

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2020/3897/P	FortuneGreen and West Hampstead NDF	27/11/2020 18:14:33	COMMNT	<p>The West Hampstead and Fortune Green Neighbourhood Development Plan (The NDP) reflects the concerns of many local residents about basement developments, in particular the impact on the structural integrity of old terraces. (Para A15, page 19 of the NDP) There appear to have been very few recent basement developments in Agamemnon Road, particularly at the top end, and there needs to be very close scrutiny to avoid any detrimental precedents being set.</p> <p>We note the neighbours' concerns about the proposed railings affecting the character of front gardens at this end of Agamemnon Road and support the suggestion of a ground level grill being used as protection for the light-well, rather than railings.</p>

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2020/3897/P	Richard Burdett	29/11/2020 15:52:56	OBJ	<p>Here is the text of my letter of objection sent separately to the Planning Dept by email</p> <p>Dear Madam/Sir</p> <p>Proposed basement excavation at 46 Agamemnon Road, London NW6 1EN Planning Application reference: 2020/3897/P</p> <p>I am writing to object to the above planning application. I live at 42 Agamemnon Road, two doors down from the applicant, and have done so since 1995.</p> <p>I have read the various documents that form the application along with the objections. Of the latter, I fully concur with all details of the extremely thorough objection from the residents of 44 Agamemnon Road, and agree that the application is an unacceptable form of development.</p> <p>Rather than submit an identikit objection, I am outlining here three key areas, which are at the heart of my own objections to the application:</p> <p>1. Flooding The Local Plan lists Agamemnon Road as having flooded in 2002 and there have been several instances during my time here of significant “runs” of water down the road, of sufficient magnitude to cause damage to the road. With changing weather patterns, it is not unreasonable to conclude that such events will increase.</p> <p>Many of the local houses, mine included, have relatively shallow (and narrow) coal cellars. Many of these, again mine included, suffer from damp problems. The proposal, albeit described as an “extension” in the application, is in fact a substantial excavation. This means that water, that previously had somewhere to go, will now need to find a new home. The logical conclusion is that that water will move downhill worsening the problems for neighbours.</p> <p>2. Architectural Coherence The planning application describes the road as “varied in terms of architectural styles with newer infill buildings incongruous to the general vernacular”. I’m trying to avoid pedantry but, if the road is “varied in terms of architectural styles”, how can there be a “general vernacular”? The description is disingenuous in the extreme.</p> <p>The fact is that Agamemnon Road is an attractive and highly coherent streetscape, and shares that coherence with neighbouring roads, particularly Ajax, Ulysses, and Achilles. The terrace opposite 46 is indeed significantly different but, as that difference is a result of WW2 bomb damage, it could hardly be otherwise and is, of itself, no grounds for open season on planning regulations.</p> <p>There is no precedent on Agamemnon or any of the above mentioned roads for a lightwell of the type outlined in the planning application, which would constitute a significant visual blight. To quote Camden Planning Guidance: Altering and Extending Your Home (March 2019):</p> <p>“A front garden and other similar forecourt spaces should...only include the excavation of lightwells as a means of providing access or daylight to basements where these form part of the existing character of the</p>

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street." (my emphasis).

Finally, I would add that, whilst the application is for a lightwell secured by railings, the alternative, a grill, is equally incongruous. The solitary local example of this at 31 Ulysses Road (which pre-dates the Local Plan, The Neighbourhood Plan and Article 4 direction on basements and cannot therefore be seen as precedent for such developments) is a significant local eyesore, fundamentally at odds with all neighbouring front gardens.

3. The inherent danger of basement excavations

Developments such as the one in question here are intrinsically dangerous. This is evidenced by the growing frequency of news stories about the total collapse of houses subject to such extreme alterations, most recently earlier this month in Chelsea.

West Hampstead has had its own share of these troubles with the total collapse of 163 Sumatra Road in February 2018 where a similar basement excavation was taking place. Sumatra Road and its housing stock are in many respects analogous to Agamemnon Road with the notable exception that Agamemnon is much steeper, rendering it, at least to this layman's view, more prone to collapse.

Whilst almost three years have passed since the Sumatra collapse, I can find no evidence of an enquiry into the cause and a conclusive description of what caused it. A planning application for the property registered with Camden on 6th November 2020 (2020/3552/P) includes a Basement Impact Assessment (18511/BIA) which states:

"The works recommenced in early January 2018 but were stopped again in February 2018 because of the collapse of half of the front façade and of all the internal structures. The Client stated that the cause for the collapse was a grab lorry repeatedly hitting the façade during the collection of waste from the site." (my emphasis).

This seems both extremely careless and extraordinarily convenient for the developer, and does nothing to mitigate the legitimate belief that these developments are inherently risky, and that those most at risk are the neighbours affected.

I could list many further grounds for objection but, as previously mentioned, would refer you to 44 Agamemnon Road's detailed submission, which covers all of the main points admirably.

In summary, I object to this development believing it to be inappropriate in multiple ways for the neighbourhood, and also carrying an element of risk and disruption that it is unreasonable to expect the community to bear.

Yours faithfully

Richard Burdett