pit indicating that it was waterlogged. The pits needed to be bailed out to be inspected.

In 2013, there was for many months a series of leaks from the Thames Water main in Well Walk. Remedial work was finally carried out on three separate occasions: on 8th May 2013 outside 17 Well Walk, which is the house attached to 15 Well Walk, diagonally opposite 46 Well Walk; on 15th June 2013 in the entrance to Gainsborough Gardens, adjacent to 46; and on 8th October, 2013 outside 15 Well Walk, diagonally opposite 46 Well Walk. This caused considerable disruption to traffic.

At the end of the 1970s or early 1980s a sink-hole opened up in the carriageway at the bottom of the sloping entrance to Gainsborough Gardens which was large enough to close the road, particularly after a police car drove into it.

When The Lodge, which stands at the bottom of the slope leading into Gainsborough Gardens, tried to lower the level of its basement in the mid 1980s, it encountered ground water.

It is no coincidence that subsidence occurs at this point. The Bagshot Sands meet the Claygate Beds along the contours in this area, which is what causes springs to come to the surface. Well Walk derives its name from the well, one of many in Hampstead, that once stood on the South side of the street, in front of 44 or 46; its headwaters are, I believe, slightly further up the hill between Well Walk and Well Road in the garden of either number 6 Well Road or 13 Well Walk. Local histories state that the original well was cut off when the Victorian sewage system was built along Well Walk, around 1852, and the new Chalybeate Well was built on its current site at the bottom of Well Passage, on the north of Well Walk. There is no question that water flows down the hill, its course roughly following the line of Well Passage (it is probably no coincidence that was never built over) and into Gainsborough Gardens, where there was once a pond.

I have stressed these incidents to show the instability of the soil and the presence of watercourses at this location.

Their impact on the roads, infrastructure and properties is obvious.

Any disturbance of the soil and disruption of underground streams from work at 15A Well Walk may well further upset a fragile ecosystem and cause damage to those properties situated downstream. Any impact may be slow to manifest itself.

As the owner of one of those properties, I urge the council to refuse the planning application. I am also concerned about possible damage by works on the site to the historic Chalybeate Well, at the bottom of Well Passage, uncomfortably close to where men working on site would need to move their materials and equipment. Measures would have to be taken to protect this important landmark.

Application No: **Consultees Name:** **Consultees Addr:** **Received:** **Comment:** **Response:**

There is no explanation of how the excavation would be carried out. 15A stands on the corner of Well Passage and Well Walk, over a metre above the carriageway of Well Walk, on a pedestrian walkway (Well Walk!) and a strip of lawn, about 7m wide. Access from street level is by narrow old stone steps, two flights of which are on either side of the Chalybeate Well, and one further to the East. It seems highly likely that the work would require the raised pavement in front of 15 Well Walk to be closed to pedestrians, and possibly Well Passage too. Well Walk is the most direct route to the Heath from Hampstead, and many people, especially those with children, walk along it every day of the year, but especially at weekends. Both pavements, north and south, are then very crowded. I consider it would be dangerous for pedestrians to have to cross to the southern pavement, at a point where there is a kink in the road and visibility is poor.

Where would materials be stored? Where would the spoil be collected? What would the volume of the spoil be? The street at that point narrows, and has a dangerous kink. Where would a skip be safely sited, and without causing inconvenience? Residents' parking is already severely limited.

These practicalities need to be addressed for public safety. We are already finding more and more large construction vehicles working on the New End Nurses Home site trying to drive along Well Walk, which is totally unsuitable for heavy lorries. If part of the pavement had to be closed and a skip positioned nearby, opposite the entrance to Gainsborough Gardens, this would create an additional hazard, as at the moment lorries coming from New End who realise they will be unable to get through Well Walk to East Heath Road manoeuvre at this point.

Incidentally, I urge the Council to ban vehicles involved with the construction works on the New End Nurses Home site from using our narrow residential streets.

I am also concerned that the larger of the lime trees in the garden of 15A may be damaged, leading to its death. This tree, and the others in the garden of 15 Well Walk, is visible from Well Walk, which is lined with shady lime trees. The trees are part of the landscape. We see them as we walk along the street, and our house, and the well-known oriel window of 46 Well Walk, have attractive views up Well Passage.

The design of the rear elevation would be obtrusive, is not sympathetic to the original house and is not suitable for this historic area of Hampstead, which lies moreover in the Conservation area.

The rear of the house is clearly visible from Well Passage. The materials proposed for the rear extension are grey aluminium, which is inappropriate for a red brick Victorian apartment block with timber-framed windows in the Hampstead Conservation Area. The passage is on one of the tourist walks around Hampstead, through the former Hampstead Spa, and past Constable's House in Well Walk. The new bay window will be in the face of everyone walking down Well Passage - and most visitors chose the circuit which walks down it rather than up!

Thank you for considering my views. I ask you to heed the objections of local residents, to protect our property and local infrastructure and to preserve the integrity of the Conservation Area. I therefore urge you to refuse the application.

Application No: **Consultees Name:** **Consultees Addr:** **Received:** **Comment:** **Response:**

Yours sincerely,
Marguerite M. Morton.

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