

17 Lyncroft Gardens West Hampstead London NW6 1LB

To: Nathaniel Young  
Planning Solutions Team  
Camden  
Nathaniel.young@camden.gov.uk

Date: January 26<sup>th</sup> 2020

Dear Mr Young,

**Re: Application 2019/6236/P – Ground Floor 17 Lyncroft Gardens NW6 1LB**

My wife and I are the freeholders and residents of 17 Lyncroft Gardens, one of the properties neighbouring no. 15. We have lived here for 40 years. We write to register our strong objection to the proposal to develop the basement of no. 15.

Our objection is based on a number of factors, relating primarily to the proposal's self-evident incompatibility with Camden's clearly defined policy on such developments in Conservation Areas, and to the very real and very substantial negative impact of such a project on the quality of life in the street for many residents, not just for immediate neighbours, through the inevitably extended period of the works that would be involved.

We note that Mr Mills, of 13 Lyncroft Gardens, has submitted a detailed objection. As a professional architect, Mr Mills is better qualified than we are to fully grasp both the regulatory and the practical implications of such a proposal. Rather than duplicate much of his letter, let me emphasise clearly that we endorse the detail of his objection in every respect. We will add our own commentary in what must, you will understand and forgive us, be layman's language.

**Camden guidelines:** We note Camden's stated policy, that '**The Council will normally resist basement developments fronting the highway due to its impact on the appearance of the Conservation Area**'. This surely speaks for itself. We draw your attention to the unprecedented scale of this proposal, involving the dig-out of the entire foot-print of the house. We further draw attention to the proposal of architecturally inappropriate basement windows. This, and other elements of the proposal are in contravention of Conservation Area requirements to respect the architectural character of a fine period terrace such as Lyncroft Gardens.

**Precedents in the street:** There are three houses in the street that have had basement enhancements (at nos. 3, 23, and 35), in each case undertaken prior to the 2011 establishment of the West End Green Conservation Area protocols. These should not be taken as setting precedents to justify approval of the present application. On the contrary, the current works on two of these developments (nos. 3 and 23) provide painful evidence of the very considerable risk and disruption this is inevitably involved in such undertakings.

**Risks to our property and our street:** The houses in Lyncroft Gardens are built on shallow foundations and there is a street history of subsidence. There have been issues with rain-water drainage and this remains an unpredictable threat. That said, we enjoy a largely stable situation. On the principle that 'If it isn't broken, don't fix it', there is a very strong case for maintaining the settled status quo. The law of unforeseen consequences is an ever-present reality when initiating and undertaking a project of this kind in a terrace of this date and type.

Interior damage is an inevitable consequence of the heavy drilling, digging, and upheaval of such a project; we simply cannot predict its extent.

Further, we have observed that our pavement – a rare survivor in traditional York stone – has suffered through the careless parking on the pavement of contractors' heavy vehicles whose drivers are indifferent to the damage they cause. Ad hoc repairs will never make up for not leaving well alone.

**The disruption:** Our recent experience has shown us that the project would involve regular multiple large vehicles and skips, traffic sometimes reduced to one lane, broken sight-lines threatening pedestrian security when crossing the road, and persistent pressure on resident parking. There would inevitably be earth and dirt constantly defacing our pavement and street. We further note that the current sites attracted a double burglary. So health, safety, and security would all be put at risk.

**Personal impact:** We are a retired couple. We spend a great deal of time in our home, so would be very much impacted in terms of noise, dirt, and street access during the day. It would be naïve to suggest otherwise. No amount of insurance cover and soothing reassurances can compensate for the inconvenience of the inevitable damage to our home. Cracks, even slight, will involve the upheaval of redecoration, not to mention the very considerable stress. And the risk is undeniable that the damage could be far greater. I know from our neighbour at no. 5 that the vibration of drilling during the basement work on no. 3 was enough to shake objects off her shelves. This does not augur well. Lyncroft Gardens is an agreeable and generally relatively quiet residential street, with many long-term residents. We have already been subjected to many months of inconvenience as a consequence of the works to nos. 3 and 23.

**Camden's guidelines have been put in place for good reason and should be respected. The Application should be denied.**

Please note, for the record, that, while we were informed in a circular letter of our neighbours' intention, we were not informed by them that the Planning Application was submitted. Bearing in mind that there is a time limit for the submission of objections, this failure to inform us sets a regrettable precedent.

Yours respectfully,

Philippe and Lucilla Garner

FAO Nathaniel Young  
Planning Solutions Team  
London Borough of Camden

3 Feb, 2019

Dear Mr Young and Planning Solutions Team,

**Re: Application 2019/6236/P Flat Ground Floor, 15 Lyncroft Gardens,  
NW61LB**

We write to object to this development.

The above is a basement development fronting the highway, which is contrary to planning policy and will have a harmful impact on the conservation area.

The scale of the proposed development is very large in area and depth and unprecedented in this street. If allowed, it is likely to cause significant damage to the neighbouring properties. It could affect the stability of properties in this terraced street, which already has a history of subsidence issues. The proposed digging out of the basement to a depth of 4 metres could well cause drainage issues affecting all the houses on the street.

The proposed development seems to harm the architectural character of the building. This would fail to enhance or preserve the West End Green conservation area (WEGCA).

This planned development is unprecedented. Recent developments at No 3 (2019/0718/P) and No 23 (2018/3377/P) did not create new basements. They maintained the existing floor areas and increased the internal height. Therefore they do not set a precedent for new basements as in the proposed application at Nr 15.

The size of the development would cause many months of noise, vibration, disruption, dirt, heavy goods vehicles, traffic and parking restrictions. Such activity threatens the fabric of our environment - our roads, our pavements as well as our buildings and daily lives. It will bring considerable disruption to the residents of Lyncroft Gardens, who have already endured over a year of upheaval from works at No 3 and No 23.

At No 1 we have first hand experience of the disruption and damage caused by basement works. As said, Nr 3's development is less extensive than that proposed at No 15. They did not create a new basement, but lowered the



existing basement floor to increase headroom. Nevertheless, this has caused neighbours nearly a whole year of disruption, noisy machinery, dust and dirt, endless heavy goods vehicles and skips - deeply interfering with the quality of our lives and the quality of our environment.

This work involved about 1 metre excavation. The resulting drilling, digging and upheaval has caused cracks in our home and movement affecting the doors of our house and as a result the security of our home. We have had to have the locks moved several times. We have had to be constantly vigilant for the impact of damage to our home throughout this time. The personal impact and risks of the proposed development to all the neighbours and residents should not be underestimated by the Planning Solutions Team.

We fully support and endorse the details set out in submissions by our neighbours Mr Mills at No 13, Mr & Mrs Garner at No 17 and Mrs Scarfe at No 5.

### **Conclusion**

Camden Council should refuse permission for this development.

- It is planning policy to resist basement development fronting the highway
- This development is not compliant with the aims and objectives of the Conservation Area
- There is no precedent for such a development in this street
- The proposed works would cause damage to the fabric of the street and hardship to local residents for many months if not years.

Yours sincerely,

Hannah Azizollahoff, Joseph Azizollahoff, George Whitmore

