

Barnett, Jessica: PC-Plan

From: jon thorn
Sent: 27 March 2014 09:20
To: Planning Policy
Subject: Re Basements

Dear Sir,

PARTIAL REVIEW OF THE CORE STRATEGY: BASEMENTS

I am 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.

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

1. 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;

2. 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

I 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.

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

I also have strong reservations about allowing basements to be built under the gardens of listed buildings such as those in Canning Place/Victoria Grove/Launceston Place and, therefore, would listed buildings to be exempted from the proposal that basements may cover up to 50% of the garden.

The longer term impact on the underground water courses is also an 'unknown unknown', and therefore something that be erred on the cautious side. If we cannot be sure of its impact, why would therefore ignore the potential for problems.

As a practical matter, the various basements that I have visited in friends and neighbours' houses have mostly come with various construction/damp problems that have had to be resolved at a later date, which also therefore involved great inconvenience to the area. perhaps higher costs could be applied to any further work on the basement works for 2 years after the end of construction, as that would focus the owner and builder n getting right first time rather keep coming back to fix things.

In addition I would like to alert the RBKC to the recent examples of planning applicants 'gaming' the notice period. This is as relates to the planning application for 6 Cottesmore and 17-19 Cottesmore Gardens, W8, where small scale applications were filed and re 6 Cottesmore few if any applications were filed, and then,

prior to the ending of the period for objection a 'tricky' re filing was made to a much larger scale and which would have certainly caused many more objections. Is there a reason apart from gaming the system for this practice? I assume not.

I would suggest also that re-filing come with some delay or penalty.

Many thanks,

Jon Thorn