

Supporting Information

Publication Draft (Regulation 19) Basement Revision



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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

This report provides a summary analysis of permitted basement developments. It provides evidence of the impact of basement development on residential amenity, in the context of increasing numbers of applications for basement development in recent years, with noise complaints relating to basement development, and a summary of media coverage. It also considers how proposed policy changes will affect the number of developments which receive permission in the future.

TABLE 1: BASEMENT APPLICATIONS BETWEEN 2010 -2014

YEAR	PERMITTED APPLICATIONS	REFUSED APPLICATIONS	TOTAL
2010-2011	64	26	90
2011-2012	142	23	165
2012-2013	121	18	139
2013-2014	123	19	142
TOTAL	450	86	536

BASEMENT APPLICATIONS

- Between April 2010 and March 2014 there were 536 applications for new residential basement levels or extensions to existing basements (see appendix 1 Map 1). This shows that basement applications are being received throughout the city with particular clusters in Mayfair, St. John's Wood, Knightsbridge and Belgravia.
- 450 applications were permitted (84%).
- 66% of permitted applications involved a new basement or excavation of a new basement level beneath an existing level, (as opposed to a horizontal extension of an existing basement level), and 89 (30%) of these were greater than 1 storey.
- There were a further 86 applications refused which had an element of basement excavation or extension as part of the application, although the refusal did not necessarily relate specifically to the basement.

TABLE 2: BASEMENT APPLICATIONS RATIO BETWEEN 2010 -2014

APPLICATION RESULT	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
PERMITTED	450	84%
REFUSED	86	16%
TOTAL	536	100%

2. IMPACT OF POLICY CHANGES

2.1 SINGLE STOREY LIMIT

Currently the proposed policy changes are to reject applications on basement excavations if they involve the excavation of more than one storey below the lowest original floor level unless the following exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated:

- that the proposal relates to a large site with high levels of accessibility such that it can be implemented and used without adverse impact on neighbouring uses or the amenity of neighbouring occupiers; and
- that no heritage assets will be adversely affected;

A detached property would typically have high levels of accessibility, as Table 3 shows there are approximately 381 detached residential properties in Westminster. Of the permitted applications between April 2010 and March 2014 only 3 permissions were for a basement excavation of greater than 1 storey, and were for detached properties and would therefore provide the high level of accessibility required for consideration for a deeper basement. Thus many would not have received permission. Map 3 in Appendix 1, gives an indication of the spatial distribution of these different types of stock across Westminster. It is clear that most of the borough is covered by terraced housing, with small numbers of semi-detached and detached properties, with the greatest concentration of these in the north of the borough around St. John's Wood.

TABLE 3: ORDNANCE SURVEY NATIONAL RECEPTOR DATASET 2014: HOUSING STOCK IN WESTMINSTER

HOUSE TYPE	COUNT	PERCENTAGE
DETACHED	381	0.3%
SEMI-DETACHED	562	0.4%
TERRACE	11,586	9.1%
FLAT	114,465	90.1%
TOTAL	126,994	100%

The policy would also require no adverse impact on a heritage asset. For the purpose of this analysis, a greater than single storey extension, either on a listed building, or a building adjoining a listed building *has been assumed to represent an adverse effect on a heritage asset*. Map 4 shows the distribution of listed buildings across the borough. Of the total number of basement applications that received permission between 2010/11- 2013/14, set out in Table 4, below, 58 (13%) relate to a listed property, or building adjoining a listed building, and proposing a basement greater than 1 storey and may have been have been refused under this policy. (see Appendix 1, Map 2). Table 4 also shows the relatively high percentage of deeper basements over recent years that have affected heritage buildings.

TABLE 4: BASEMENTS APPLICATIONS OVER 1 STOREY BETWEEN APRIL 2010 – MARCH 2014

YEAR	TOTAL APPLICATIONS OVER 1 STOREY	APPLICATIONS THAT MAY AFFECT HERITAGE	PROPORTION OF APPLICATIONS OVER 1 STOREY
2010-2011	20	11	55%
2011-2012	29	19	66%
2012-2013	21	13	62%
2013-2014	19	15	79%
Total	89	58	65%

2.2 EXTENT OF DEVELOPMENT: 50% OR 4METRE LIMIT

GARDEN LENGTHS IN WESTMINSTER (IN METRES)

Area	Average garden length	Permissible extension size beneath garden under various policy options:	
		Under 50% measure	4m measure
Belgravia	12m	6	4
Pimlico	8m	4	4
Knightsbridge	9m	4.5	4
St John's Wood*	21m	10.5	4
Hamilton Terrace	45m	22.5	4
Maida Vale	12m	6	4
Westbourne	11m	5.5	4

The table shows average garden lengths in areas where most basement extensions occur in Westminster. These were then considered under the two proposed policy 'measures' to determine the likely extension size that would result from the policy

This helped to inform policy relating to the '50% or 4metre' rule, which proposes to allow *whichever is the larger*. As can be seen from the table, in most of the areas of Westminster where basement development is particularly prevalent, the likely measure would be the 50% of garden length, although the 4 metre measure would benefit those with particularly small courtyard type gardens.

2.3 SOIL DEPTH REQUIRED ABOVE BASEMENTS

Summary

Soil above basements is required to protect the character and function of gardens by supporting tree and shrub planting, in order to provide an adequate landscaped setting for the developments, and to maintain and enhance green infrastructure and biodiversity.

An adequate volume of soil allows trees to grow and thrive to maturity. In the majority of cases, a minimum 1.0m top soil (plus drainage layer) will allow adequate soil volumes to be achieved to support tree growth and health to maturity. In circumstances where trees will

be planted in confined locations, (i.e. where the lateral extent of the root systems will be impeded), soil depths of up to 1.5m (plus drainage layer) will be necessary in order to provide sufficient soil volume for tree growth and stability.

Justification

The basic functions of a tree root system are to take up and transport water and nutrients, and to provide anchorage and stability to the tree. Tree root plates rarely extend below 3.0m in depth, although trees can develop deeper roots if conditions allow. Tree roots can also spread for distances far greater than their crown spread or their height. As a very general rule of thumb, the majority of tree roots are found on the top 1.0m of the soil. But soil type, fertility, soil density and aeration, obstructions in the soil (such as the presence of nearby buildings, walls or underground services) and the particular characteristics of different tree species all influence the depth and extent of tree root systems.

Water and nutrient availability

The volume of soil available to a tree directly influences the amount of water and nutrients it can take up, which itself affects the trees' health and longevity. Trees planted in small soil volumes can grow for a short time, but then quickly deplete the available resources, and are highly susceptible to drought stress. As a result they do not thrive, and die prematurely.

In circumstances where adequate soil volume can be achieved for trees to grow and thrive to maturity, soil depth should be no less than 1.0m, plus a drainage layer between the top of the basement roof and the soil. This equates to a total depth of build up above the basement of 1.2-1.5m, depending on the thickness of the drainage material.

In circumstances where the lateral extent of root growth will be impeded by the presence of physical barriers in the soil (such as building foundations, walls, and underground services), or inhospitable rooting conditions (such as the presence of impermeable surfaces), soil depths should be increased to up to 1.5m (plus drainage

layer), in order to provide sufficient soil volume for trees to grow and thrive to maturity. In these cases, consideration should be given to stratification of the imported soil layers in order to provide a bespoke environment for root growth, taking into account species selection, soil structure, water holding capacity, drainage and nutrient availability.

Adequate soil volumes are derived from Urban, (2008), [or any future research which supersedes this.]

Tree stability.

Research on windthrown trees has found 44% of tree root plates with a depth of up to 1.0m, 83% with a depth up to 1.5m and 95% with a depth up of to 2m.

Research into the establishment of trees on landfill sites found that trees with a minimum rootable soil depth of 1.0m were no more susceptible to windthrow than trees on undisturbed sites. Further findings concluded that the tree roots did not penetrate the clay cap over the landfill if at least 1.5m depth of soil cover, or soil forming material was placed over the cap.

These findings suggest that a minimum depth of 1.0m of rootable soil depth limits the risk of windthrow, but that root growth does occur to greater depths, and so the research supports the requirement for additional soil depth where soil volume is limited.

References

Tree Root Systems Arboriculture Research and Information Note 130/95/ARB (1995) Dobson, M. Arboricultural Advisory and Information Service.

Tree Roots in the Built Environment, (2006) Roberts, J., Jackson, N. and Smith, M. The Stationery Office.

Woodland Establishment on Landfill Sites: Ten Years of Research (2008), Department of Communities and Local Government.

Up by the Roots. Healthy Soils and Trees in the Built Environment (2008), Urban, J., International Society of Arboriculture.

2.4 BASEMENTS: SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Potential environmental and sustainability implications of basement development:

Vehicle Movements

One of the key issues is the very high numbers of HGV movements required for disposal of excavated spoil. The issue was considered in detail by Alan Baxter's and Associates for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in its *Case Studies of basement excavation in relation to programme and vehicle movements*¹, finding that deeper basements which necessitate a much larger volume of soil being excavated, require between 11 and 58 lorry movements per week, with planned excavation periods between 4 and 19 weeks, depending on the volume, site access and construction methodology. Additionally, the associated construction periods (excluding fit out) range from 17 up to 70 weeks. Total lorry movements associated with basement construction case studies ranged from 65 lorry movements for the smallest single-storey basement and up to 700 lorry movements for the largest basement extension, sub-basement and swimming pool.

¹ Case Studies of basement excavation in relation to programme and vehicle movements, Alan Baxter and Associates (January 2014)

Green Analysis

Comparative before and after aerial photographs have been taken of a sample of sites in Westminster to see the impact on landscaping in private gardens following a basement being installed, particularly where it extends under the garden. Although many will re-landscape their gardens, many do not, or do so in a more sterile fashion afterwards, losing biodiversity benefits, and mature planting which is not replaced. This can clearly be seen from the aerial shots at Appendix 3. This leads to questions about the impact of the loss of permeable ground for sustainable urban drainage, and the loss of green landscaping and associated impact on biodiversity.

Embodied Carbon

The high embodied energy of materials used in basement construction, particularly concrete, which is the main material used in basement construction, results in a relatively high CO₂ emission rating. *BREEAM* and *Code for Sustainable Homes* standards do not take account of, or measure, embodied carbon, as these measure the operational carbon emissions. Eight Associates produced a report for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea², which found that “subterranean extensions in dwellings are generally characterised by a more carbon intense building life cycle” The report considered the buildings life cycle carbon emissions of projects with subterranean extensions vs projects with above ground extensions. As reported by Eight Associates in its press release³ from March 2015:

“The Eight Associates report for RBKC drew on 16 different case studies in its lifecycle carbon analysis of above ground extensions, single storey basements and multi-storey basements. In terms of embodied carbon, basements were found to be over 50% more carbon intense than above ground extensions. Multi-storey basements are likely to have carbon intensity for the materials used over 12% higher than single storey basements.

It was a similar case for construction carbon, with single and multi-storey basements likely to have in excess of 50% more carbon emissions than above ground extensions per square metre. Importantly, it was found at this stage of development that multi-storey basements have carbon emissions 28% higher than single storey basements.

The long term implications of the ‘iceberg house’ phenomena were highlighted by the finding that even if multi-storey basements were to utilise advanced retrofit measures, the enhanced operational efficiency, and associated carbon savings,

² Life Cycle Carbon Analysis Extensions and Subterranean Developments in RBKC, Eight Associates, (February 2014) <http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/pdf/E642%20RBKC%20FinalReport%201402-10RM%20lores.pdf>

³<http://eightassociates.co.uk/press-release-20150304>

still would not be enough to compensate for the embodied and construction carbon over a 60 year period.

In relation to operational carbon, multi storey basements have the highest operational carbon emissions, 9% higher than single storey basements.

Basements that are exclusively in the garden perform worse than those under or attached to the existing dwelling.”

3. IMPACT ON RESIDENTS

The high volume of responses on this issue since first raised in 2008, and at different stages of consultation associated with our SPD, and previous policy iterations gives an indication of the level of concern amongst residents. Concerns have also been raised via Karen Buck MP, who undertook a survey of residents attitudes to basement development, which supports the Council’s own findings that the amenity impacts associated with basement development is a major concern for residents. This is backed up by noise complaints associated with basements, which are high. In recent years the media have also highlighted the impact that basement developments have on neighbouring residents.

3.1 NOISE COMPLAINTS

A table setting out some of the noise complaints received by the Council relating to basement development between 2012 and 2015 is included at Appendix 4, intended to demonstrate the impact on residential amenity. Those that were deemed to be simply building works in a basement, that may not relate to a basement excavation or other non-construction noise were filtered out. This does not attempt to pick up every complaint associated with basement excavation, and is not exhaustive, but gives an indication of the types of complaints and their impact on neighbours. These are also shown on map 5 at Appendix 1.

3.2 RESPONSES TO PREVIOUS CONSULTATION STAGES

See separate consultation statement.

3.3 NEIGHBOUR RESPONSES

Appendix 5 consists of a digest of representations received by Development Planning in response to neighbor consultations on domestic basement extensions. With around 140 basement applications annually, and multiple neighbour representations it has not been possible to include all such responses received. Instead a selection has been made to show a representative sample of the range of resident concerns. The most frequently cited concerns are: Disruption, noise and vehicle movements, structural stability and subsidence, loss of trees and impact on hydrology.

3.4 GARDEN PLANTING

Appendix 6 contains extracts from the four conservation area audits which refer to the contribution of planting in private gardens to the character and appearance of conservation areas.

3.5 EVIDENCE FROM OTHER SOURCES OF RESIDENTS' CONCERN

Appendix 7 includes evidence from other sources of residents' concerns. This includes a survey undertaken by Karen Buck MP of Residents' concerns around basements⁴, an extract from the Knightsbridge Annual Report, and the South East Bayswater Residents' Association (SEBRA) Newsletter from Autumn 2013.

3.6 MEDIA COVERAGE

There have been numerous high profile stories on basement developments and 'iceberg designs' (where the proportion of the development below ground is greater than that above ground). These are hard to quantify as they appear in the media at differing stages of the application or construction process and they are usually not site specific; however Appendix 8 contains a summary of recent, relevant media coverage relating to basements.

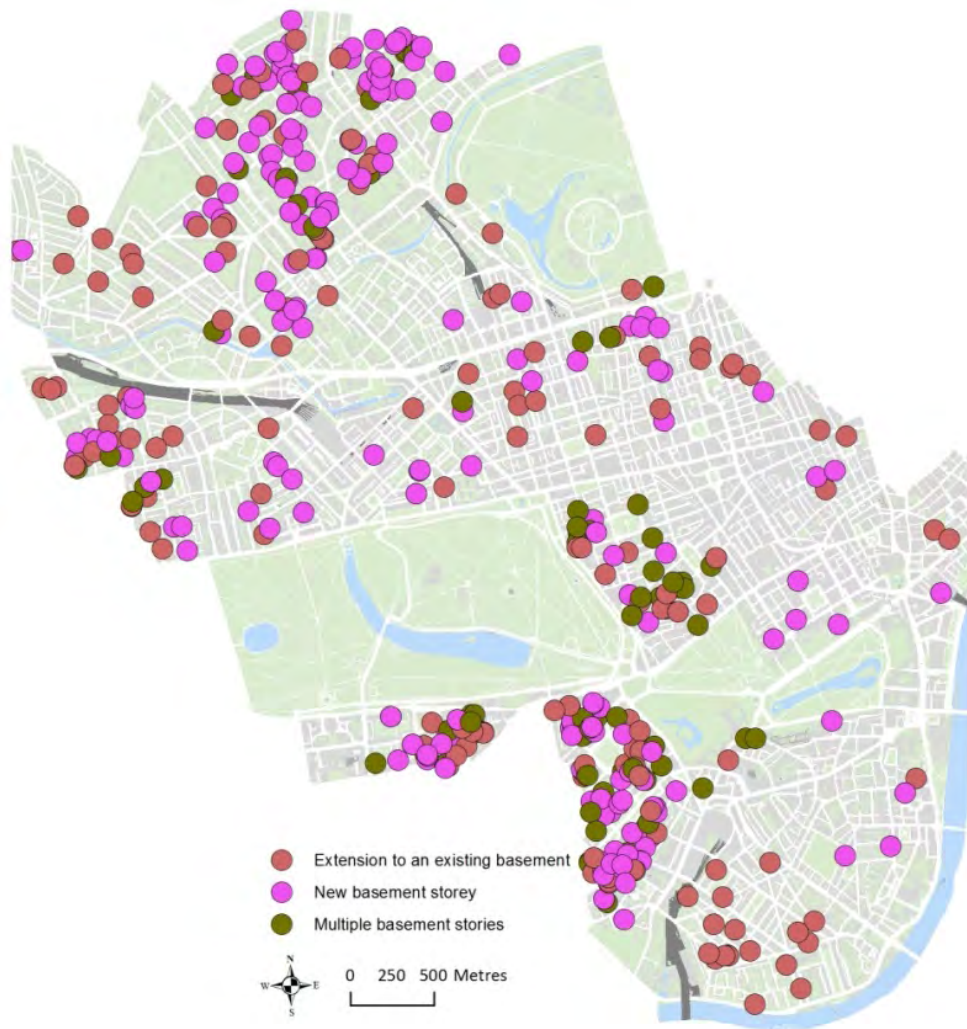
4. PROPOSED CODE OF CONSTRUCTION PRACTICE CHARGES AND SERVICE LEVEL

The proposed policy is intended to strike a balance between mitigating amenity impacts on residents while acknowledging that development will take place, and that it represents a valuable way of adding space without impacting visually. Given that a balance needs to be struck and it is not feasible or desirable to 'ban' basements, a revised code of construction practice will apply to all residential basement development, and adherence to this will be expected. Appendix 2 sets out a charging schedule and outline service level agreement.

