

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Consultees Addr:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2017/4326/P	Jeff Dexter	57 Achilles Road	06/09/2017 15:51:44	OBJ	Ms Kristina Smith Planning Officer Planning Solutions Team London Borough of Camden

5 September 2017

Dear Ms Smith,

Re: Planning Application 2017/4326/P – 63 Hillfield Road LONDON NW6 1QB:  
Erection of new two-storey (plus basement) building fronting Achilles Road

Since my home at 57 Achilles Road is my sanctuary, this application is a most unwelcome invasive attack, a threat to my health and well-being.

The owners of 63 do not live at 63. That house is not their home. They live two doors away at 67 and their application is just another greedy "garden grab" for profit. How can this happen? Gardens are protected by Camden policy.

Why should my tranquillity be ruined by the noise, dirt, and dust of a new construction just yards away from my bedroom, living room and kitchen doors?

My house at 57 shares boundaries with six separate properties with Hillfield Road, plus another on Achilles Road. I've had problematic incidents created by five of those properties in the 32 years since my wife and I purchased 57 as a home.

In order to acquire the property we had to make an offer way above the market value at the time. The reason was the unique setting, with an asset of green open space and virtually complete privacy that has been managed carefully with unique gardening skills.

At the time of purchase we learned from our structural surveyor that the building had certain issues with the surrounding soil. Being the end of the terrace, we were told that the house will be at the mercy of thermal movement - not subsidence as such - and the ground below will be wet most of the time.

The surveyor said, "Not to worry, the building has moved south west just few millimetres in over a hundred years, so if cared for it'll outlast us for another century"

A charming neighbour on Achilles Road had worked with the District Surveyors offices for the Metropolitan Borough of Hampstead. He explained the history of the road's construction and the reason for the gap in the terrace between 57 and 59: the main soil was too unstable to be built on because two river tributaries flow beneath it.

We still live with that problem. My flank wall is always damp, while the small basement, even with the supposedly substantial concrete bolsters of underpinning, there's still

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movement and damp from all directions. The basement has flooded seriously twice, and three times with just minor trickles. There are two pumps. One very large internal pump works with the tanking, while an external pump takes away the external rising water which breaks through the concrete just below the basement door.

Added to the situation of wetlands, we've had many issues with trees, either overgrown or changes when trees have been lopped. In fact the garden at 65 at one time had even substantial trees. One was removed when it became diseased and the actual roots of that went underneath my house foundations. Once that was dealt with there was an improvement but the ground still moved.

Three years ago, the owners of number 65 had a request from me about two overgrown trees which were creating even more damage on my side of the boundary. I politely asked if they'd consider removing them, which they kindly did. But, at the same time, they removed another three substantial trees within the garden, which were no threat at all, and rather looked rather splendid, so there's been a great deal of arborial loss over the years.

More or less the same situation has occurred with other neighbours' gardens. In fact 3 years ago, I lost all the substantial bay trees, and all plants in that flowerbed due to the incorrect way of removing Japanese knotweed from next door's (55 Achilles Rd) garden. My beautiful garden that we had created over many years suffered a great loss. Another incident occurred, also about 3 years ago, with the owners of 67 Hillfield Rd, who had a different kind of growth infestation. The owners dealt with their problem using a chemical treatment, which killed off most of my flowerbed, including a 25 year old jasmine bush.

Also, the owners of 69 Hillfield Rd, decided to level their garden, which at one point was the same level as my garden. They removed 2 feet of soil up to the edge of the fence in my property to level their own. In the process, without using any soil retention techniques whatsoever, the soil washed away from my side of the garden, which contained a pond I'd built 25 years ago.

The rear part of the garden at 63 Hillfield Rd has been left unkempt for several years and the overgrowth has broken down the fencing, particularly the trellis work and in the process, has pushed out the gravel boards at the base of the fencing. When I made efforts to have it repaired, I discovered it had become a byway for hedgehogs, so naturally I didn't have the heart to block them off. Since May 2017 when deep core soil samples were taken from the same garden (63) using heaving pile-driving equipment, I haven't seen a single hedgehog.

It appears to me and many of us that, the entire process of planning applications these days is weighted far more in the interest of developers than it is to residents. That includes the current notification process which is really not fit for purpose. It is anti-social and unjust, considering it's our properties that could be under threat without anybody being made aware of it. The fact that you no longer write to us to inform us of such development proposals is an insulting and inconsiderate policy. In particular, the fact that local residents have only been given from 10th August until 6th September, at peak holiday time, to

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					<p>comment, your timing is even more inconsiderate. Even to this day, neighbours are just becoming aware of this unnecessary and discourteous development.</p> <p>See key points and observations listed below.</p> <p>Jeff Dexter 57 Achilles Road London NW6 1DZ</p> <p>1) Overdevelopment There are serious concerns that what is being proposed would amount to unacceptably high-density of living units.</p> <p>Should the proposal be accepted, what would once have been a single dwelling and garden would be replaced by six living units.</p> <p>According to guidelines set out by the GLA and contained within the 'Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance', minimum standards of outside space should be as follows:</p> <p>Standard 26 - A minimum of 5sqm of private outdoor space should be provided for 1-2 person dwellings and an extra 1sqm should be provided for each additional occupant.</p> <p>Standard 27 - The minimum depth and width for all balconies and other private external spaces should be 1500mm.</p> <p>Source: <a href="https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/housing_spg_revised.pdf">https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/housing_spg_revised.pdf</a></p> <p>Flats 2 and 3 have no outside space, while flat 1 would appear to be under the 7 sqm required for a four person dwelling.</p> <p>Adding extra living units would only compound the issue and lead to a situation of very high density living units, which would be completely out of character with the local development.</p> <p>2) Inaccuracies of the planning presentation There are a number of inaccuracies in Vorbild's Planning Presentation that are of major concern.</p> <p>Firstly, the 'Site Location and Characteristics' section on page 6 states: 'The site borders Nos 61 and 65 Hillfield Road on the southern end, and 59 Achilles Road on the northern side. On the western side, it borders the garden belonging to No 65 Hillfield Road, and on the east the windowless side elevation of No 57 Achilles Road</p> <p>This is inaccurate – the side elevation of No 57 has windows on the first and second floors</p>

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					<p>1 and 2 of the 'Scale and Appearance' section, on pages 13 and 14 show completely different designs, making it hard to ascertain precisely what the impact of the proposed design.</p> <p>3) Potential damage to surrounding property from the extensive digging planned</p> <p>4) Increased pressure on local parking, which is already overcapacity</p> <p>5) The digging out of basements on Achilles road could start a precedence for future works</p> <p>6) Concerns that such a construction will very likely disturb the delicate water table under the surface of that end of Achilles Road</p> <p>7) Achilles Road already suffers from very poor drains and drainage, and such construction can only potentially further damage this infrastructure.</p> <p>8) The removal of trees and green space The Arboreal report identifies a number of trees for removal – this, and the fact the proposed landscaping works are predominantly hard landscaping, means that there would be significant loss of trees and outlook to the properties and streets that overlook the development.</p> <p>9) Appearance The appearance of the development facing Achilles Road would have a detrimental effect on the locality. The relationship between the front elevation of the new building shown in views 1 and 2 of the 'Scale and Appearance' section on pages 13 and 14 of the Vorbild Planning Presentation and its neighbour is poor – the scale and arrangement of the windows are completely out of keeping with the surrounding buildings.</p>

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