

Barnett, Jessica: PC-Plan

From: Suzanne Millar
Sent: 26 March 2014 17:08
To: Planning Policy
Cc: Bach, Michael; David Lewis; David Lewis
Subject: Basements in K & C

Dear Council Representatives;

We are very concerned by the rapidly increasing number of basement developments and the inadequacy of the Council's current planning policies to deal with the extreme pressure to excavate basements. These developments due to their scale, duration and impacts on our neighbourhood during construction and the cumulative effect of successive schemes have severely affected our quality of life through both noise, vibration and dust and through the impact of construction traffic and long-term parking suspensions. In addition, we do not yet know the long term effects on the structure of our houses and the environment.

We strongly support the Council's proposals to change their policy toward basements in order to:

- to reduce the scale of basements by limiting them to one storey and no more than 50% of the garden, except for listed buildings where there is already a restriction about building under them;

- to be more explicit about the need to:
 - ensure proper drainage through soakaways,
 - retain trees,
 - ensure that buildings are adapted to a higher level of performance in respect to energy, waste and water consumption,
 - ensure better control of the traffic and parking problems due to the demolition, excavation and construction process
 - ensure better control over noise, vibration and dust
 - ensure structural stability
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- In addition, having lived through "Hell" for nearly 4 years while my very inconsiderate neighbour demolished their house and built a sub-basement, I then had the further aggravation of a further 4 years of battling with lawyers, engineers and surveyors to get compensated for all the substantial damage to my property due to the extensive work next door--I think this is outrageous! The party wall award is clearly an inadequate way of dealing with damages if the person doing the building work decides to not be reasonable. If it were not for my tenacity and my insurer's willingness to pay for a lawyer, I may have ended up with nothing--just a damaged house. This is clearly unfair. Of course, there was no compensation at all for my putting up with unbelievable noise and mess for the 4 years of construction nor for all the time it took me to put together all the information required by the lawyers.

We consider this essential because of the impact on our quality of life that is caused by the scale and number of basement construction projects and the resulting inconvenience caused by traffic and construction activity.

We would like to have our support recorded in favour of the proposed changes.

Yours Sincerely,

Christopher & Suzanne Millar