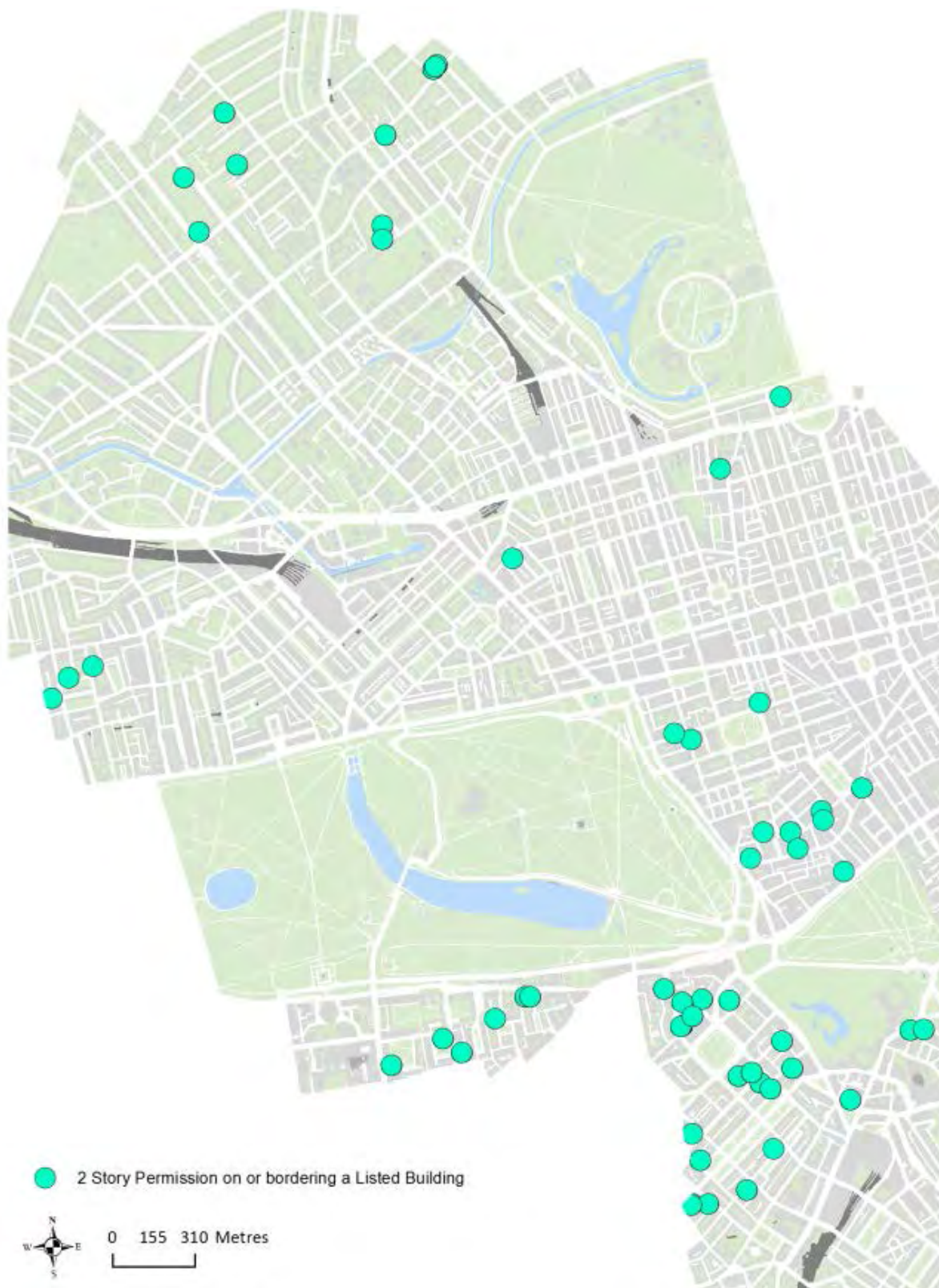
⁴ Basement Developments, Neighbours' Survey, Westminster (2013)

APPENDIX 1: MAPS

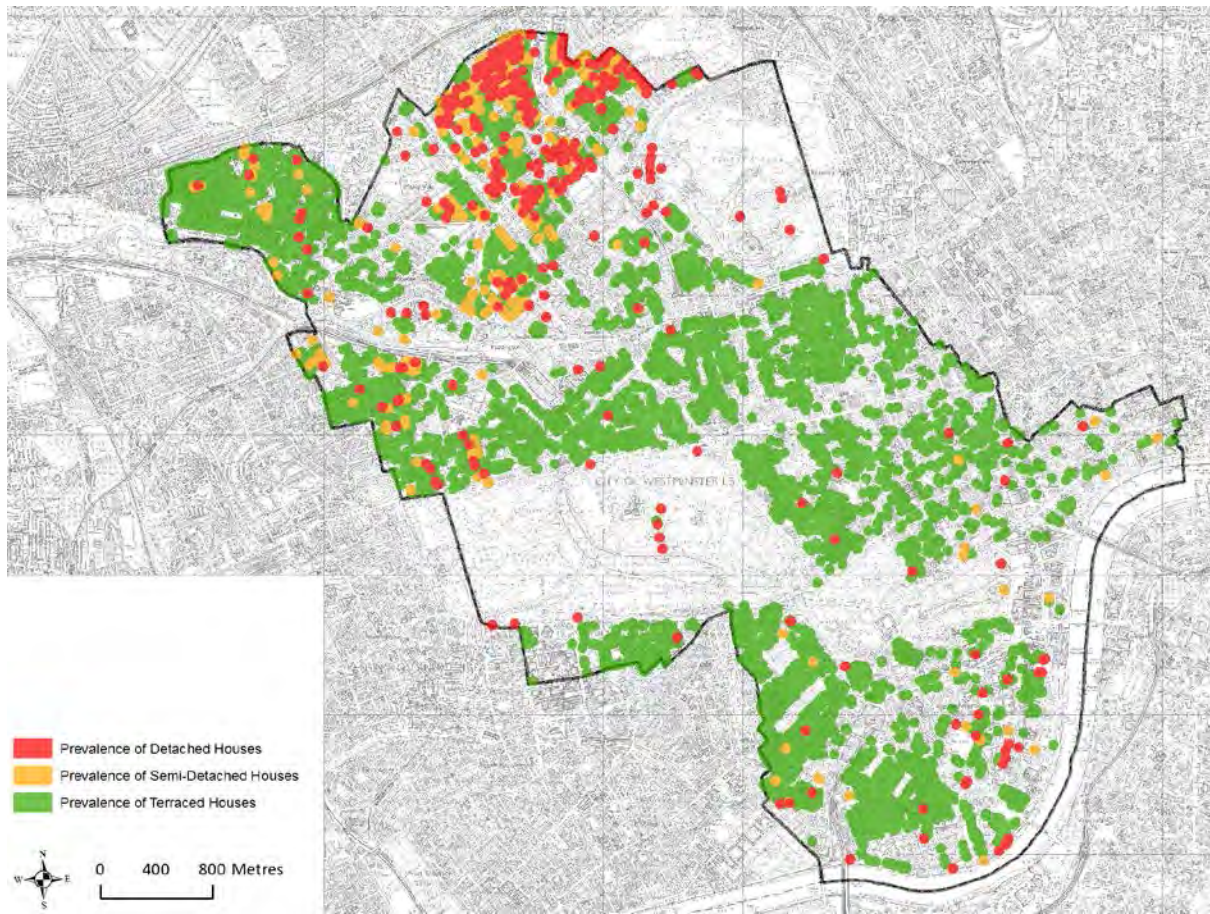
MAP 1: PERMITTED APPLICATIONS THAT INCLUDE A BASEMENT EXTENSION / EXCAVATION



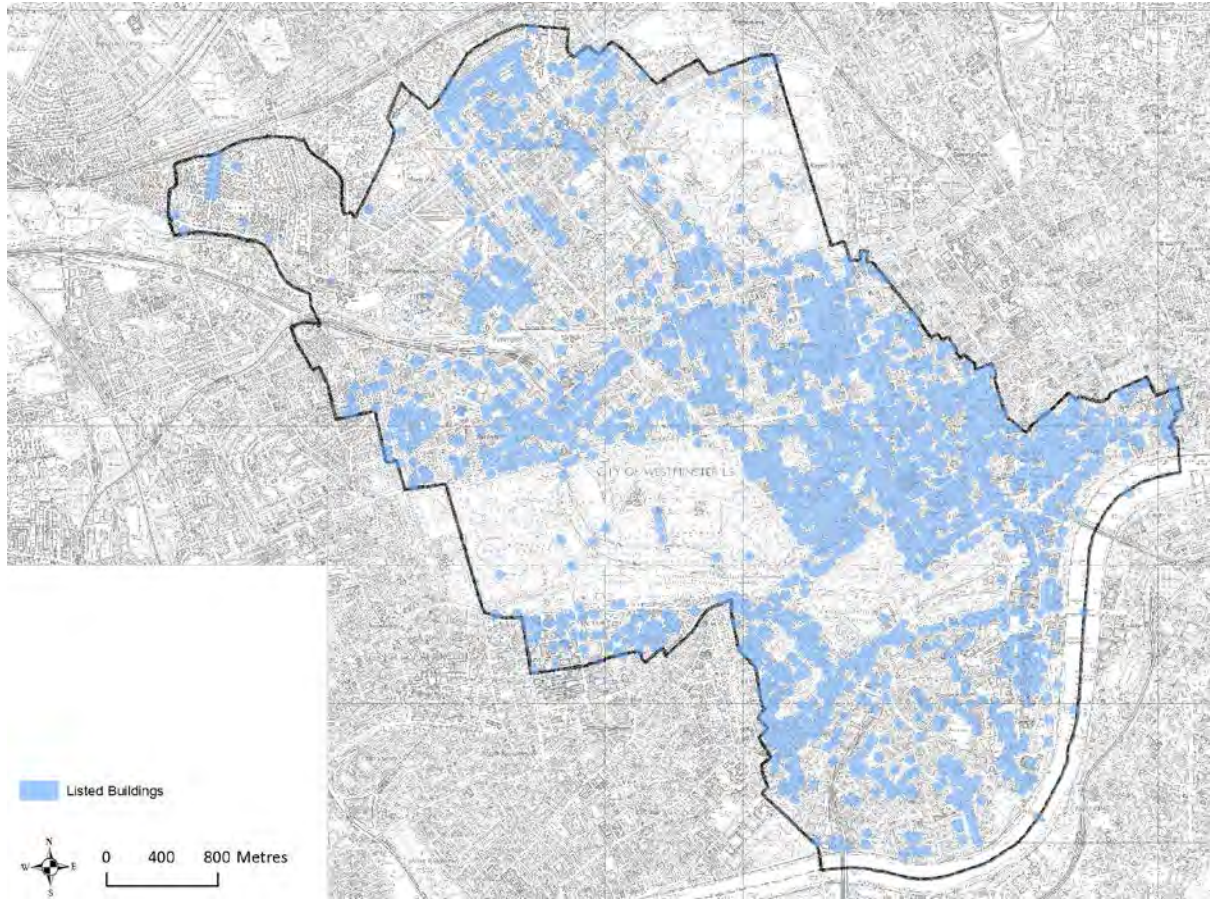
MAP 2: APPLICATIONS OF MORE THAN A SINGLE STOREY WHICH BORDERS OR INVOLVES A LISTED BUILDING



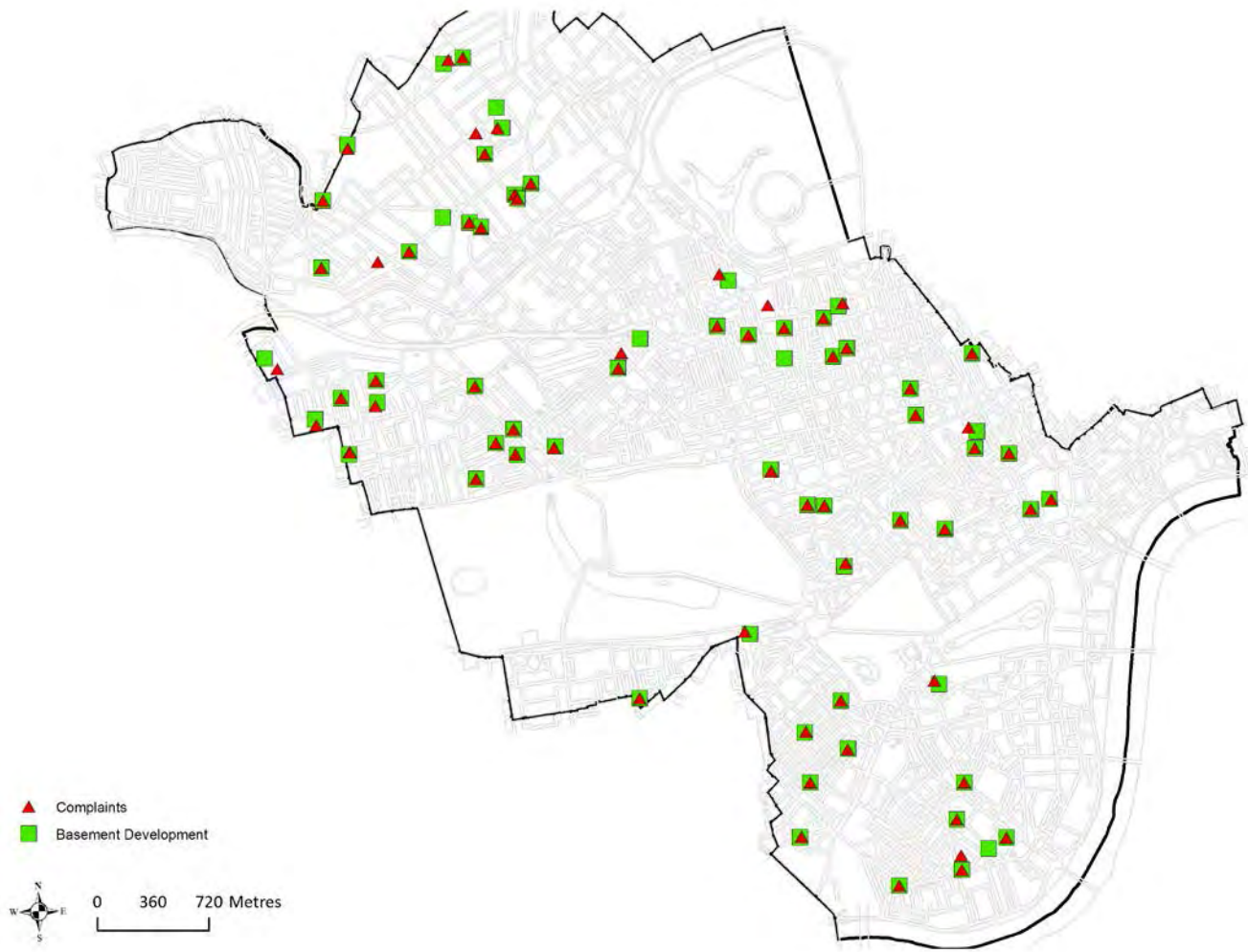
MAP 3: WESTMINSTER HOUSING STOCK



MAP 4: WESTMINSTER LISTED BUILDINGS



MAP 5: NOISE COMPLAINTS RELATING TO BASEMENT DEVELOPMENT 2012-15



APPENDIX 2: CODE OF CONSTRUCTION PRACTICE FEES AND SERVICE LEVEL

The Council is updating its Code of Construction Practice, setting out our minimum standards and procedures for managing and minimising the environmental impacts of construction projects within the City of Westminster.

The City of Westminster experiences high levels of new development, including subterranean development, reflected in the City Council being the busiest planning authority in the country. At the same time, the City has a densely-settled population of residents and businesses, with a range of attractions bringing in significant visitor numbers. Because construction impacts have the potential to cause significant disturbance to residents and businesses, this requires efforts by all to control, monitor and coordinate construction works (including demolition) to minimise impacts, stop things from going wrong, deal with them promptly and efficiently when they do. It is intended that the first phase of this Code of Construction Practice will apply to basement extensions and excavations to residential buildings, and those immediately adjacent to residential buildings.

Service offered under the Code of Construction Practice

An indicative schedule of fees and services to be offered has been developed in consultation with relevant services. For the Basements category this includes advice to applicants on their construction management plan, noise and dust mitigation, monitoring and site visits, and a role in community liaison and complaints follow up, although it should be noted that a key expectation of the Code of Construction Practice is for applicants to provide their own telephone complaints number, prominently displayed on the site, thus reducing the number of calls to the Council.

The costs set out below are indicative, and will be based on actual costs incurred, in terms of licenses, permits, and monitoring, and therefore tailored to individual sites. Where sums paid on account are not spent they will be repaid to applicants.

	Basement excavation – costs and services	Chargeable element breakdown, to extent not chargeable under other powers
Environmental Inspectorate service provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice to applicants regarding environmental requirements, construction management plan, noise and dust mitigation measures 	Based on hourly rates Average: £1020 (3 meetings and follow up emails)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice on site planning with regards to highways and traffic issues 	Based on hourly rates Average: £1020 (3 meetings and follow up emails)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular site visits to check 	Every fortnight over the duration

	compliance with agreed requirements	of the development: £136 per visit Average: £3808 / year
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the documents (Construction Management Plan) and agreement 	Based on hourly rates £680
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Liaison and complaints follow up 	Based on hourly rates and experience: High cost - £2720 med cost - £1360 low cost - £680
Cost estimates (per site), range and average Environmental Inspectorate Service	£7208 - £9248 (depending on the level of complaints received) Average: £8228	

Note that cost range outlined above for the Code of Construction Practice does not include licences for the following elements which may not be required in all cases. Therefore charges are listed separately, and will apply as required.

Fees for licenses, if required:

License fees are currently under review, with an increase expected by end of August 2015. New rates will be published on the Council's website at: <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/apply-temporary-structure-road-closure-or-crane-licence>

Current fee levels:

Temporary Traffic Order	£1816
Structure License	Varies based on duration and size of structure between £295-£1800 (for further details: https://www.westminster.gov.uk/apply-temporary-structure-road-closure-or-crane-licence)

Crane licence	£294 (for crane or platform on the highway); For further details: https://www.westminster.gov.uk/apply-temporary-structure-road-closure-or-crane-licence
Skip licence	£78 (for up to two skips, valid for 3 months) For further details: https://www.westminster.gov.uk/skip-licences
Parking suspension	£42 (per space per day) (for further details: https://www.westminster.gov.uk/parking-bay-suspensions)

APPENDIX 3: AERIAL IMAGING

The following photographs show before and after images taken from a sample of basement applications, dating from 2010 with follow up photos from 2014. These show that in a large proportion sites, the landscaping following development is more sterile, with higher proportion of hard landscaping and impermeable surface, with likely reduction in biodiversity benefits.

2010



09/08115/FULL

2014



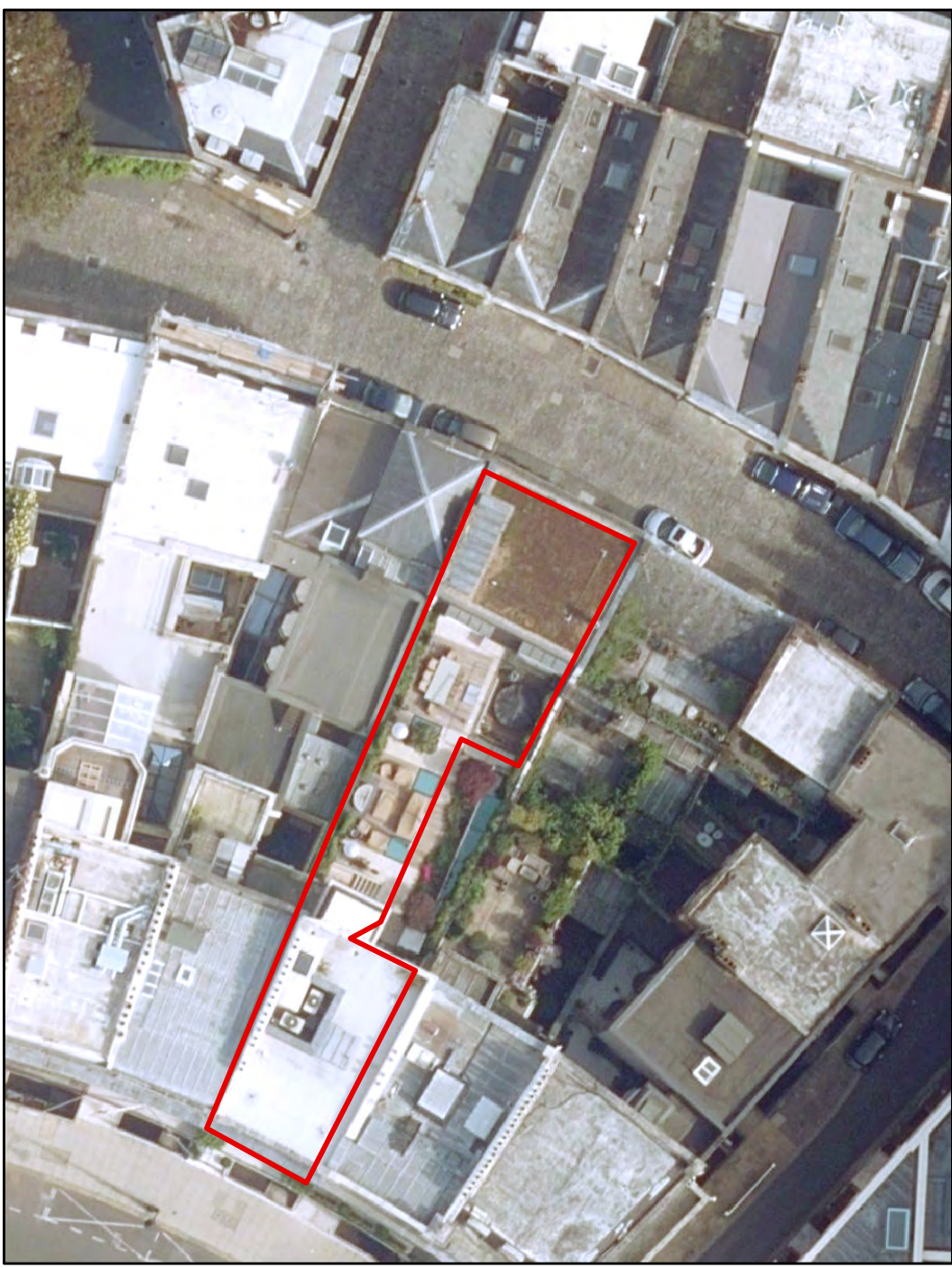
0 2.254.5 9 Meters
 A scale bar with markings at 0, 2.25, 4.5, and 9 meters.

