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1 West Hill Park, London N6 6ND

Regeneration and Planning

Camden Council

2nd Floor

5 Pancras Square

London N1C 4AG 7 November 2017

Dear Sirs

**Re 26 West Hill Park, Highgate, N6 – Application No. ref.2017/5176/P**

I write on behalf of West Hill Park Management Company, the company responsible for maintenance and the built environment on the West Hill Park Estate. The company is owned by our shareholders – the owner residents of the estate.

We wish to make representations to oppose the granting of planning permission for application ref.2017/5176/P.

We have taken sounding from our residents and in particular the neighbours of the house and the overwhelming majority have strong views opposed to the application. The board has considered the application themselves and agree to that opposition.

The basis for our opposition to the application is that:

1. In both Option 1 and Option 2, the development will damage the appearance from the South West. This will directly impact on one of the paths used by residents and others. With Option 1, it would present an overbearing and damaging effect to the open cultivated areas. Additionally on Option 2 it would be visually out of keeping with the integrity of the Estates visual structure. This has been carefully maintained so that the original harmonious composition and features designed by Ted Levy Benjamin & Partners has remained intact and integral.
2. The application suggests a substantial increase in the volume of the house. The proposed enlargement in unsympathetic in scale. There are further implications in the size increase in that the density of the estate would rise. The construction would effectively allow for a second residence internally.
3. We are concerned that there would be an increased load on parking spaces. The Estate has limited space available for parking and we consider that there is likely to be a parking overflow from this into Merton Lane.
4. The changes proposed would have considerable impact on the structural integrity of the estate and neighbouring property due to the presence of numerous springs and water-courses. We have obtained an opinion from a Chartered Geologist (CGeol), Chartered Engineer (CEng) and Fellow of the Geological Society of London (FGS) for more than 40 years who states:

*“The Chelmer BIA report concludes that the permeability of the Claygate Member secondary aquifer, which underlies 26 West Hill Park, is minimal and, as a consequence, ground and slope stability problems are unlikely to be encountered during basement construction works. However, this conclusion is highly dependent on the distribution and thickness of the sandy interbed component, which is notoriously unpredictable and can vary over short distances. Furthermore, it is clear that the Claygate Member does act as an aquifer locally because an alignment of springs (spring line) is situated only a few tens of metres downslope from 26 West Hill Park, following the contact with the underlying London Clay Formation, a well-known aquitard.*

*Indeed, a seepage attributable to the presence of this permeability barrier is present in the garden of 27 West Hill Park, the next-door property.*

*These springs feed Highgate Ponds, located as little as 200 m downslope from the property concerned. Therefore, any ground-water diversion caused by the proposed basement structure could lead to channelling of flow with potential but unknown consequences for adjoining properties, particularly 25 Merton Lane, which is some 2m lower in elevation.*

*Furthermore, it is understood that ground settlement has been a notable problem at 27 West Hill Park adjacent, requiring relaying of pathways. This effect is attributed either to shrinkage of clay layers or, perhaps more likely, to degradation of sandy layers as a consequence of ground-water transmission in the immediately underlying Claygate Member.”*

In the alternative view if the opinion of the we have obtained is not accepted we would also point out the applicant’s Summary Surface Water BIA by Croft states that the soil in the area around the new swimming pool at the rear is impermeable.  It also states that water will as a result flow round it.

Clearly it is not possible for water to flow round where the existing house is.  So the only way it can flow round is at the Merton Lane end.  There is only approximately one meter between the end of the proposed structure and the Merton Lane boundary.  So water will in fact flow into Merton Lane, with the attendant nuisance and possible damage.

1. This application is an example of creeping development which is seen as threat in the Highgate Neighbourhood Plan ( HNP )(s 1.4.4). It would set a precedent for extended development on a number of detached houses in West Hill Park, it would also set a precedent for further similar enlargements and basements on other freehold houses in West Hill Park. This will be undesirable for many reasons including the density on the estate and the social stratification into very large and smaller houses and the reasons in (1) & (2) above.
2. The estate is part of a The Highgate Conservation area. Originally planning permission was granted on the basis that the permitted development rights were not applicable to further expansion. As such the default position is that applications of this size and nature should be opposed.
3. The application is clearly in conflict with objectives SO.5.1,5.2 &5.3 of the HNP as well as policies DH3 and DH4

It is for the reasons above that we would urge that planning permission is denied.

Yours sincerely

John Newgas

For West Hill Park Management Co. Ltd.

References To Highgate Neighbourhood Plan

SO 5.1 To guide the design and form of both new development and alterations to existing buildings and boundaries to preserve and enhance Highgate’s conservation areas

SO 5.2 To ensure, wherever possible, that any development strengthens the feeling of community

SO 5.3 To mitigate the effect of building works on neighbours

DH3 Rear extensions on residential properties should be subordinate in scale to the original dwelling, complement its character in terms of design, proportion, materials and detail, should not harm the amenity of adjacent properties, and should retain a significant area of garden or amenity space which is proportionate to that of neighbouring properties in the surrounding area. Development should respect and preserve existing architectural features where these contribute to local character and appearance, for example projecting bays and decorative balconies.

DH4 Side extensions to detached or semi-detached properties, including the enlargement of existing garages, should be sensitive to and respect the character of the streetscape, and not block or significantly infill gaps between buildings, or otherwise disrupt the integrity of the individual architectural composition or group where these contribute to the character of the local area. They should be subordinate in scale to the original dwelling and complement its character in terms of design, proportion, materials and detail. They should not harm the amenity of adjacent properties.