



West Hill Park Management Co. Ltd.



Regeneration and Planning  
Camden Council  
2nd Floor  
5 Pancras Square  
London N1C 4AG

21 April 2019

Dear Sirs

**Re 26 West Hill Park, Highgate, N6 – Application No. ref 2019/1426/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 shareholders – the owner-residents of the estate.

We wish to make representations to oppose the granting of planning permission for application ref 2019/1426/P

.

We have taken extensive soundings on the matter of basement extensions on the estate, and we are satisfied that the very large majority of residents is against them. The board has considered the application themselves and agree to that opposition.

The basis for our opposition to the application is that:

1. The Board and residents of West Hill Park have made strong efforts to maintain the design integrity of the Estate. We believe strongly that the aesthetic of the Estate should be maintained and that any infringement undermines the whole. Ted Levy created a unique environment of shared living which has survived intact for the past 40 years. To that end residents are not permitted to alter the external appearance of their property, make additions nor erect new structures of any kind. The residents individually agreed to this when they purchased their properties. The current owners knew of these restrictions and agreed to them.
2. The application would allow for a substantial increase in the volume of the house. The proposed enlargement is unsympathetic in scale. This in turn has significant implications in the density of the Estate, as the construction would effectively allow for a second residence such as a granny flat to be created internally by conversion of the swim spa. West Hill Park Estate was originally constructed with a high occupational density. The Estate does not have the capacity for this to be increased. Planning



permission has recently been granted to extend the house by the addition of two habitable rooms, which amplifies our concerns if both schemes were to be implemented

3. We are concerned that in the event of an internal change of use and conversion, there would be an increased load on parking spaces. The Estate has no ability to increase the number of parking spaces. We consider that this will increase parking pressure on Merton Lane.
4. The changes proposed would have considerable impact on the structural integrity of the estate and neighboring properties 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 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.”*

5. This application is an example of creeping development which is seen as threat in the Highgate Neighborhood 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. The application if permitted would fundamental go against Ted Levy’s vision for mixed communal living and undermined this fine example of 1970’s architecture, which the London Borough of Camden whole heartily supported at the time. A time when Camden itself had arguably the best ‘architectural practice’ in the country.
6. The estate is part of a The Highgate Conservation area. Originally planning permission by Camden was granted on the basis that the permitted development rights were not applicable to further individual expansion. As such the default position must be that applications of this size and nature should be opposed.



7. 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
8. We are concerned that there are a number of material errors in the Construction Management Plan. For example it is inaccurate in stating that there are no other major building projects in the vicinity; work is underway on Water House and will soon start on 53 Fitzroy Park and possibly at no 55. All these are major projects within 2-300m of 26 West Hill Park. For all these sites, vehicle access is mentioned as being via Merton Lane but no account is taken on high number of pedestrians in Merton Lane with many cyclists dogs children etc in a road with only one pavement.

It is true that the existing pool arrangements need significant work. The external cladding has been allowed to rot and fall away exposing large holes in the exterior walls. There is similar internal damage. We feel the prior lack of maintenance should be remedied by proper repairs rather than becoming the basis for material changes

It is for the reasons above that we would urge that the committee refuse 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.