2010



09/07673/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters

 A scale bar located at the bottom right of the 2014 image, showing a scale from 0 to 9 meters with markings at 0, 2.25, 4.5, and 9 meters.

2010



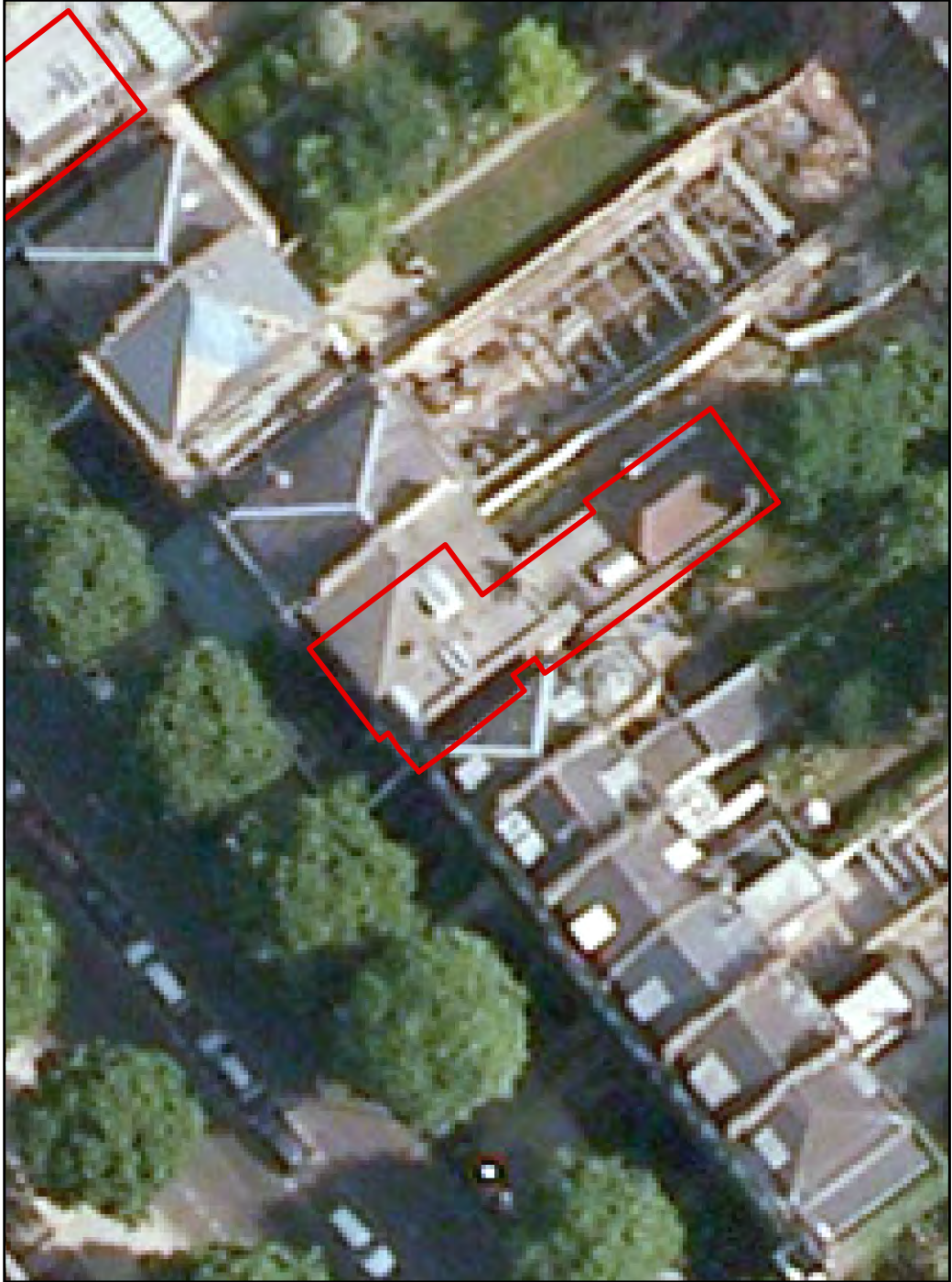
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2010



10/02563/FULL

2014



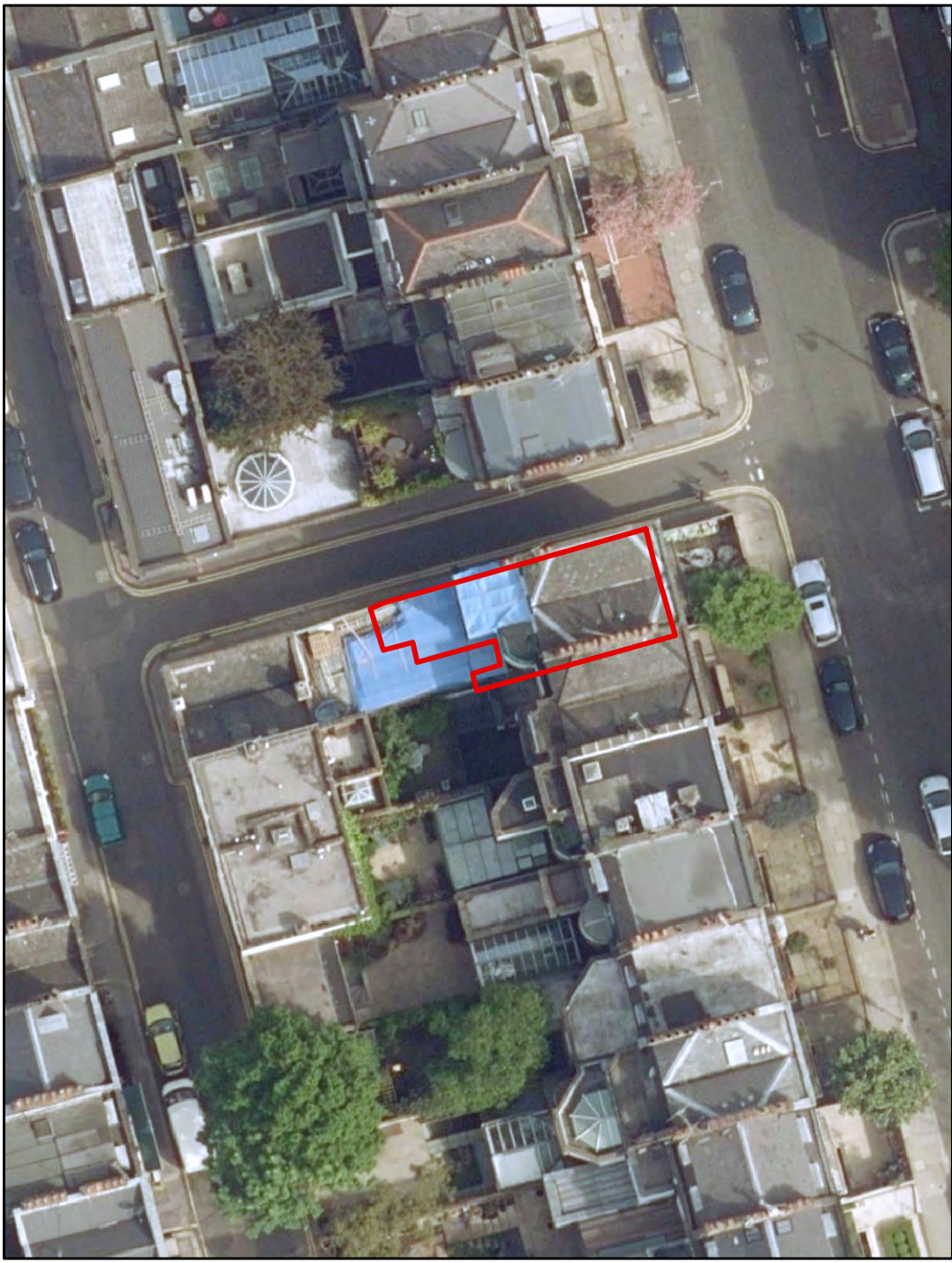
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2014



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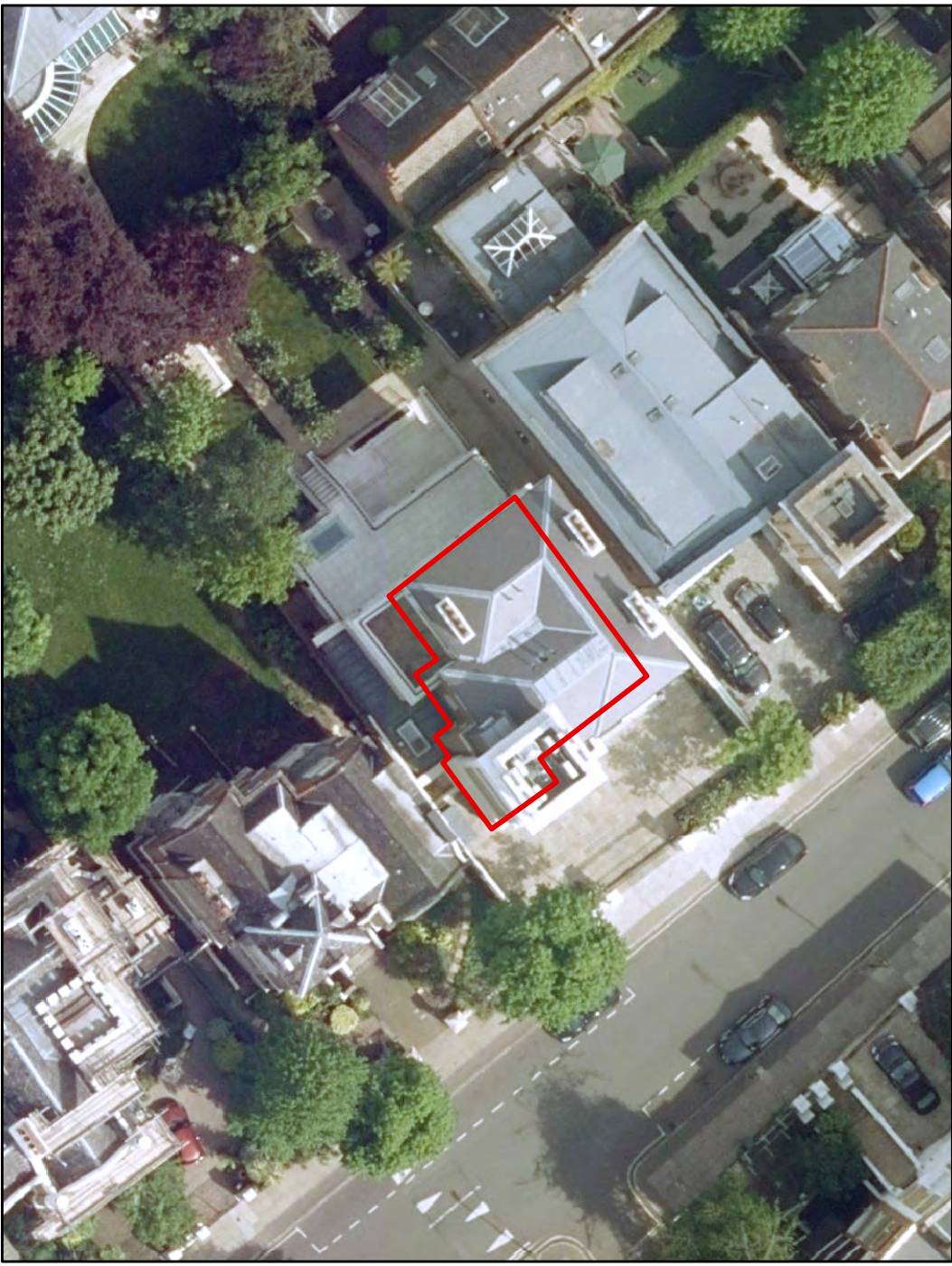
 A scale bar with markings at 0, 2.25, 4.5, and 9 meters.

2010



09/10361/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters

 A scale bar located at the bottom right of the 2014 image, showing a scale from 0 to 9 meters with intermediate markings at 2.25 and 4.5 meters.

2010



10/02918/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters

 A horizontal scale bar with four segments. The segments are labeled 0, 2.25, 4.5, and 9 Meters.

2010



10/01353/FULL

2014



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2010



09/08505/FULL

2014



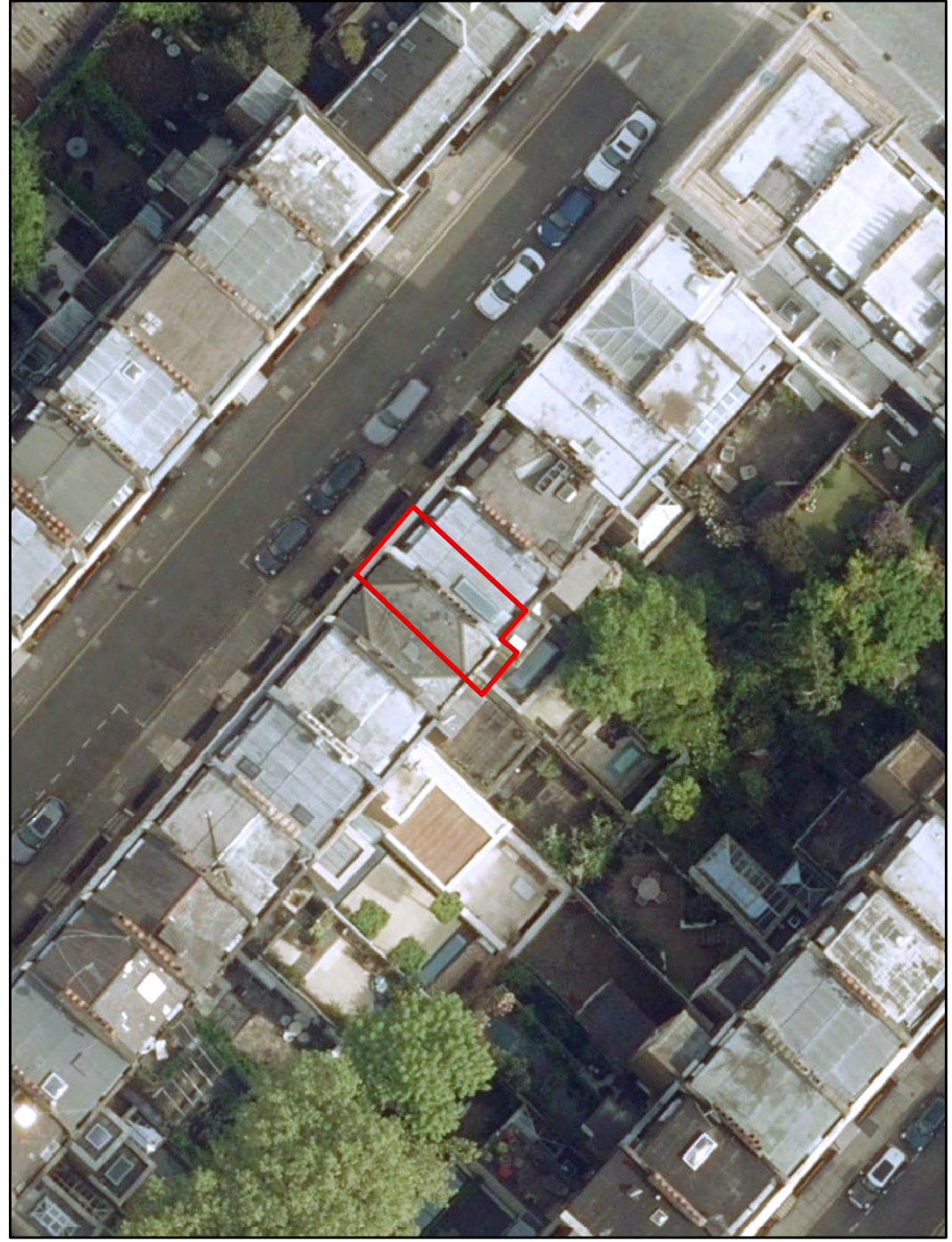
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2010



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2014



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2010



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2014



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2010



10/03303/FULL

2014



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2010



10/02649/FULL

2014



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A scale bar showing 0, 2.25, 4.5, and 9 meters.

2010



09/09103/FULL

2014



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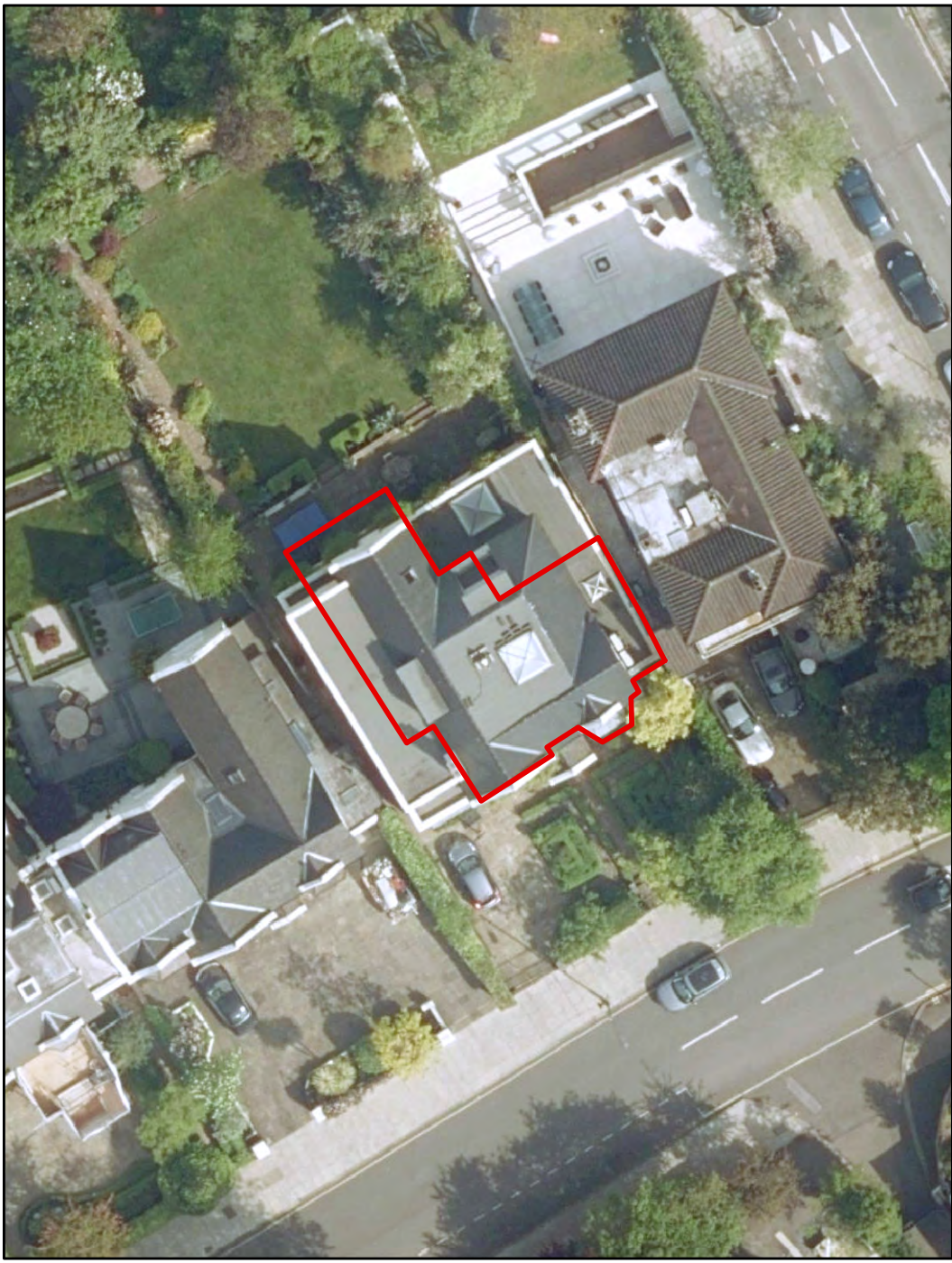
 A scale bar showing 0, 2.25, 4.5, and 9 meters.

