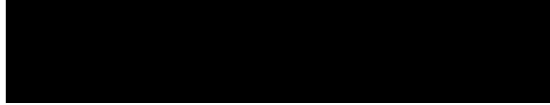


Bill Risebero *DipArch DipTP MA RIBA*



Mr Thomas Sild
Planning Solutions Team
London Borough of Camden

4 July 2019

Dear Mr Sild

4b Hampstead Hill Gardens NW3 2PL - 2019/2964/P

I am writing on behalf of, and in consultation with, my friend Mrs Janna Williams, of [REDACTED] Hampstead Hill Gardens. I am sure you realise that, [REDACTED] she is the person most severely affected by the planning application at No.4b. As well as Planning problems, the proposal raises Legal, Building Control and Environmental Health issues too.

We urge the Committee to refuse the application as it stands.

The following are our main arguments:

1. Density of development. The proposed built form of No.4b, would occupy almost the whole of the site and, contrary to policy, would remove the garden completely, replacing it with a 4.5m deep light-well. The building would consist of four storeys, rising to approximately twice the height of the eaves of No.4a, giving rise to a number of architectural and planning problems. It seems to us an unacceptable overdevelopment of the site.

2. Architectural character. No.4a and 4b were designed as a modest infill. At present, No.4b, though different in detail from No.4a, is suitably low-key, and complementary to it. The proposed building, with its increased height and its self-assertive form cannot be considered a good neighbour.

3. Conservation Area.

(a) Character and appearance. The character of the Conservation Area is a suburban one, of detached and semi-detached houses in fairly spacious gardens. A built form which covers virtually the whole of its site and dispenses with its garden, cannot be considered to be in character.

(b) Preservation and enhancement. Apart from the contestable claim that the new building would form a visual link between No.4a and No.6, it is not clear how the proposal is intended positively to *enhance* the Conservation Area. Most of the design arguments seem to be concerned with how to mitigate the negative effects of a large amount of floorspace on a small site.

4. Height of building. This would seem to be another consequence of the wish to maximise floorspace. Among other things it involves raising the party wall with No.4a by

some 1.5 storeys, reducing light and the quality of the outdoor space at the rear of [REDACTED] to an unacceptable degree.

5. Excavation. The wish to maximise the floorspace seems to be the reason for the basement accommodation. Following the demolition of the existing house, the basement would involve excavation, possibly both underpinning and shoring, and the permanent retention of all the surrounding edges of the site. We object to this in principle, but if the Committee considers granting permission we would ask for Conditions to safeguard the stability, weatherproofing, waterproofing and architectural integrity of [REDACTED] including the repair of any damage and consequent compensation.

6. Basement construction. Hampstead's geology is complex, and the area in which the site is situated, where numerous water-courses arise, is notorious for subsidence. There have been various costly examples of this in recent years. A basement in this area is likely to affect surrounding ground conditions and both surface and subterranean water flows, exacerbating the problems, not only for the application site but for adjoining sites too.

7. Construction process. The demolition, excavation and construction of No.2b would be very disruptive, over a long period, both in the neighbourhood and especially in No.4a. The applicant has suggested to Mrs Williams that, if the development does go ahead, the use of heavy or noisy machinery could be avoided in the excavation of the basement. If the Committee considers granting permission, we would ask that dust, noise and vibration be forbidden by Condition, and working hours strictly limited to normal hours, on weekdays only.

8. Party Structures. The proposed development fronts the Highway and affects Party or boundary Walls on the other three sides. If permission is to be granted, the applicants should be aware that Party Wall Agreements may be necessary in all cases and certainly in the case of No.4a.

However, we hope that the Committee will decide to refuse this application.

Yours sincerely

Bill Risebero

cc Mrs Janna Williams