



Chris Banks <bankssolutionsuk@gmail.com>

RBKC EIP Basements hearing

1 message

4 September 2014 15:48

To:

Cc:

Dear Mr Banks,

While this association has previously advised you that we do not need to be at the table to make oral representations at the hearing, we would like the Inspector to be provided with supplementary evidence, attached and below, on basement projects on the streets of the St Quintin Estate, in W10.

We would also wish to support the representations of the Kensington Society, and in particular their comments on the drivers of basement projects in the Royal Borough.

Attached is an analysis carried out by the association of the number of planning applications for basement projects in this neighbourhood, including the first 4 months of 2014. As you will see, the number has risen sharply in the last couple of years.

We attribute this rise to two factors:

- unscrupulous basement contractors, who distributed flyers in the area claiming that RBKC was about to introduce a 'basement ban'.
- the continued steep rise in house values in RBKC, which has increased the profitability of basement projects for developers (buying, refurbishing and selling on individual houses) and for owner-occupiers seeking to maximise the investment value and capital gain of their primary residence.

Local estate agents advise us that in this neighbourhood, the approx £300k capital cost of a basement project will add £250-300k to the value of a property. These streets are built with Edwardian terrace houses, which sell at £2m or more when refurbished. We are now experiencing multiple basement projects, often in the same street, with consequent noise, contractors traffic, lack of parking spaces and all the other impacts on the amenity of the area cited by the Kensington Society.

As pointed out by the Kensington Society, there is little evidence that this level of basement projects is driven by any genuine need for additional residential floorspace. The houses in this area are relatively generous 3 bed family homes, with scope for loftrooms for expanding families. The sudden sharp increase in the demand for basements would therefore seem to be driven very largely by financial considerations - either developers profit or owner-occupiers seeking to maximise the investment value of their property. There has been no sudden change in the demography, or of family size, within the area. Whereas there has been a change in house values, relative to the rest of the Royal Borough and London as a whole, which has made basement construction a financially attractive option - whether or not the space is needed.

We therefore strongly support the efforts of RBKC to introduce stronger policies to control this trend, and support the views of the Kensington Society on further tightening of policies to mitigate the impact and reduce the risks of basement construction.



Basement projects in Kelfield Gardens W10, 2014



Basement projects in Highlever Road W10, 2014

Henry Peterson
Chair St Helens Residents Association

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