2010



10/00627/FULL

2014



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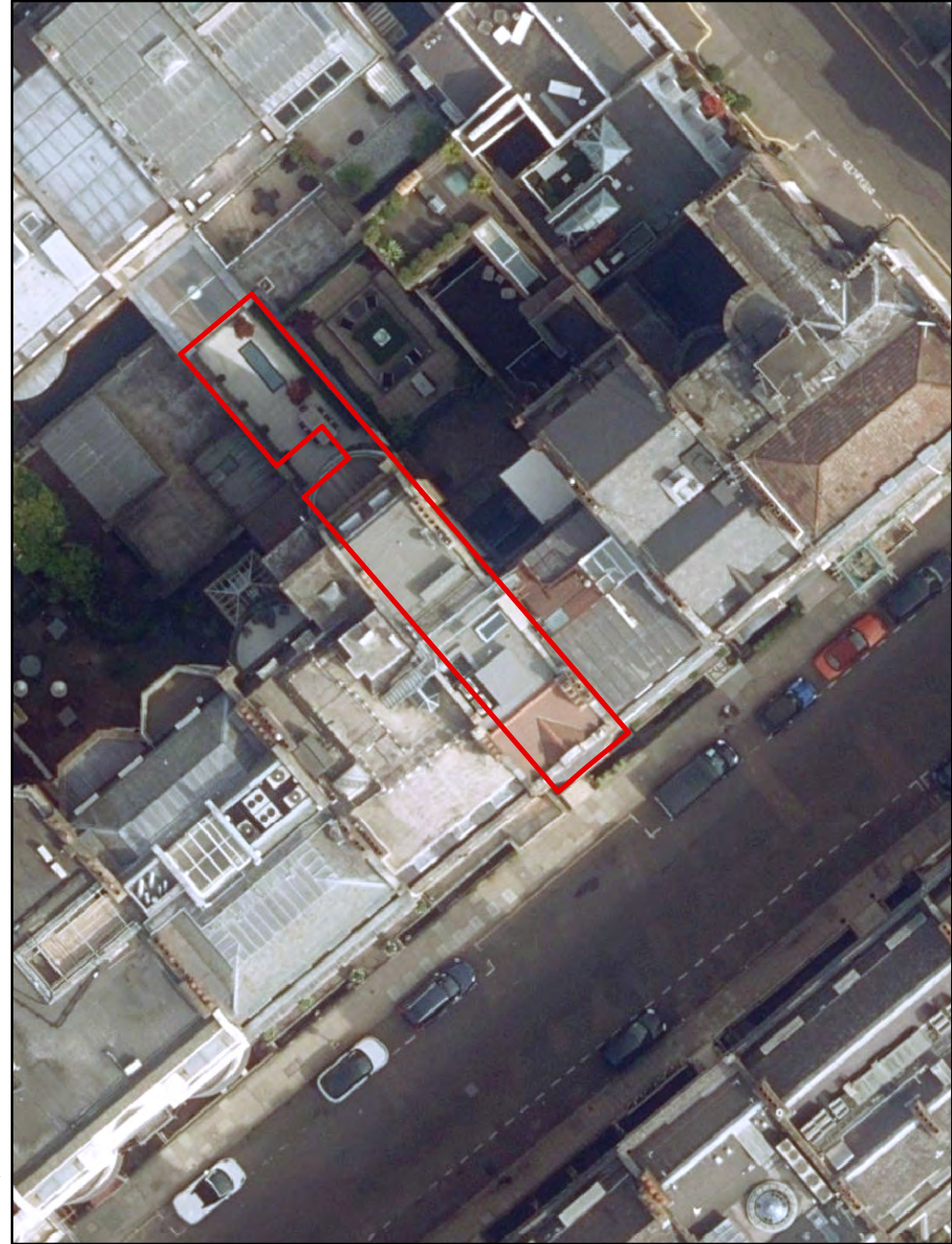
 A scale bar with markings at 0, 2.25, 4.5, and 9 meters.

2010



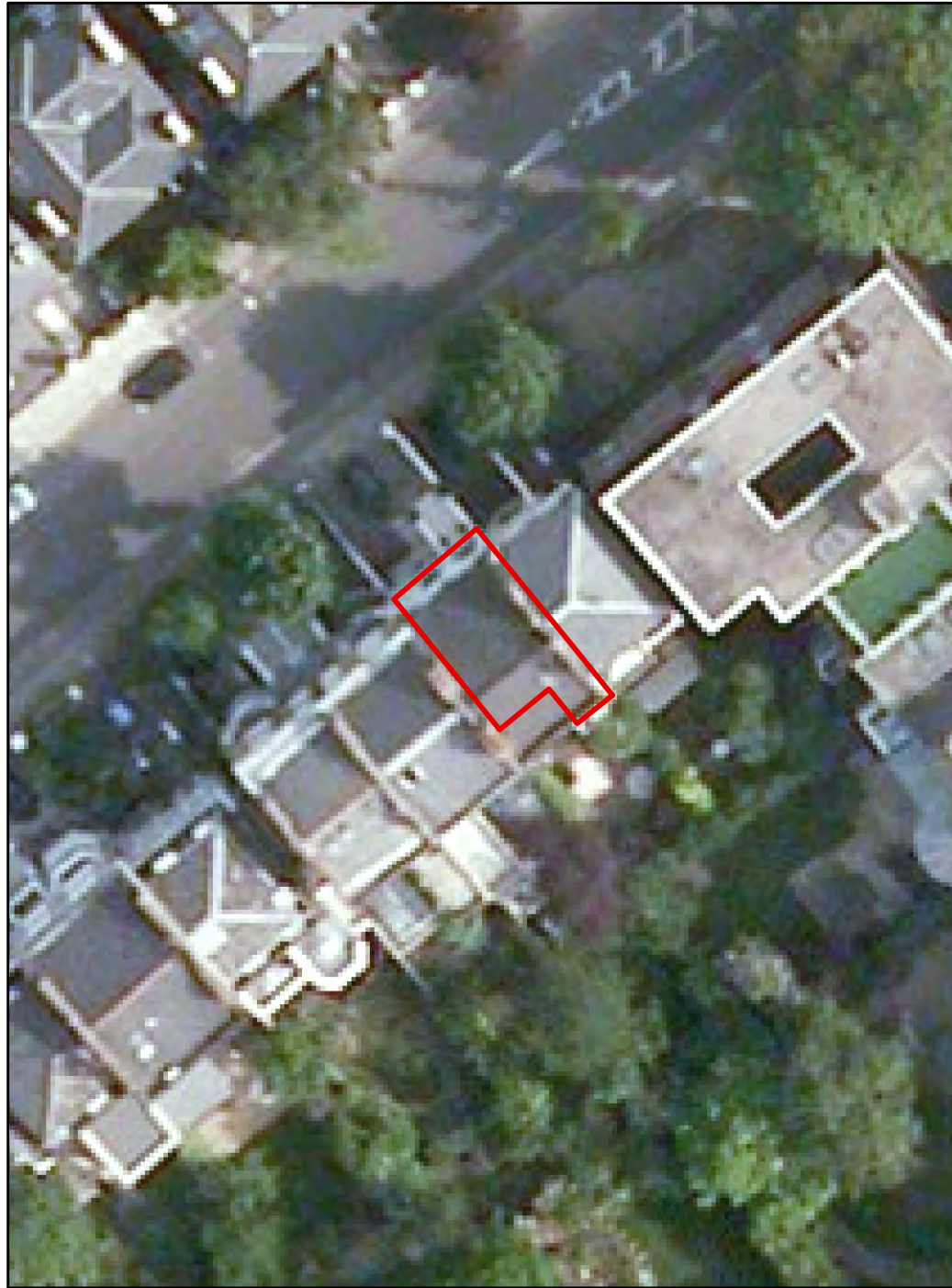
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2014



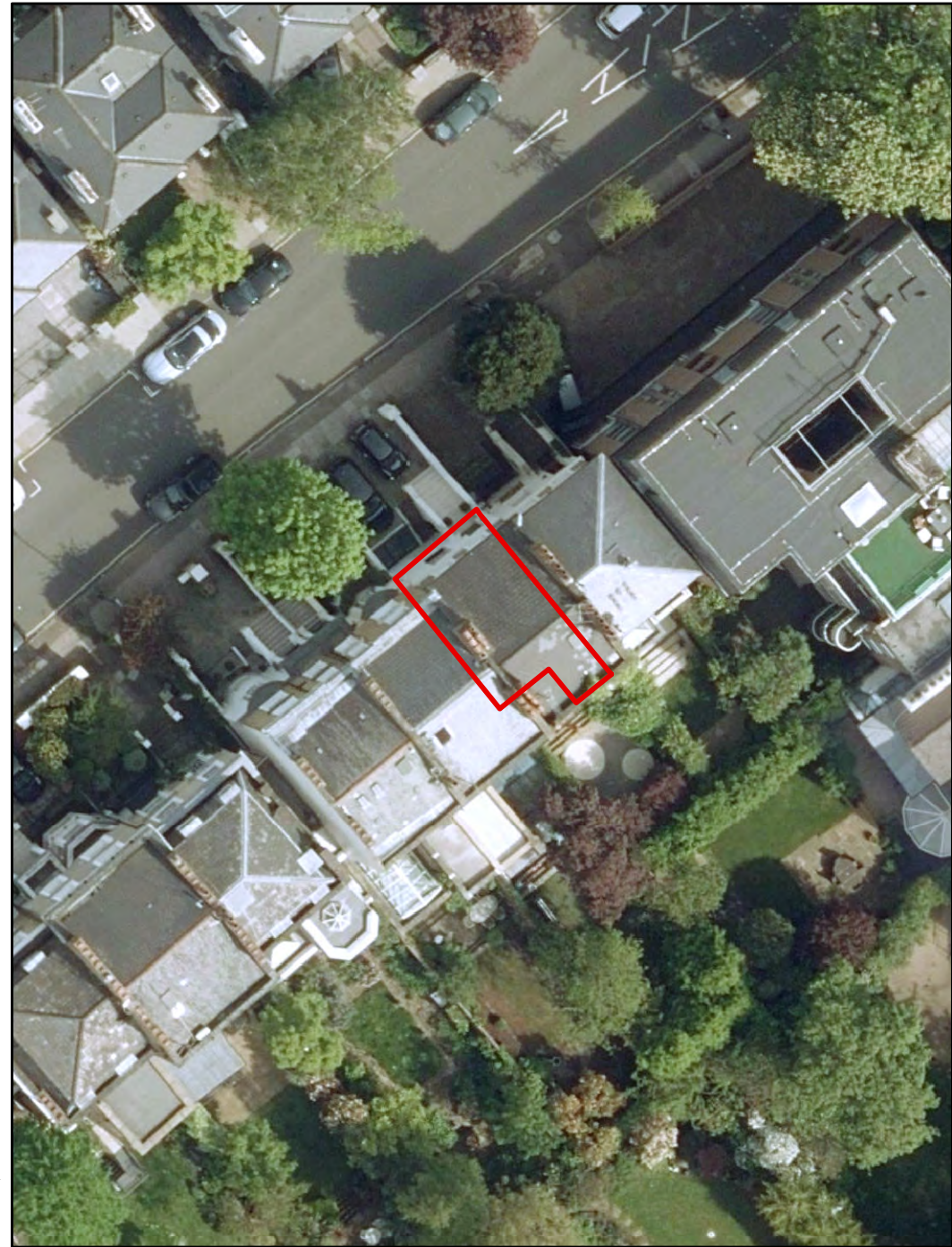
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A scale bar showing 0, 2.25, 4.5, and 9 meters.

2010



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2014



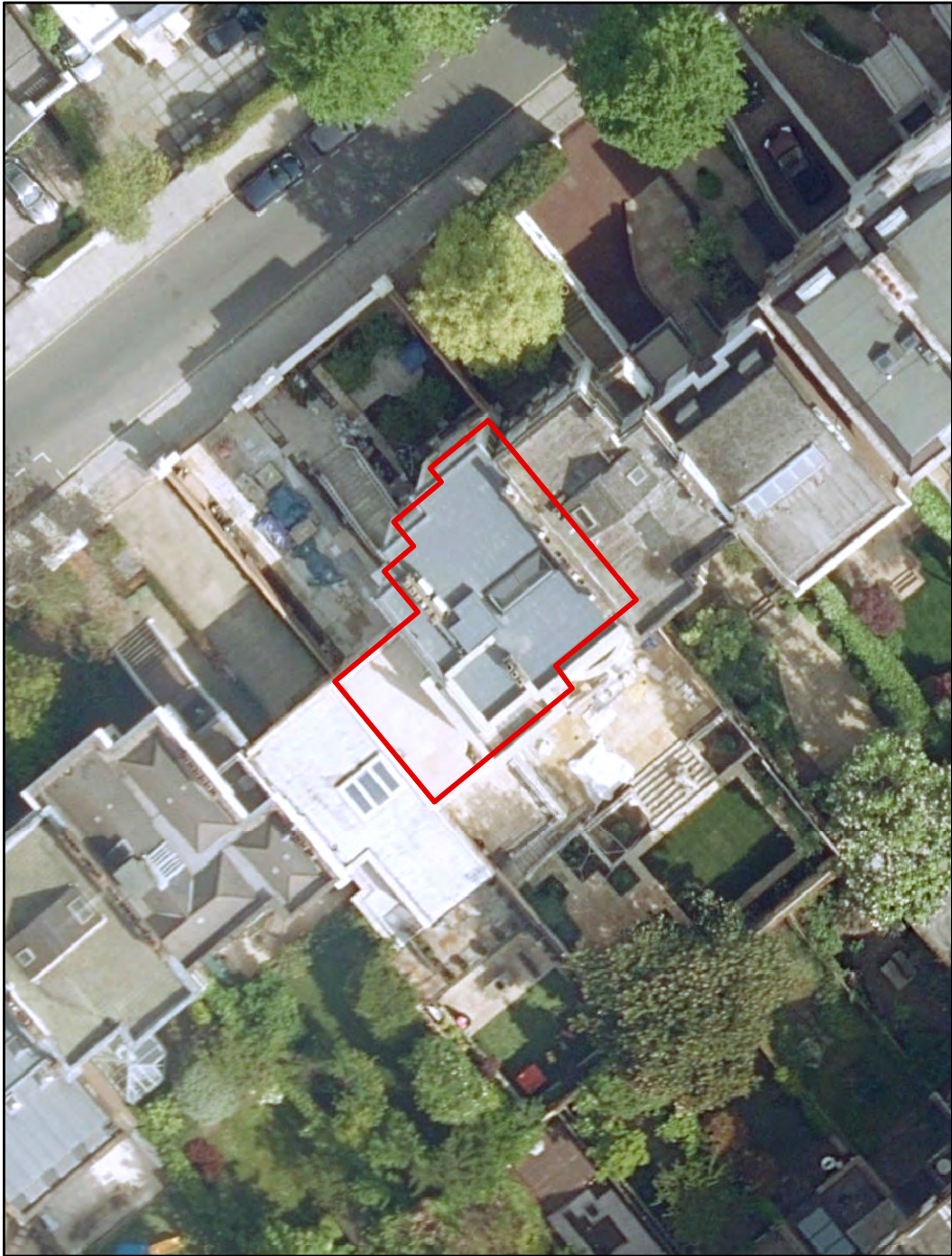
0 2.254.5 9 Meters
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2010



10/03825/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters

2010



10/04228/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters

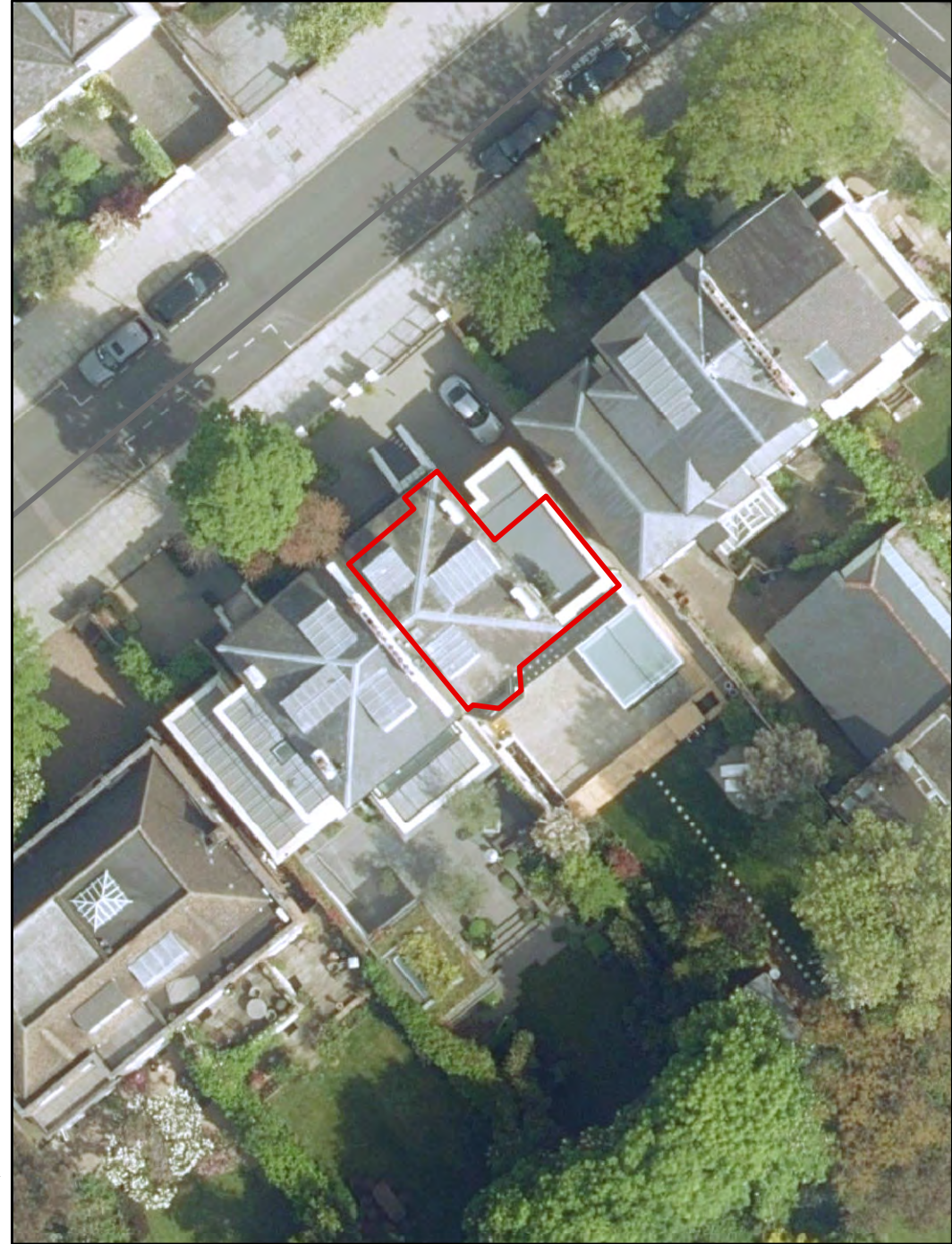
 A scale bar with four segments, corresponding to the markings 0, 2.25, 4.5, and 9 meters.

