

2019/5443/P: 12 Keats Grove

Response to No.12A Comments by Steven & Vicky Bobasch

Prepared by Application Agent_ Koryn Steinbok of Chris Dyson Architects (CDA)

No.12A Comments (03.01.2020):

We are very impressed with the care taken in the application and the proposed restoration of the important listed house which should improve its livability to make it fit for the future. We fully support this project in principle and would like to do our best to make it happen.

CDA Response (15.01.2020):

We appreciate this positive general feedback and would like to reassure the neighbours that we aim to deliver this project in a manner which is sensitive and respectful to them.

No.12A Comments (03.01.2020):

While 12 Keats Grove itself is a detached house in substantial grounds, the basement excavation will take place on the edge of their plot and only 1metre from our structural walls and foundations. Mindful therefore of problems experienced by others locally with basement work, we are concerned by the proposed new basement to be so close to our house. This concern which is also specifically raised by part of the comment from the Heath and Hampstead Society on 11December 2019 is about:

1. The construction issues for the new deeper basement and
2. The impact on our shared mains drainage, and
3. How the work will be done so that we can be reasonably protected.

1. Need for a Basement Construction plan:

We appreciate the much effort has been put into the planning application by a high-quality team. As we have no experience of basement work, we consulted the Basement Specialist at the Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum ("The HNF Specialist"). He recommended that we raise issues with the Camden Planning Officer to consider at the planning application review stage. The Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum Policy BA2 on Basement Construction Plans states: *"5.13: When the proposed development involves excavation or construction that if improperly undertaken could cause damage to neighbouring properties then a basement construction plan will be required."*

Clearly this partly depends on "improperly undertaken" and what that means. We do not wish to infer any intention by the applicant to do this. However, the applicants' BIA refers in section 5 to "Construction Methodology" which is one page without detail while Appendix C: "Proposed Structural Drawings and Construction Sequence" is also one page of drawings of the building and a few lines of text. There's no detail on the process of the works and protecting our interests. There is an existing lower room of modest depth (rather than a real "basement") on the same place. Indeed it is currently at the same level as the garden- see applicant's drawing "Proposed section through kitchen". The proposed basement is, in contrast, a complete room below ground and will require excavation down for at least 4 metres right next to our walls.

WE THEREFORE REQUEST THAT A REQUIREMENT FOR A BASEMENT CONSTRUCTION PLAN IS IMPOSED IF PLANNING IS GRANTED- SEE REQUEST #3 ON LAST PAGE FOR MORE DETAIL.

CDA Response (15.01.2020)

[Prepared by Structural Engineers Price & Myers]:

We accept that a Planning Condition to require a Basement Construction Plan would be helpful; noting that Camden Planning Guidance - Basements March 2018 states: "In some circumstances the Council may require a basement construction plan secured through a Section 106 Agreement. The Council strongly recommends that Party Wall agreements are concluded prior to the applicant seeking the Council's approval of the Basement Construction Plan (BCP). This allows for the specific issues relating to the construction programme to be established, meaning neighbours are better informed before entering into a Party Wall agreement in connection with the proposed basement scheme." We consider that the specific details of the basement construction are best agreed during the Party Wall process in line with Camden Guidance. Please refer to BIA page 18:

- The existing ground floor is at an 'upper-ground level', sited above the external ground level.
- The new basement level in the existing garage area is only 1.7m below the adjoining ground so the maximum excavation depth will only be around 2.5m below ground. This proposed dig is considered very minimal.
- Construction details will be produced to clarify exact foundation sizes and then the precise excavation depth can be confirmed; this is best dealt with as part of Party Wall process and not Planning.

No.12A Comments (03.01.2020):

2. The HNF Specialist advised that in his opinion the current Basement Impact Assessment ("BIA") presented is unsatisfactory and incomplete. We can add that there is history of ground water at high levels here:

- i. The previous owners of 12 Keats Grove, Mr and Mrs C Spooner told us of problems in their lower ground floor which is much higher than the proposed basement.
- ii. When building our current house at 12a, the water table frequently came up overnight showing the high-water table.
- iii. The neighbour in 11Keats Grove also had problems with her basement.

Price and Myers in their submission of 31st December 2019 state:

"The new extension and the house are both supported on the same new foundation and no differential settlement is expected between the existing house and the new extension as both are supported on the new underpinning." However this is noticeably lacking in any comment on the impact to the area just beyond the new underpinning which protects the applicant.

REQUEST #1: REQUIRE THE APPLICANT TO PROVIDE MORE INFORMATION ON THE POTENTIAL SETTLEMENT TO THE AREA ON EITHER SIDE OF THE PROPOSED UNDERPINNING.

CDA Response (15.01.2020)

We agree that it will be good to further collect data and therefore are continuing to monitor the groundwater levels in the coming weeks/months which would form part of our more detailed Basement Construction Plan at a later stage (also to be addressed under Planning Condition / Party Wall Agreement).

[Prepared by Structural Engineers Price & Myers]:

We consider that the information on ground movement shown in the series of plots in appendix part 2 of the GEA Ground investigation and Basement Impact Assessment Report provides sufficient data on the potential for ground settlement. Number 12A is on piled foundations and the ground movement at shallow depth will have minimal impact on their performance.

