To: John Diver case officer for 2017/5176/P and 2017/5178/P both relating to 26 West Hill Park N.6

From: Highgate CAAC chair Susan Rose.

Highgate CAAC has serious reservations concerning these applications which are detailed below. We would, however like to point out that no Heritage Statement has been submitted for either application. WE also consider that it is essential that the case officer should make a site visit since the drawings submitted with both the above applications contain inaccuracies as does the CMP also submitted. With regard to the CGI images submitted, these give no sense of the context of the proposals, and as detailed below omit some trees etc and give little impression of the nature and size of those shown. The CMP shows little understanding of the amount of traffic using Merton Lane. This is the major access route to Hampstead Heath and in good weather throughout the year on weekdays as well as weekends carries very heavy pedestrian traffic. There is a degree of parking stress as well. There is also no awareness if the fact that at least three large construction schemes are about to start in Fitzroy park and Millfield lane, The Water House 53 Fitzroy park and 5 Fitzroy Close. Using the rear of the site for all access to the works will cause severe disruption and some danger in a narrow road with poor sight lines.

WE would also like to draw attention to the fact that either of these applications will be to the detriment of the Conservation Area. West Hill Park is a positive contributor to the CA. it was designed by a renowned local architect whose works command a premium when they come up for sale such is his reputation for designing elegant comfortable houses which are supremely ‘liveable’. Ted Levy created West Hill park as a unity and effective management has prevented piecemeal alteration of the various elements till the present. Overlooking in an estate of high density was prevented by the skilful positioning of units using the fall in the ground level to advantage and with careful positioning of windows. The result is that the original concept has been preserved to the benefit of the residents, local people and passers-by as a model of how housing built as a commercial development can enhance the area as a whole.

2017/5176/P the application for a side extension etc.

The side extension proposed will adversely affect the amenities of neighbours in the estate by overlooking their gardens and balconies. It will also present a ‘cliff face’ effect to 23 and 25 Merton Lane by bringing the side wall of the house much nearer to these properties especially 23 and looming over it by reason of the differences in ground level.

The extension of this property will disrupt the balance of the Ted Levy design and damage a positive contributor to a heritage asset with no corresponding public benefit . The size and nature of the extension is against the Camden local plan and in direct contradiction of the relevant policies in the Highgate Neighbourhood plan. ( SO.5 .1,2,3 and DH3-4)

2017/ 5178/P basement extension with new pool 26 West Hill Park

All the general remarks above apply equally to this proposal some with increased force. This applies especially to the effect of the excavation of the garden to accommodate a new pool and basement extension. The oak in the garden is a very fine mature specimen, the companion to the equally fine tree in the garden of 25 West Hill Park. Both these trees help create the wooded character of the lower end of Merton Lane and loss of one of them would destroy this to the detriment of the Conservation Area. The mitigation proposed is insufficient and unlikely to prevent the death of the tree especially as it seems to stand ibn the way of all deliveries etc to the site if this is from the rear. The rear garden of 26 also contains some smaller trees and shrubs which are not shown on the plans including the landscaping plan nor mentioned in the D&A statement; they are certainly intended to be removed since they are on the line of the basement. They are of importance in the street scene since they provide screening along the boundary with 23 and are also a factor in the general wooded character of the site as seen from the road.

The basement itself covers too much of the garden and extends almost to the back fence. The heavy engineering required to ensure there is no collapse of the boundary wall and supporting wall to the driveway of 23 Merton Lane seems out of place and excessive in this context. The hydrological problems likely to be caused by this excavation are also of concern since any runoff into Merton lane will drain onto Hampstead Heath and eventually into Highgate no3 pond (the boat pond) with pollution likely to result.

HNP policy DH7 deals with these matters (see pp59-60); Camden’s policy A5 is emerging nad must also be taken into account.

IN these circumstances Highgate CAAC strongly objects to both applications and requests that permission be refused.

Susan Rose Chair Highgate CAAC