2010



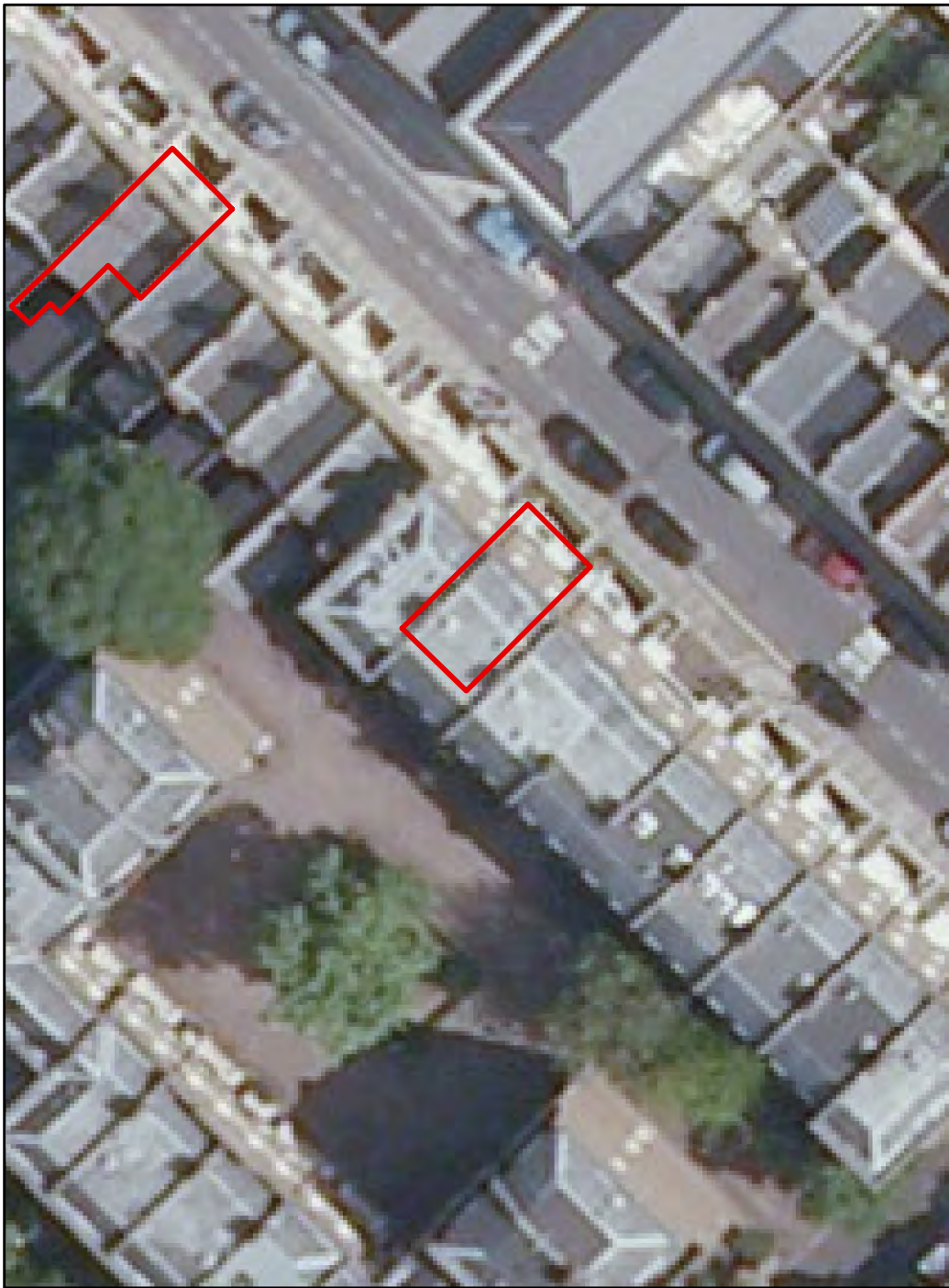
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2014



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2010



10/00009/FULL

2014



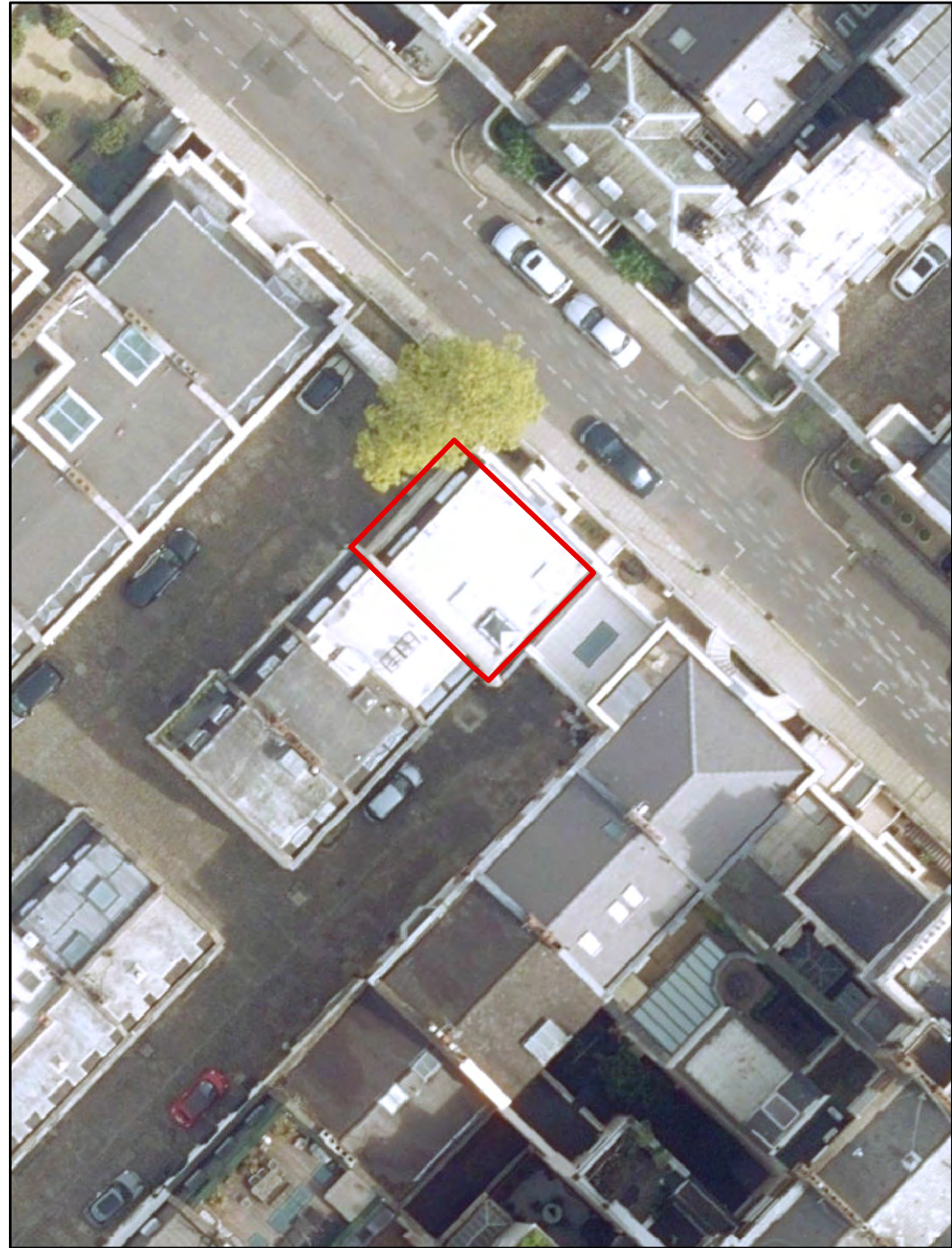
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2010



10/04738/FULL

2014



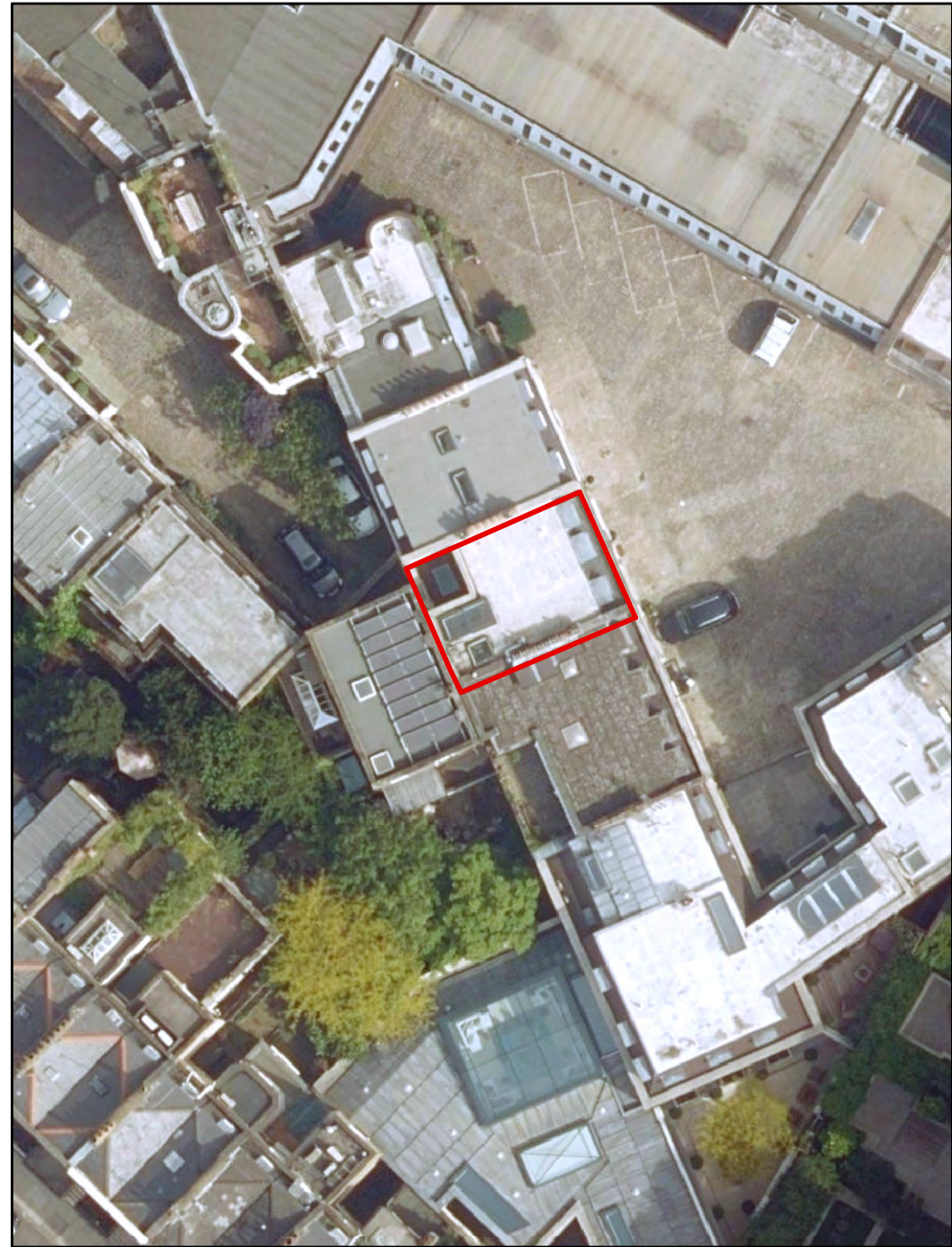
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2010



10/04497/FULL

2014



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2010



10/04258/FULL

2014



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2010



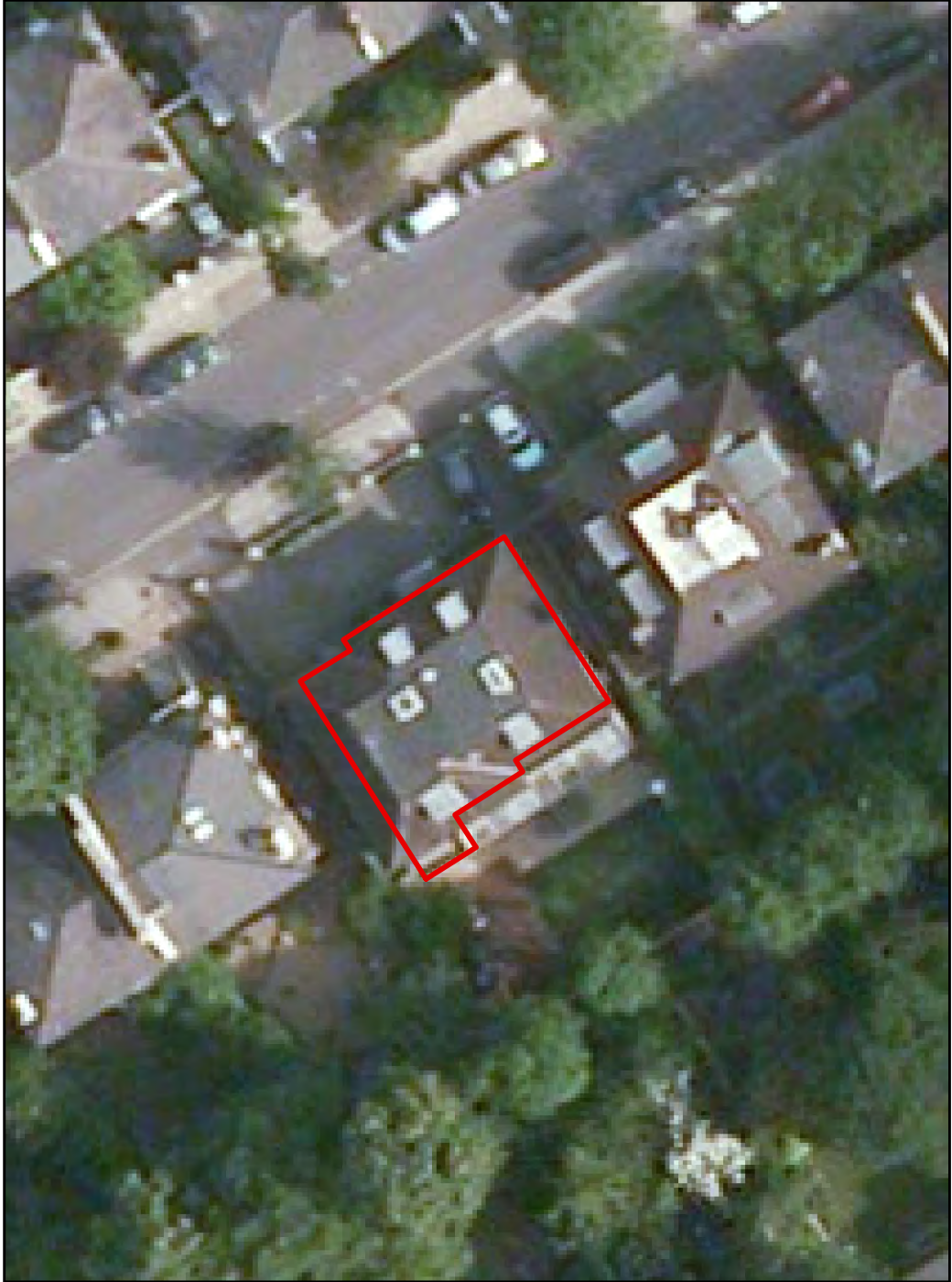
10/03881/FULL

2014



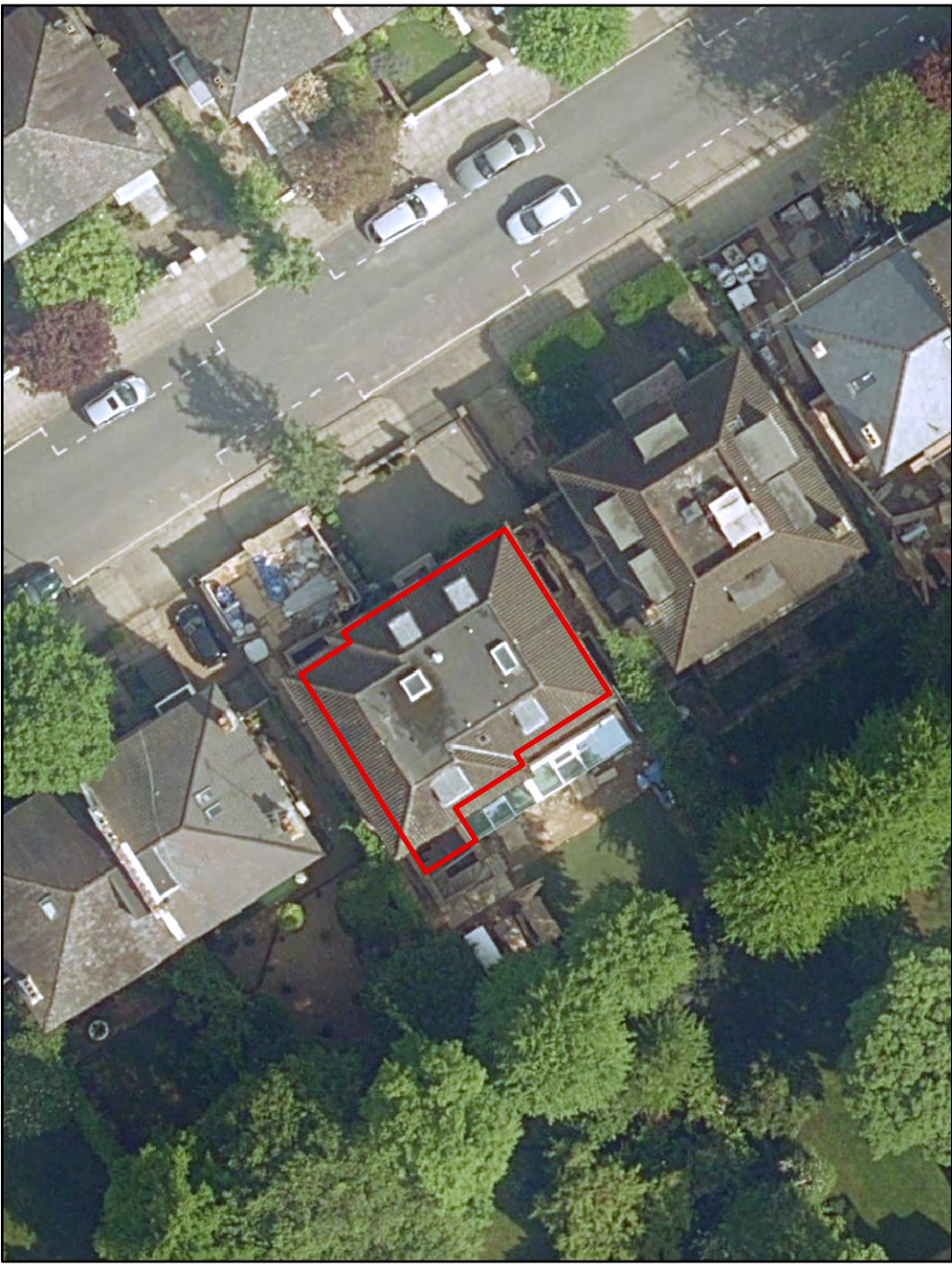
0 2.254.5 9 Meters
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2010



10/04811/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters

 A scale bar with markings at 0, 2.25, 4.5, and 9 meters.


