

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2018/2481/P	John Saynor	29/06/2018 21:02:52	OBJ	<p>I strongly object to this basement extension.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I endorse the remarks of Mr John Eastwood dated 18th June. 2. I strongly oppose the construction of the basement and "light well". This will have a very deleterious effect on the appearance of Kylemore Road, which is a very pleasant street with small gardens at the front of each house. A small number of houses have recently had habitable basements/light wells added (most recently nos 23 and 21), which has had the effect of replacing a small garden with concrete and paving. Happily, there are no habitable basements on the "even" side of the road (aside from one long established and unobtrusive one), where each house still has a small garden. <p>It is untrue to state (as per 2.2 of the Design and Access Statement (DAS)) that "basement/lower ground floor conversions are commonplace." In fact, only a few houses have such conversions. I believe that most of the houses have traditional low-ceilinged cellars, which most residents find quite adequate for storage and other purposes. The proposed basement sets a very unwelcome precedent and I would urge planners to reject it.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The size of the proposed light well is unnecessarily large and takes up most of the front garden. If a light well were needed, it could be provided in half of the space allocated. The proposed stairs are unnecessary if the property is to be one house. The developer may be interested to know that the owners of No 23 built a similar set of stairs when they carried out the basement construction, only to find the stairs used to effect a burglary not long after completion of the work. The stairs therefore represent an unnecessary risk to public safety. 3. Ref 4.14 -4.17 of the DAS, I do not believe that the applicant has demonstrated that he has met the listed criteria, for the following reasons: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Re damage to neighbouring properties, I would draw the attention of planning officers to the comments by Ms Sharon Dibosa to application 2018/2514 for 32 Kylemore Road. This states that the the builders employed on this building have already caused damage to a neighbouring property and are operating in an unprofessional manner. I would query whether they can be trusted to carry out the delicate work needed to construct a basement. b) The basement and light well will occupy considerably more than 50 % of the front garden, and it will result in complete loss of garden space at the front. c) There is no evidence that any kind of satisfactory landscaping will be provided, and indeed, after leaving space for bins, the plans do not allow any space for "landscaping". 4. I have read the Basement Impact Assessment and I have the following comments, which serve to undermine its credibility: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ref 4.0 p4: I note that only a desktop study has been carried out. This suggests that test holes or borings have been done, which considerably weakens the findings. Such test holes should be dug in winter when the water table is much higher than in the dry summer period that we are currently experiencing. The borehole log on page 14 is dated 1-6 August 1969!

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b) Ref 4.1 Q1A, Q1B: This appears to be incorrect. I live opposite, and I can confirm that the clay is wet just below the ground floor of the house in winter, as evidenced by digging of a test hole. Nearby Kilburn Grange Park can be observed in winter when it is waterlogged, often with standing water. In summer the water table appears to fall considerably.

c) 4.1 Q2 and Q8 on p6: Based on old maps (as submitted by another respondent) and the book "London's Lost Rivers, A Walker's Guide", the Westbourne River probably runs about 80m to the west of the property. Research on the internet and reviewing the relief of the land gives leads to a consensus that this is correct – for example:

<http://www.theundergroundmap.com/wp/tracing-the-westbourne/>

The course of the river at variance with that shown in Figure 5 (for which no source is given).

d) 4.1 Q5 and Q3 p7 :This answer is incorrect, as the plans indicate that the whole front garden will be concreted over, as as has happened, for example, at No 23.

e) Q12 p7: This states that the light well extends to the pavement, confirming that none of the garden is preserved and even suggesting that there may not be space for the bins (a concern in this area, where bins often obstruct the pavement).

5. No construction management plan is provided, and section 6 (p11) of the Basement Impact Assessment is quite inadequate as a substitute. The construction of an unnecessary basement such as this takes up to 2 years (based on the experience at no 23) and is hugely disruptive to neighbours and other residents, and presents serious risks to neighbouring buildings. The elderly couple living at no 25 were greatly distressed by the work done at no 23, which took far longer than expected.

6. There is an advertising on the scaffolding of this property, and I would suggest that the council takes enforcement action against this.

7. A puzzling feature of this application is that the applicant states that the conversion is to a three bedroom house. Given the elevated property values in the district, and the huge impact that an extra bedroom can have on a property's value (anything from £200-£500K per extra bedroom), this surprising. The plans certainly allow plenty of space to create a 4 or 5 bedroom house. If the applicant only seeks a 3 bedroom house, then the extra space provided by the basement is completely redundant. This suggests that there is something unsaid or devious about the application, or that it is not properly thought-through.

8. I would ask that the Council requests a S.106 or similar agreement in respect of this development, as I understand has happened in the case of similar developments in the area.