

55 Fitzroy Park

Note for FPRA on the Proposals to Intercept the Existing Foul Sewer and Pump the Foul Water to Discharge into the Combined Sewer beneath Fitzroy Park

Proposals were submitted for planning in 2018 for redeveloping the site at 55 Fitzroy Park, which included the demolition of the existing house, adjacent to the road, and building five new houses. Three of the proposed houses (plots 1-3) front onto Fitzroy Park to the east of the site and two (plots 4 and 5) to the west, in the garden behind. There is an existing pond at the north end of the plot and a tennis court to the west. Initially, few details of the proposed drainage were provided, but in response to queries and comments on the proposals more information, including a preliminary drainage layout was provided on the Camden planning website in October 2019.

Alan Baxter provided comments on the drainage proposals to FPRA on 11 October 2019, including comments on the proposal to intercept an existing foul water sewer that currently passes below the tennis court. We understand that the sewer dates from the mid-20th century and that the properties upstream that it serves include The Lodge, North London Bowling Club, Fitzroy Farm, the Wallace House and the Water House, each of which have an established easement across the land at 55 Fitzroy Park.

The proposal is to intercept the sewer at the western boundary with the Water House, with the upstream flows collected in an underground holding tank and pump chamber. The foul drainage from plots 4 and 5 will also feed into this chamber. The foul water flows (possibly also incorporating some storm water flows and back-wash from the upstream properties and their four swimming pools) will then be pumped up through the garden to a manhole at the north east corner of the plot, where they will be combined with the foul water flows from plots 1 – 3, and the storm water from the parking areas in front of plots 1 – 3, before they are all discharged into the existing combined sewer that runs below Fitzroy Park. Our comments on this aspect of the drainage proposals raised the following concerns:

- The proposals will significantly increase the flows from 55 Fitzroy Park into the combined sewer which will need to be agreed with Thames Water (TW) or LB Camden(LBC).
- It is unlikely that either TW or LBC would be prepared to take on the responsibility for the pumping chamber and rising main.
- If TW or LBC do not take responsibility for this foul water drainage then it would be a private sewer, with associated costs for the maintenance and management of the pumps, which may have cost implications for the owners of the properties upstream which are connected to the sewer.

A conference call was held with the designers of the drainage proposals, LB Camden and their advisers, Aecom, Alan Baxter and the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath in May 2020 to discuss the drainage proposals more generally. At that meeting the designers confirmed that it was intended that the foul drainage would be adopted by TW, but that this had not been raised with them yet. During the meeting and in following correspondence from LB Camden the designers were asked to make changes to other aspects of the proposals and respond to the comments raised by ABA and Aecom.

In an 'Updated Drainage Submission' issued to LB Camden and posted on their website in September 2020, the designers have confirmed in their response that there have been no discussions to date with TW regarding the pumped foul water proposals and that they have no plans to engage with them prior to a decision on the planning application. We consider this to be a rather blinkered approach, as in our experience it is unlikely that TW will agree to adopt this sewer because of the additional responsibilities and liabilities that a pumping station carries. We believe that this is an important aspect of the proposals to agree, at least in principle at this stage in the planning process, in order that the building owners upstream of the development are clear on the implications for them. It is likely that they will be relying on the properties at 55 Fitzroy Park to maintain the pumping station.