2010



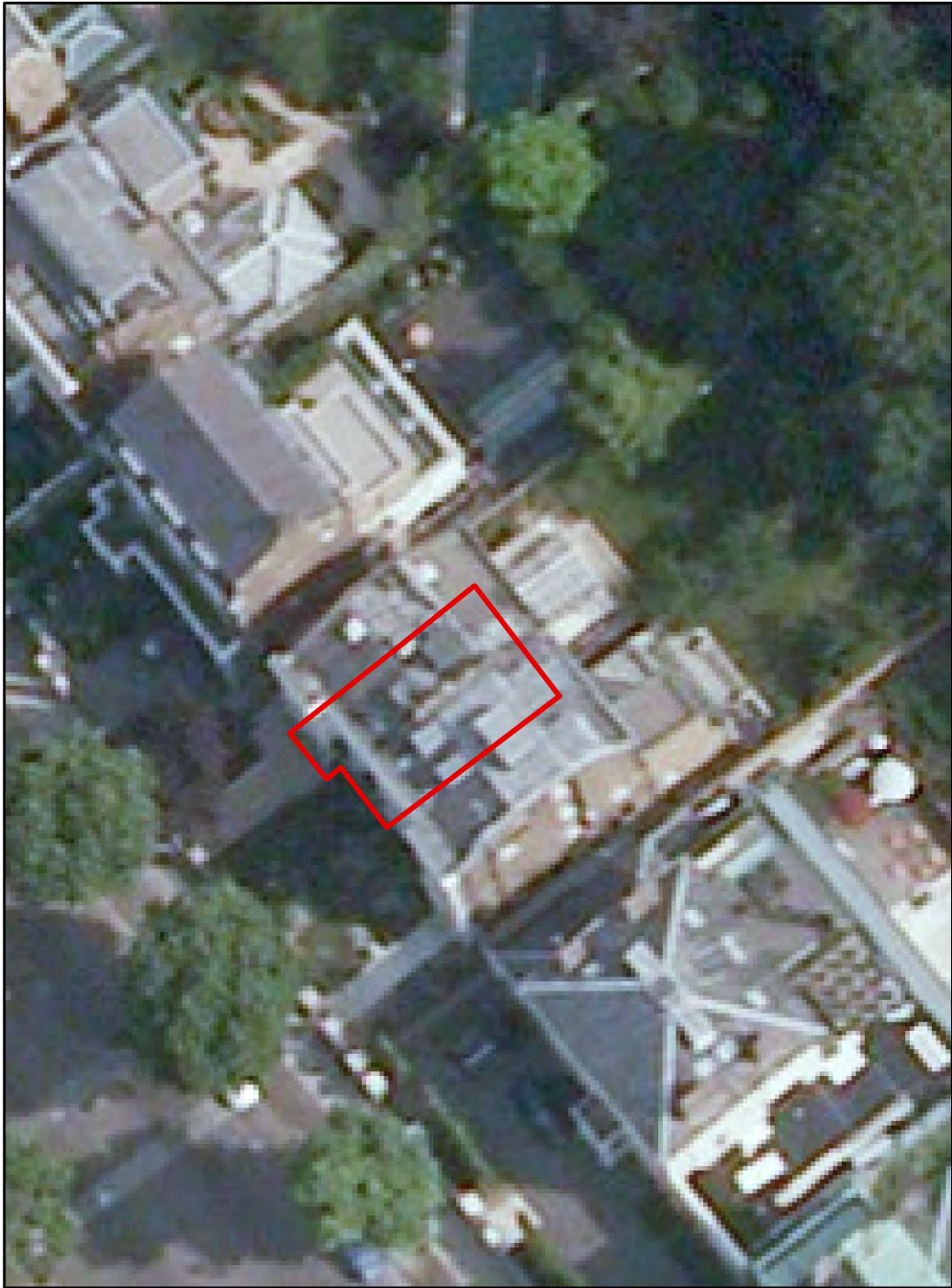
10/04173/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters


2010



10/03470/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters

 A scale bar with markings at 0, 2.25, 4.5, and 9 meters.

2010



10/03097/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

2010



10/06202/FULL

2014



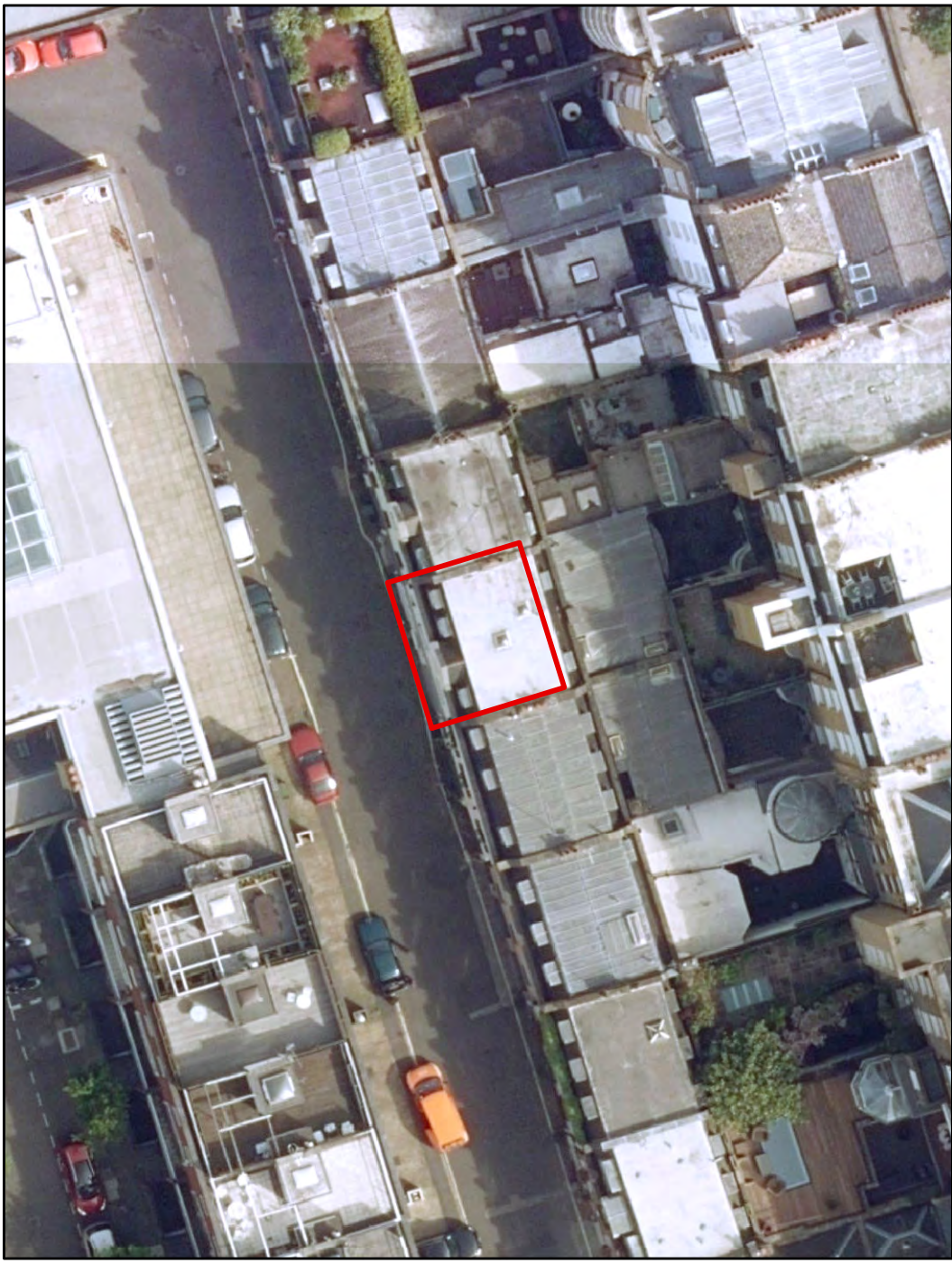
0 2.254.5 9 Meters

 A scale bar with markings for 0, 2.25, 4.5, and 9 meters.

2010



2014



10/05752/FULL

0 2.254.5 9 Meters

 A scale bar with markings at 0, 2.25, 4.5, and 9 meters.

2010



10/05188/FULL

2014



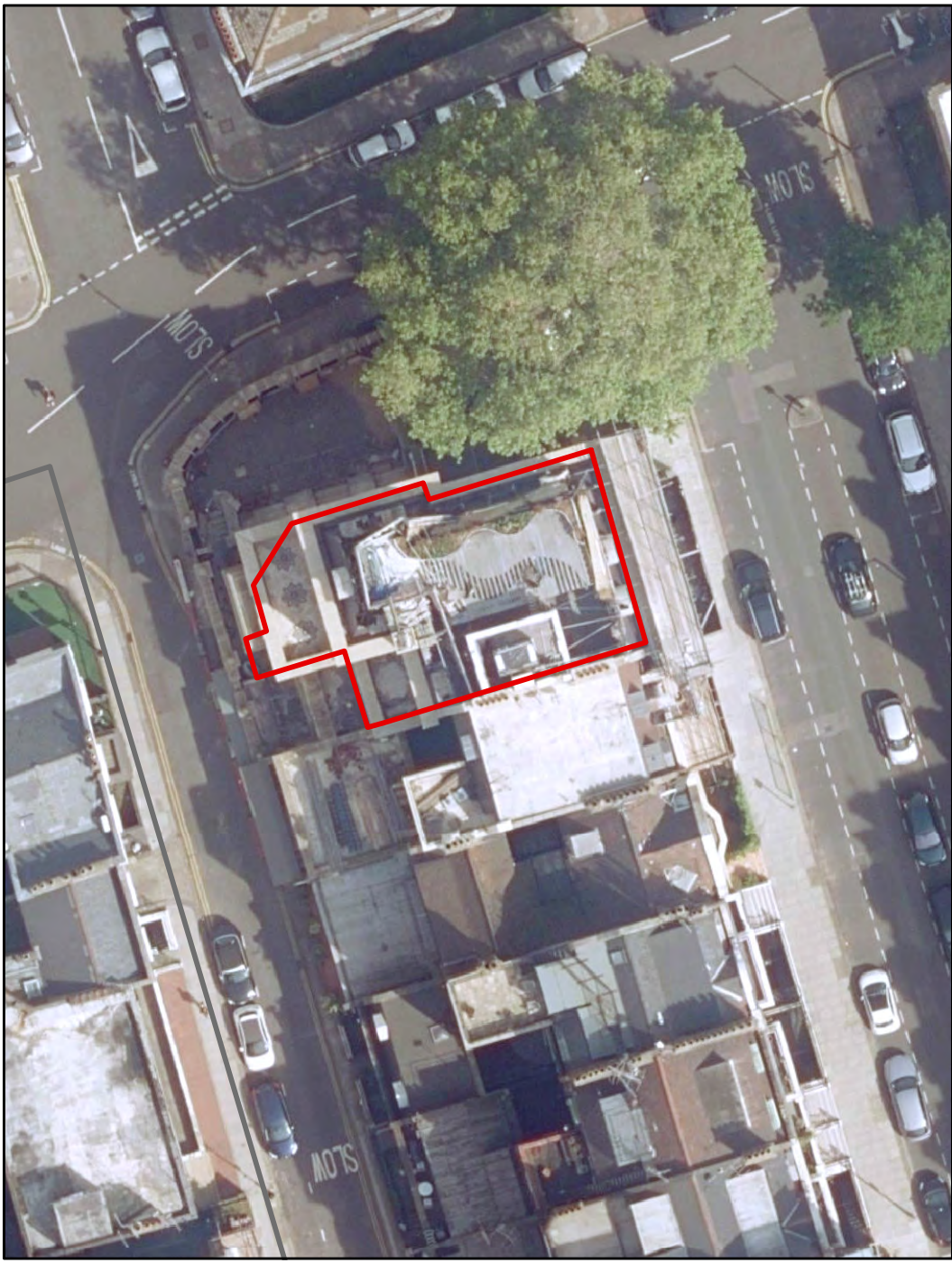
0 2.254.5 9 Meters
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

2010



10/06602/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters

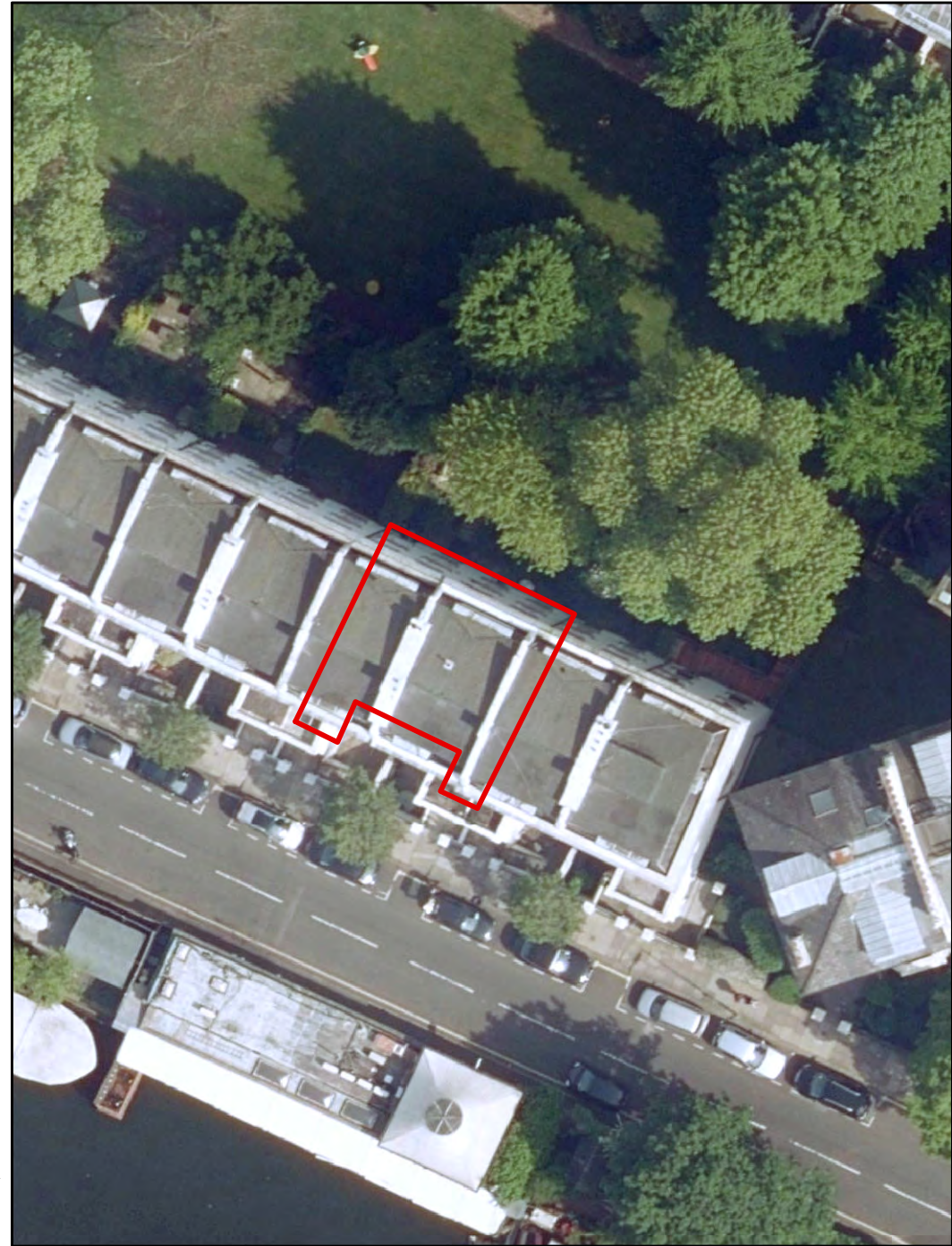
 A scale bar showing 0, 2.25, 4.5, and 9 meters.

2010



10/03633/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters
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2010



10/06500/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters
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2010



10/05972/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters
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2010



10/05776/FULL

2014



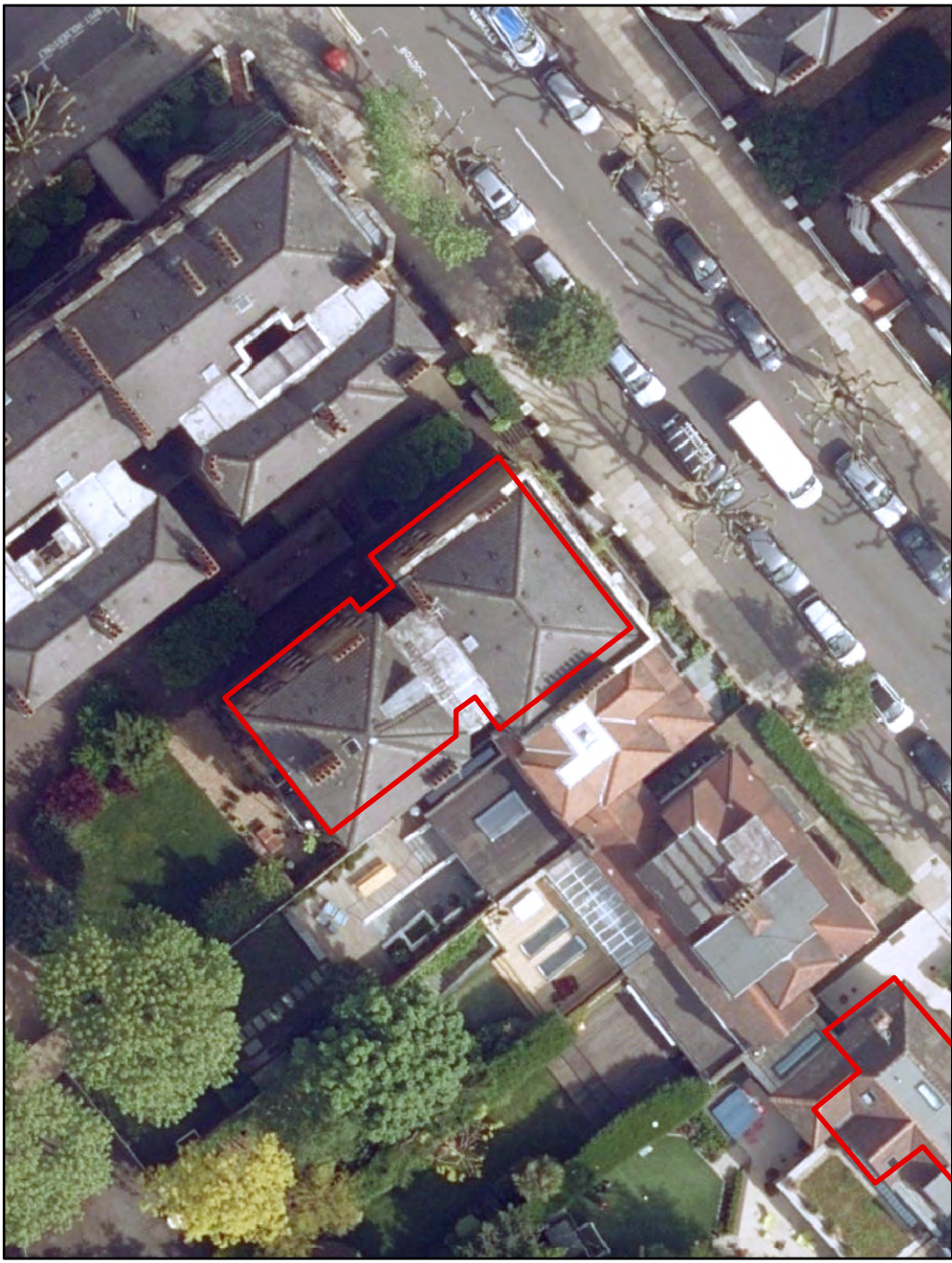
0 2.254.5 9 Meters
A scale bar with markings at 0, 2.25, 4.5, and 9 meters.

