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By email

HGY/2026/1858: 6a Grange Road Highgate, London N6 4AP
Application to discharge Conditions 8–12 attached to HGY/2024/1676

Dear Mark

These conditions were imposed specifically to ensure that the outstanding technical issues surrounding this complex basement were properly addressed before works commence in accordance with the requirements of Haringey policy DM18 and Highgate Neighbourhood Plan policy DH7. In view of the serious damage caused by a nearby basement excavation, the neighbours are understandably extremely concerned about damage to their properties and have asked Alan Baxter Ltd (ABL) and the Geotechnical Consulting Group (GCG) to review the information submitted - they both conclude that the requirements of Conditions 8–12 have not been met and that the conditions should not be discharged. The Highgate Society fully agrees with their conclusions.

We comment briefly on each condition below.

Condition 8 – Appointment of suitably qualified chartered engineer

The condition requires suitably qualified chartered engineers to inspect, approve and monitor the critical elements of *both temporary and permanent basement works*. In this context, we understand this should mean engineers listed in the Register of Geotechnical Specialists.

EngineersHRW confirm their appointment in relation to the permanent works but do not note whether the individual concerned is listed on the register. They also state that they will appoint a qualified temporary works engineer at some point in the future. That engineer has therefore not yet been appointed and no details of their qualifications or responsibilities have been provided.

Condition 8 has NOT been met.

Condition 9 – Site-specific hydrogeological and geotechnical investigation

This condition expressly requires a site-specific hydrogeological and geotechnical investigation to confirm groundwater levels and flow conditions at the site – to confirm engineering assumptions before development or excavation commences.

No site-specific investigation has been undertaken. Instead, GEA has carried out a high-level review of information already contained in the Create BIA, which uses a model based on two case histories where ground conditions are very different from Grange Road. ABL advises this BIA was solely prepared to obtain planning permission (based on a notional stage 2 concept design and an assumed sequence of construction), that this assessment should be based upon the detailed structural design and the contractor's actual sequence of construction and, is likely to require further site-specific investigation and groundwater monitoring. Neither the complete detailed design nor an actual

construction sequence has been provided which would “ensure that the development does not increase flood risk or harm the stability of neighbouring buildings” - the REASON for this condition.

GCG also raises serious concerns about the methodology used. It has previously advised that the WALLAP analysis used by Create took no account of the sloping ground. It now advises that the work around employed by GEA to allow for the sloping ground is inadequate - it does not adequately model the inevitable sway across the excavation and consequently under-predicts movement on the upslope side and the potential damage to neighbouring properties. GCG considers the submitted assessments of building damage are not realistic.

There are also unresolved groundwater concerns. GCG advises that, unless relief measures are provided, groundwater will be dammed on the upslope side of the basement, creating additional ground movement and potentially increasing damage to neighbouring properties. This is particularly concerning given the damage to nearby 4 Grange Road attributed to groundwater damming associated with the basement at 8 View Road. Dewatering during excavation has also not been adequately addressed.

Furthermore, the condition requires the development subsequently to be carried out strictly in accordance with approved mitigation measures. No detailed mitigation measures have been submitted.

Condition 9 has NOT been met.

Condition 10 – Updated Ground Movement Assessment

The condition requires an updated Ground Movement Assessment using a methodology appropriate to the sloping ground conditions and demonstrating that ground movements can be limited to Burland Category 1.

As noted above, GEA has essentially repeated the WALLAP calculations contained in the Create BIA, with adjustments intended to allow for the slope. GCG advises that these adjustments are inadequate and that WALLAP cannot realistically account for the sloping ground and resulting movements at this site. GCG considers that a full numerical analysis is required, a conclusion expressly supported by ABL. These views must be given full weight in your assessment of this application.

Furthermore, as no actual contractor's sequence of construction has been provided, the assessment continues to be based upon a notional construction sequence – this is not an acceptable basis for the discharge of this condition.

Condition 10 has NOT been met.

Condition 11 – Supervision and movement monitoring

EngineersHRW describe a number of measures that will take place in the future, including the appointment of a temporary works engineer (which has not been satisfied in their submission relating to Condition 8) and coordinator, submission of method statements and calculations, and agreement of monitoring arrangements.

These measures have not yet taken place. ABL confirms that the monitoring regime, trigger levels and frequency have yet to be agreed with neighbours.

GCG further advises that monitoring must be sufficiently robust to allow preventative action *before* damage occurs and that the monitoring system should be installed with sufficient time (i.e. measured in months to establish baseline readings and capture seasonal variations), before any construction work commences. GCG recommends readings at least every two weeks during this baseline period.

No evidence has been provided that such a monitoring system or baseline programme has been proposed.

Condition 11 has NOT been met.

Condition 12 – Coordinated drainage and structural design

Although two revised drainage drawings have been submitted, they do not demonstrate the full coordination with the approved structural and piling design required by this condition.

ABL notes that no complete package of detailed structural design drawings has been provided and that no piling or foundation plans have been submitted. It is therefore impossible to establish whether elements of the drainage system conflict with the proposed piles and foundations.

We are also aware, from previous correspondence, of a fundamental factual error in the drainage information: the drawing identifies an “existing” foul water drain running alongside 8 Grange Rd to connect to the street drain – this is not the case – the previous connection was alongside 6 Grange Rd.

Without a complete and coordinated package of drainage, structural and piling drawings, it cannot be demonstrated that the proposal is feasible or avoids physical conflicts.

Condition 12 has NOT been met.

Conclusion

The fundamental problem running through this application is that the assessments continue to rely upon an incomplete/notional design and an assumed construction sequence. ABL advises that the hydrogeological, geotechnical and ground movement assessments should be based upon the complete detailed structural design and the contractor's actual sequence of construction. Neither has been provided.

These conditions were imposed precisely because important technical matters remained unresolved when conditional planning permission was granted for this site wide basement abutting the side walls of both neighbouring properties. They are pre-commencement safeguards intended to protect neighbouring properties. Given the size and complexity of this project and your duty to protect residents, the applicant cannot be allowed to simply defer these matters until later in the construction process. The point of these conditions is to ensure the prevention of damage, as required by policies DM18 and DH7.

We therefore ask the Council to refuse this application to discharge Conditions 8–12 and require the applicant to appoint appropriate engineers and submit a complete and coordinated package of detailed structural, temporary works, geotechnical, ground movement, monitoring and drainage information as required, before discharge of these conditions is reconsidered.

Yours sincerely,

Liz Morris

For and behalf of Highgate Society Planning Group

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