

# Beware basement developments

THE issue of basements is a running sore in Hampstead, largely because of the underground water which is so prevalent in this area.

We live at the top end of Lyndhurst Road which is a relatively high point in the area and we have a garden which is well known and well loved because we have ensured that much of it is seen from the street so can be enjoyed by passing pedestrians.

In fact we won the Heath and Hampstead "Seen from the Street" competition on two occasions.

The picture here is of our once beautiful garden, now a swamp for much of the year.

The property next door to us was allowed to build a basement a few years ago and from the moment it was complete our



**'See our swamp-land'**

garden started to become waterlogged every time it rained, even a little.

I went to Camden Council

about this issue and a most helpful person eventually came back to me and said that the developers had fully complied with all drainage requirements so there was nothing they could do.

This clearly emphasises that the drainage requirements for basement developments are totally inadequate. Anyone is welcome to come and see our swamp-land, in all its glory, and help us weep for what was once a beautiful garden.

A few yards further down the road, and therefore downhill, the Royal Free plan to erect their new Pears building, closer to the St Stephen's heritage site than the original hospital, the building of which in the 1960s / 1970s caused much damage to that site.

The risk involved in this

building going ahead should be obvious to everyone but just in case it is not we are sharing our photographs and an open invitation to our garden so that anyone who wants to can see what basement developments on a small domestic scale can do to neighbouring properties. It can't take much imagination to multiply that and work out the potential impact and damage to the St Stephen's site from a basement development on the scale of the Pears building.

Add to that the warning reports from the specialist engineers and ground experts that have been issued to St Stephen's Trust and neighbourhood groups, and you have a nightmare scenario that defies belief.

**ANDREA TAYLOR**  
Lyndhurst Road, NW3