2010



09/08558/FULL

2014



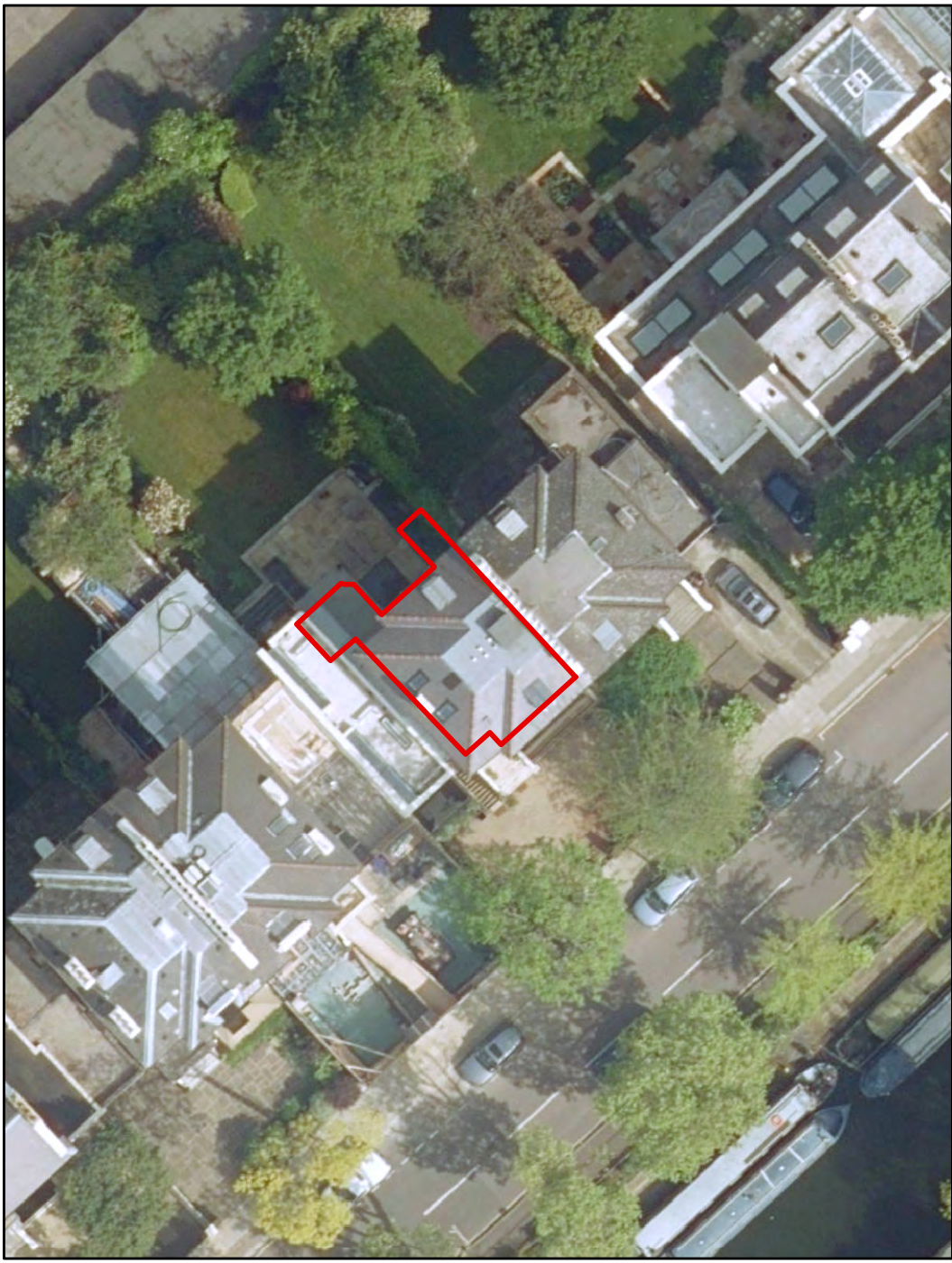
0 2.254.5 9 Meters
 A scale bar with markings at 0, 2.25, 4.5, and 9 meters.

2010



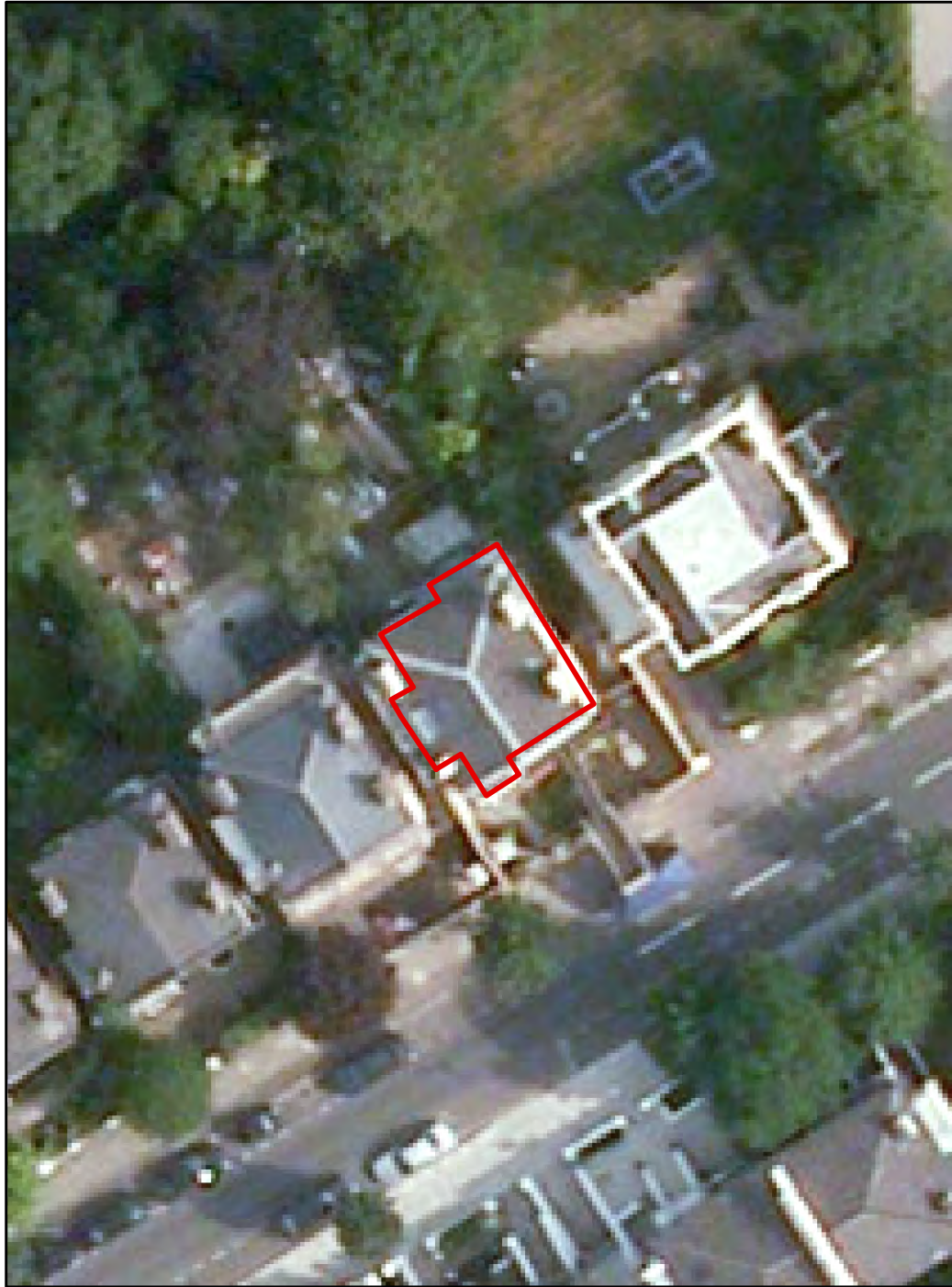
10/02582/FULL

2014



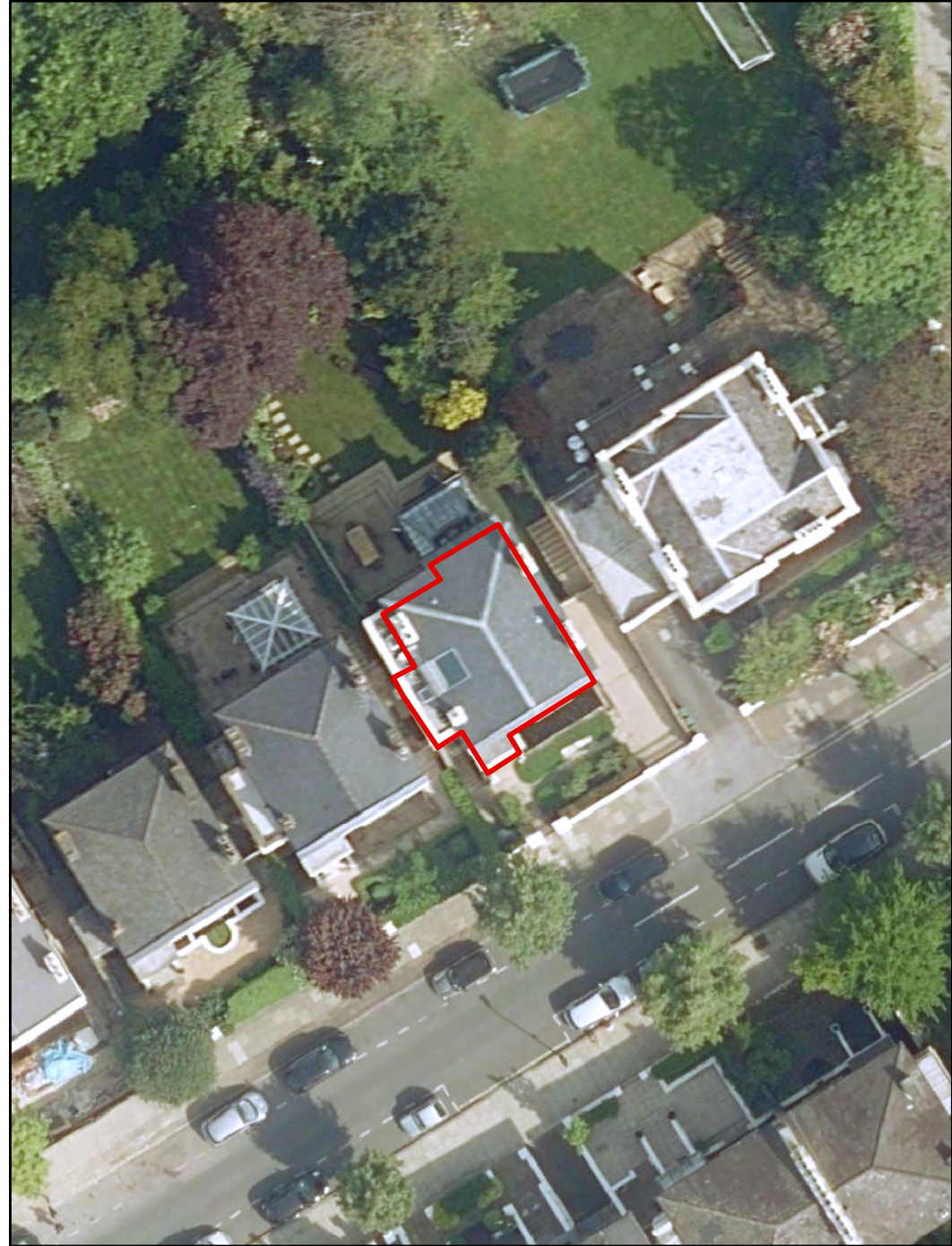
0 2.254.5 9 Meters

2010



10/07805/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters
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2010



10/07610/FULL

2014



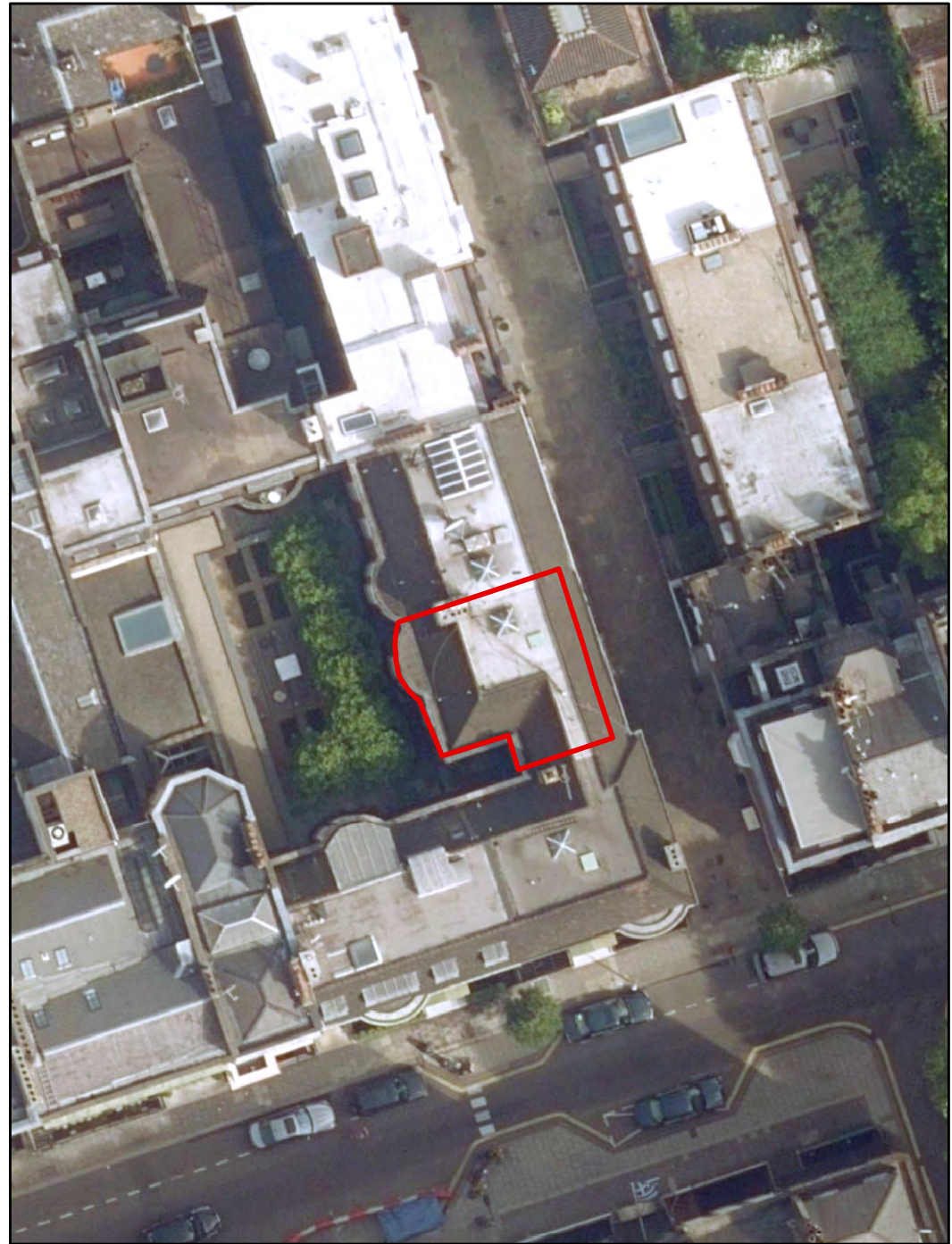
0 2.254.5 9 Meters
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2010



10/07057/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters
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2010



10/06790/FULL

2014



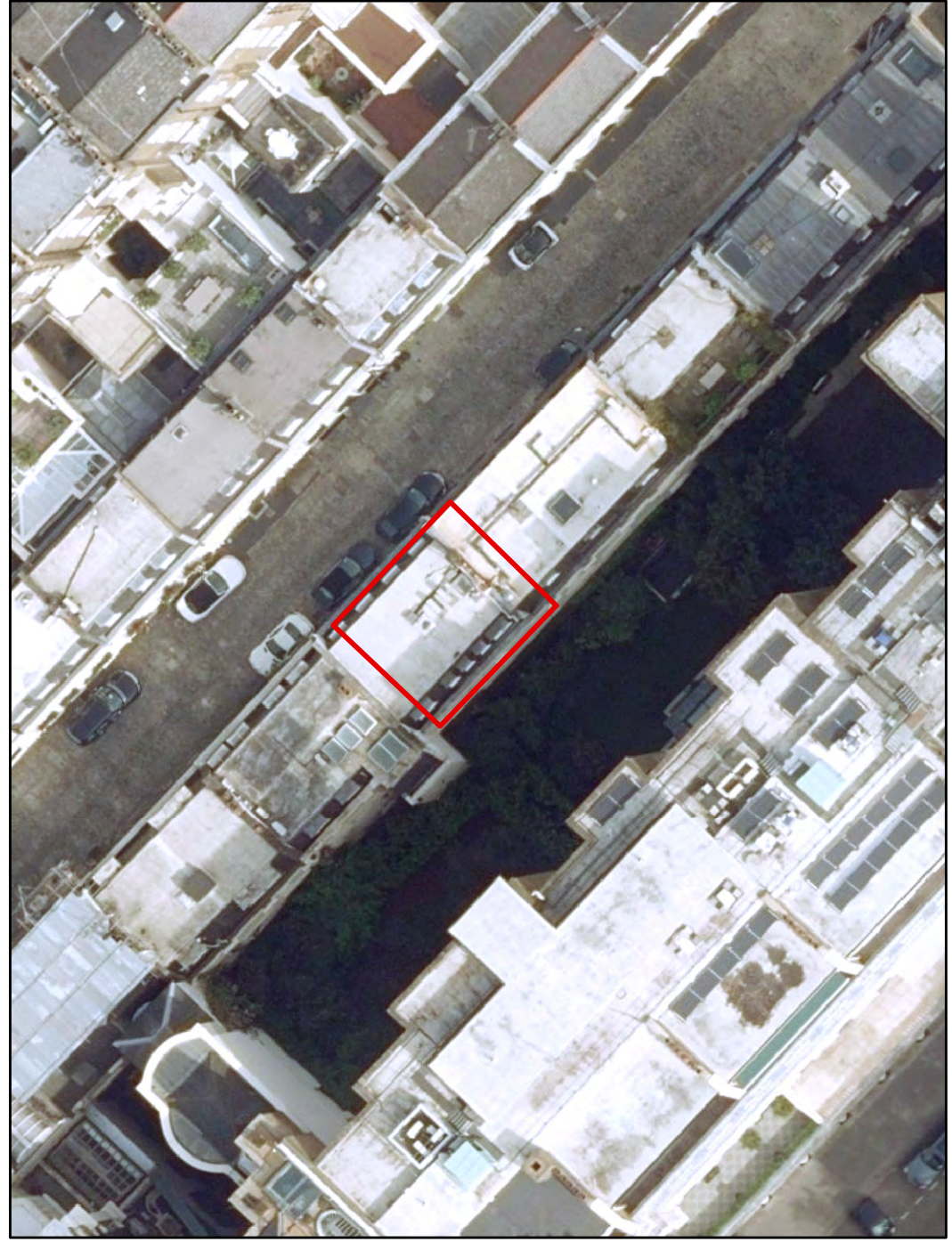
0 2.254.5 9 Meters
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2010