[Prepared by Geotechnical and Environmental Associates]:

Burland Scale: The maximum level of damage predicted for the underpinning and excavation is Category 1 'very slight'. This represents cracks of less than 1 mm and remediation by simple redecoration. This level of damage is acceptable within all London boroughs and, in our experience, to all party wall engineers. The 1.0 m referred to is the assumed depth of foundations of No.12a and is deemed appropriate on the basis of the findings of the site investigation for No 12 next door. It is unlikely that the foundations will be shallower due to the soil properties and if they are any deeper then that will be all the better because the bearing stratum will be less affected and the wall will be deeper and hence of higher stiffness and lesser sensitivity to movement. The entirety of the house at 12a has not been analysed because the walls closest to the proposed excavation show either 'negligible' damage or in a single instance 'very slight'. It follows logically that walls more distant from the proposed basement will experience damage at or below 'negligible'. This analysis has been undertaken using conservative methods, sensible parameters and appropriate construction sequencing; all of which have been set out in our report. We note that assumptions have had to be made but all of these have been clearly set out in our report.

Water table and flooding risk: The flooding events that have historically occurred in Hampstead are generally associated in the minds of local residents with the presence of groundwater, with historical references to springs and underground rivers causing additional concern. However, groundwater in Hampstead does not cause surface flooding, which is in fact associated with heavy rain, sloping ground, increasing hard cover of previously soft landscaped land and sewers that cannot cope. The Arup report that was completed for Camden in 2010 (Camden geological, hydrogeological and hydrological study - Guidance for subterranean development) provides clear advice on this aspect and is recommended reading for anyone concerned about flooding. The report states quite clearly that *Within London groundwater flooding has only been recorded within the London Borough of Enfield*. Other than on the higher ground, which is capped by Bagshot Sand, Hampstead is underlain by predominantly clay soils, which have very low vertical permeability which does not readily allow surface water to soak into the ground.

No.12A Comments (03.01.2020):

3. The HNF Specialist has been in correspondence with the applicant's engineers but this has been interrupted by the extended holiday period and replies from them are outstanding. He will be commenting directly to you. **REQUEST# 2: WE REQUEST AN EXTENSION FOR THE PERIOD ALLOWED FOR COMMENTS ON THE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR AT LEAST A FURTHER 4 WEEKS.**

CDA Response (15.01.2020):

We have throughout the process aimed to involve local community groups. We provided the opportunity to meet and present the scheme to all local community groups prior to submission. We have since continued to respond to the HNF Specialist in a timely manner. We therefore would hope to avoid any requirement for delay to the target determination date.

No.12A Comments (03.01.2020):

4. Shared Drain between 12 Keats Grove and 12A Keats Grove

Waste water from our house flows underneath the current garage building and then shares the 12 Keats Grove drain to the Thames Water mains drain in the street. This is clearly shown in Figure 8 of the applicant's BIA submission. Because the drains lie under the proposed work area, they will need to be re-routed, temporarily as the works starts and then with a permanent solution for both houses. As with any residence, drainage is essential at all times in order for our home to be habitable. There was no mention of how this critical matter is to be handled in the BIA submitted with the planning application. At our prompting, a later version 4 (dated December 2019) helpfully states: *"The proposed basements will conflict with existing below ground drainage; hence this will be reconfigured during the works. Existing drainage will be diverted or pumped as required during the works to ensure that the system remains in operation all the time. Details of both any temporary drainage diversions and the new proposals will be agreed through the Party Wall process."*

This statement is positive but far from detailed nor is it enforceable as the BIA is for "Assessment".

We submit that the Party Wall agreement alone is not suitable to protect our interest in drainage at all times. First the Party Wall Agreement deals with making good damage not maintaining services and second, it expires with the works while our need continues.

REQUEST# 3; IF PLANNING IS GRANTED, THEN IT SHOULD:

A) INCLUDE A CLEAR REQUIREMENT FOR THE SHARED DRAINS TO BE OPERATIONAL AT ALL TIMES AND

B) BE SUBJECT TO A BASEMENT CONSTRUCTION PLAN BEING SUBMITTED FOR COMMENTS (ALLOWING US TO RAISE ISSUES AND SUGGEST CHANGES IF NEEDED) PRIOR TO APPROVAL BY THE COUNCIL.

THIS WOULD INFORM OUR NEEDS FOR THE PARTY WALL AGREEMENT AND POSSIBLY A SEPARATE BINDING AGREEMENT ON THE DRAINAGE.

CDA Response (15.01.2020)

[Prepared by Structural Engineers Price & Myers]:

We accept that these matters could be made Planning Conditions as we understand these concerns as noted under our response to item 1 and in relation to the drainage we have said: *"The proposed basements will conflict with existing below ground drainage; hence this will be reconfigured during the works. Existing drainage will be diverted or pumped as required during the works to ensure that the system remains in operation all the time. Details of both any temporary drainage diversions and the new proposals will be agreed through the Party Wall process."*