10/08425/FULL

2014



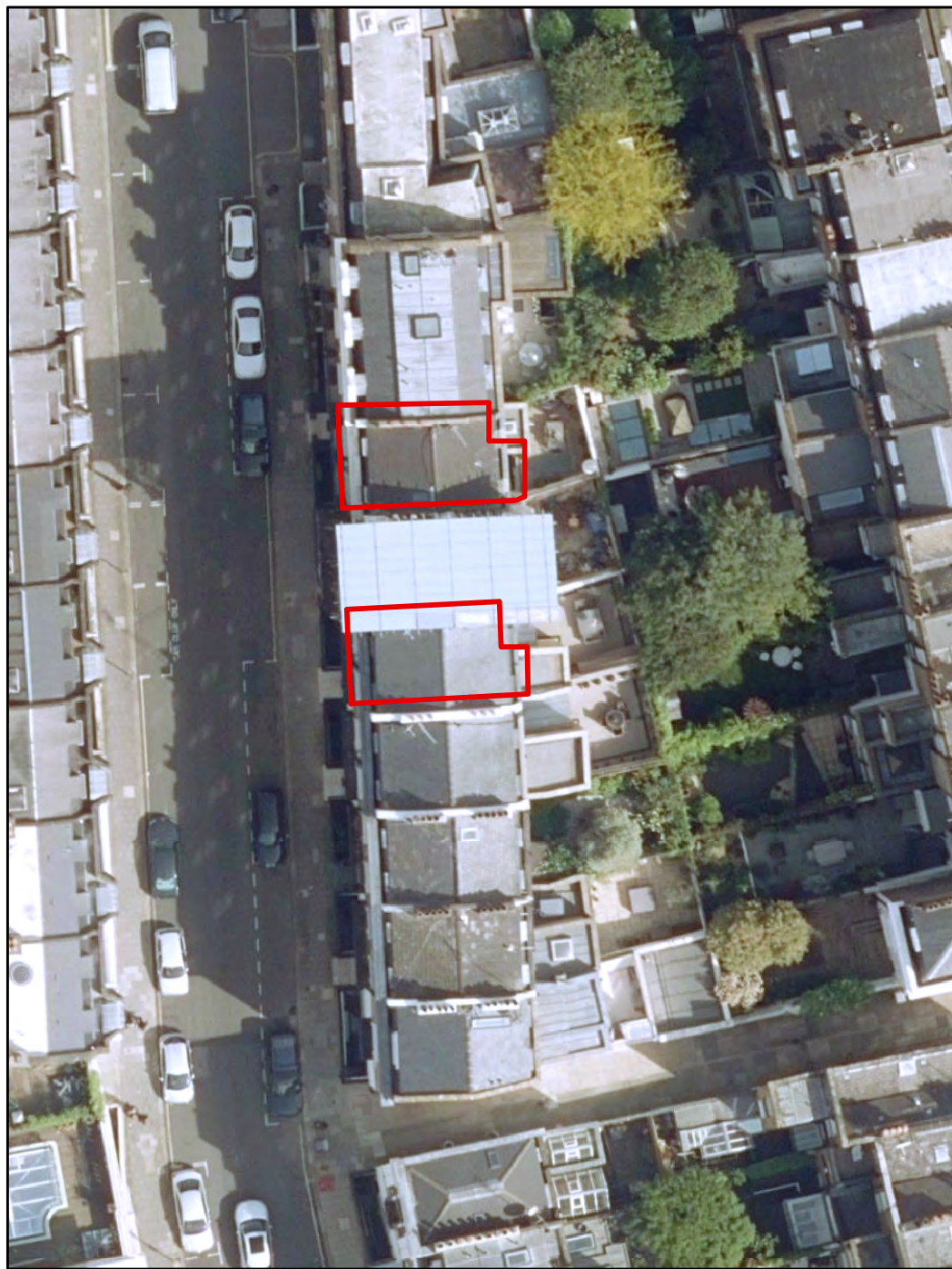
0 2.254.5 9 Meters
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

2010



10/07924/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters
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2010



10/06140/FULL

2014



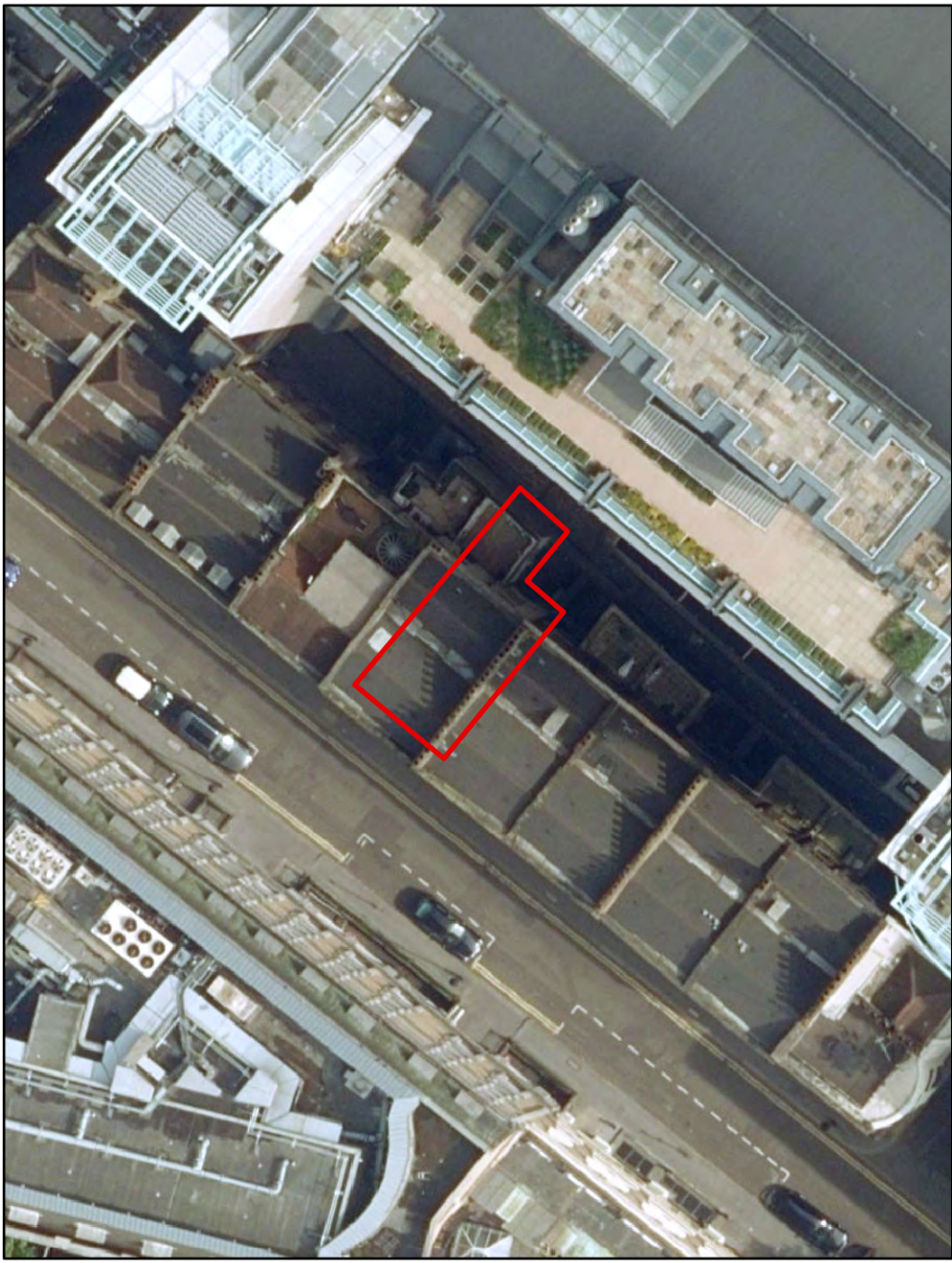
0 2.254.5 9 Meters
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

2010



10/07856/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters

 A scale bar located at the bottom right of the 2014 image, showing a scale from 0 to 9 meters with markings at 0, 2.25, 4.5, and 9 meters.

2010



10/08662/FULL

2014



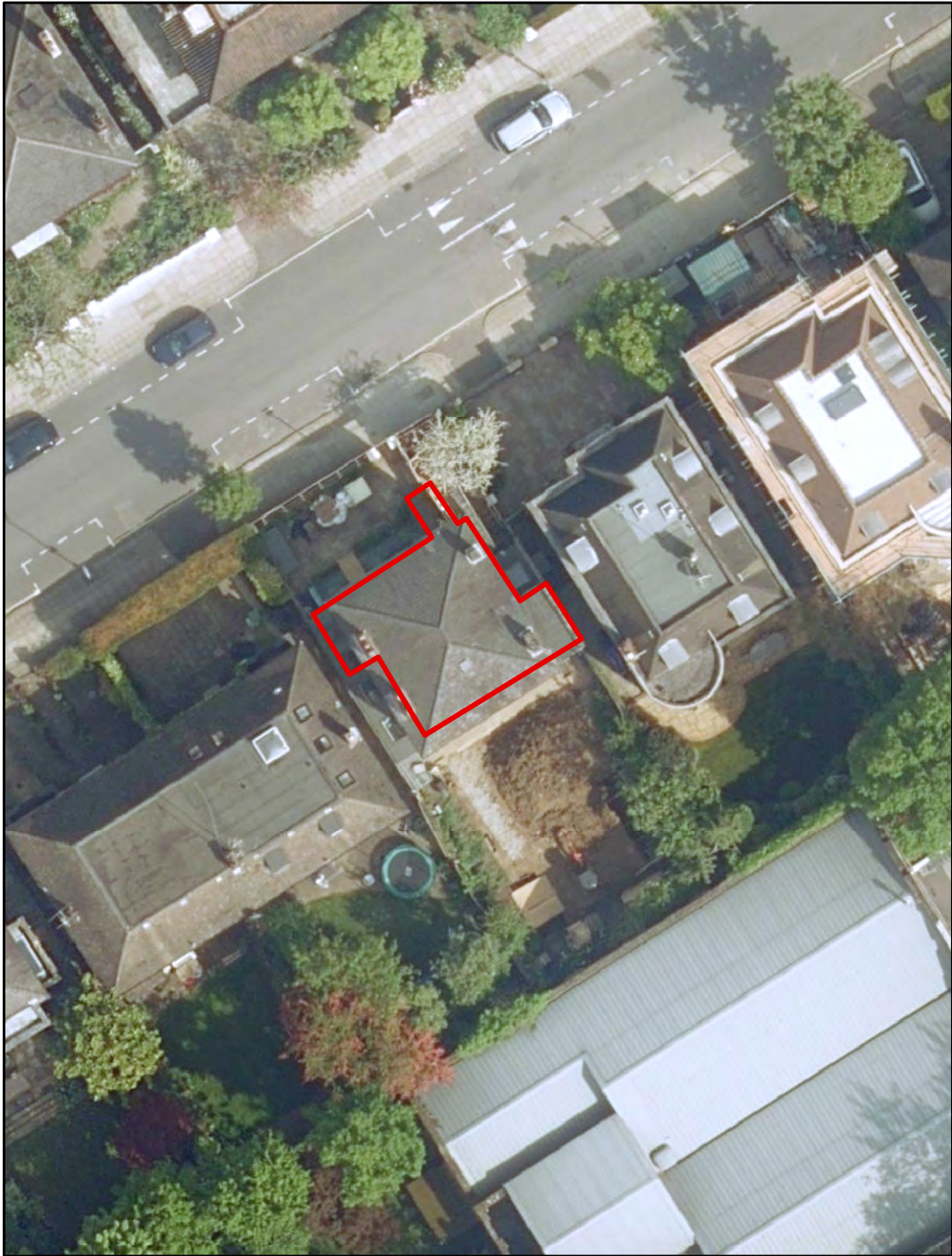
0 2.254.5 9 Meters


2010



10/08678/FULL

2014



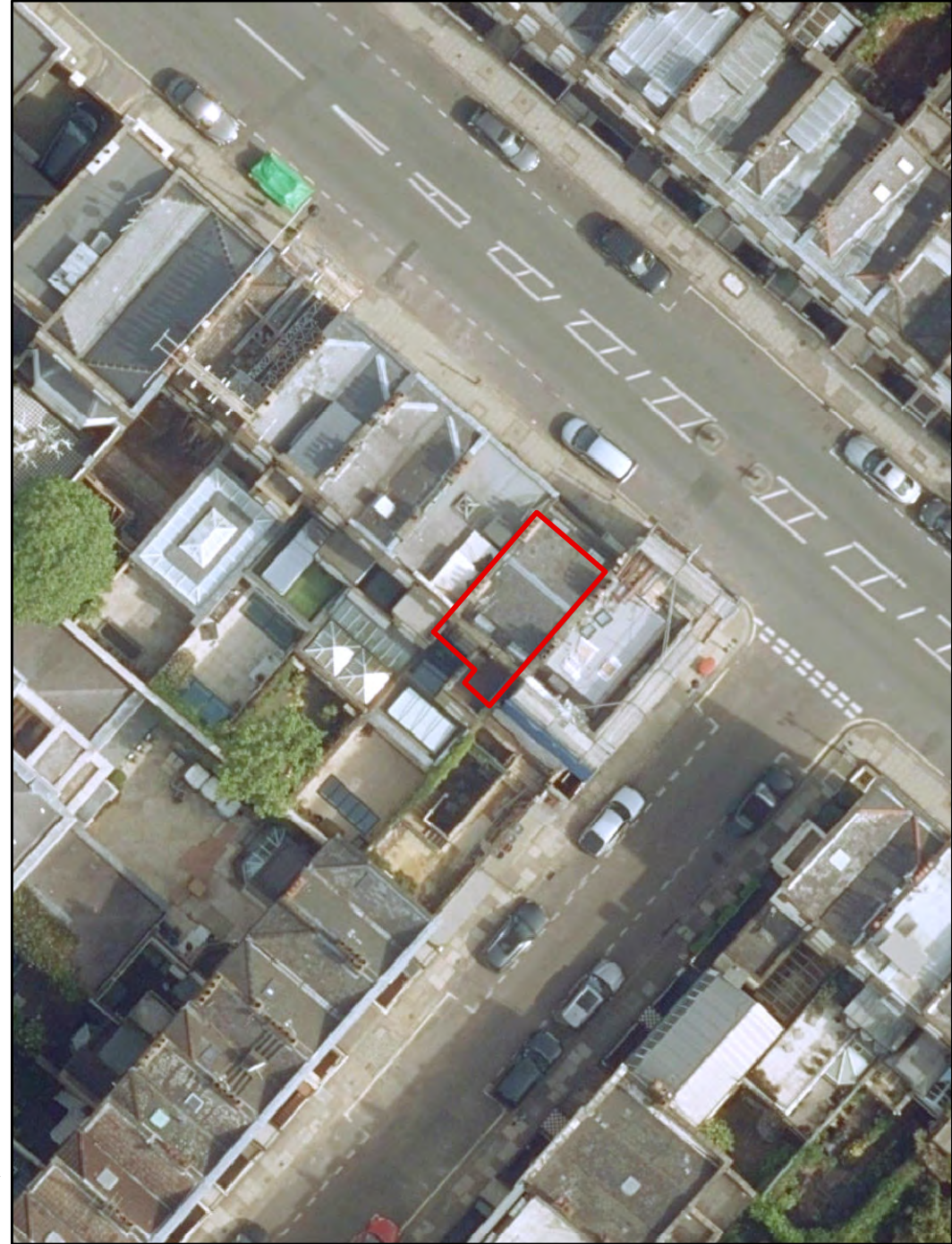
0 2.254.5 9 Meters


2010



10/08369/FULL

2014



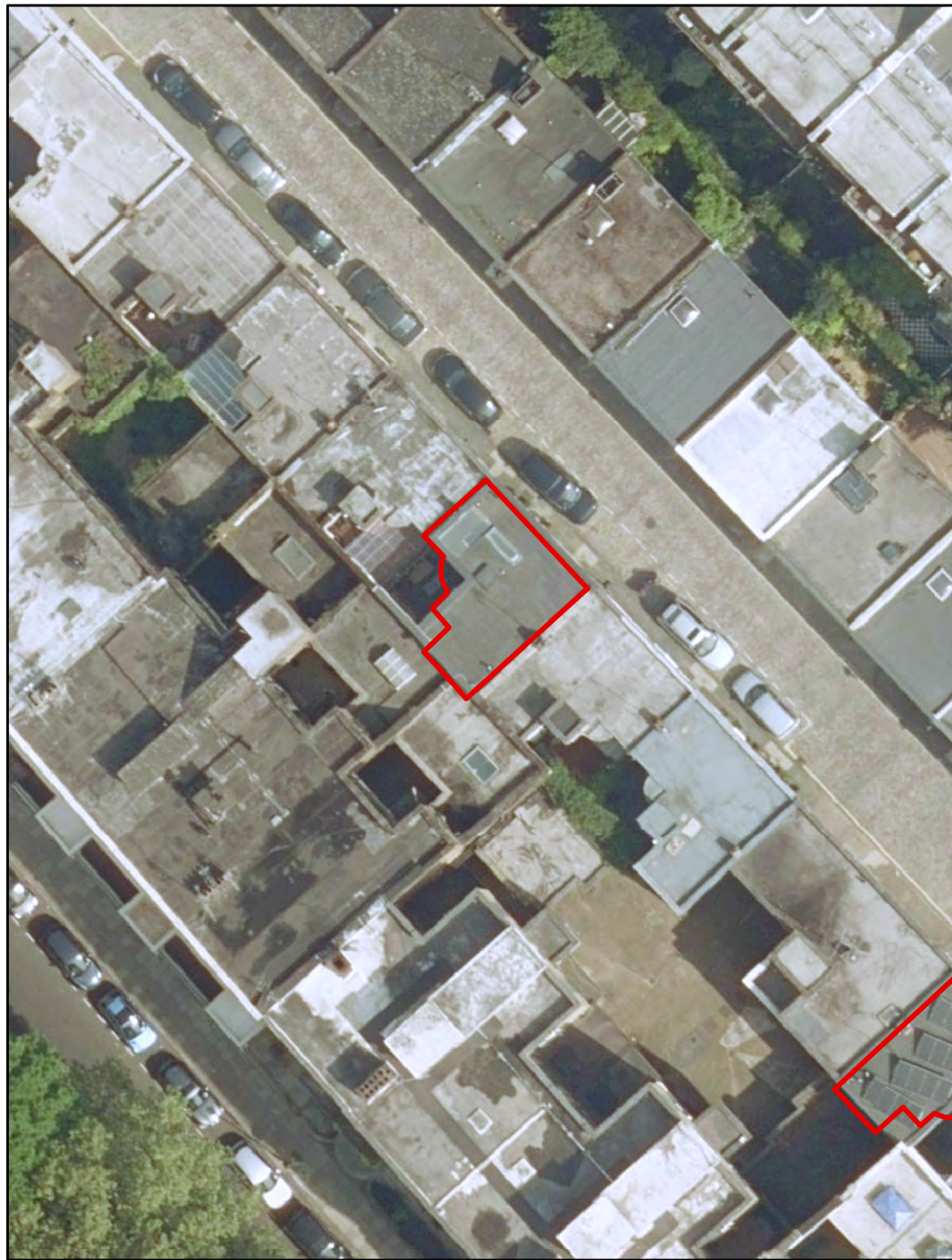
0 2.254.5 9 Meters
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2010



10/08296/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters
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2010



10/07784/FULL

2014



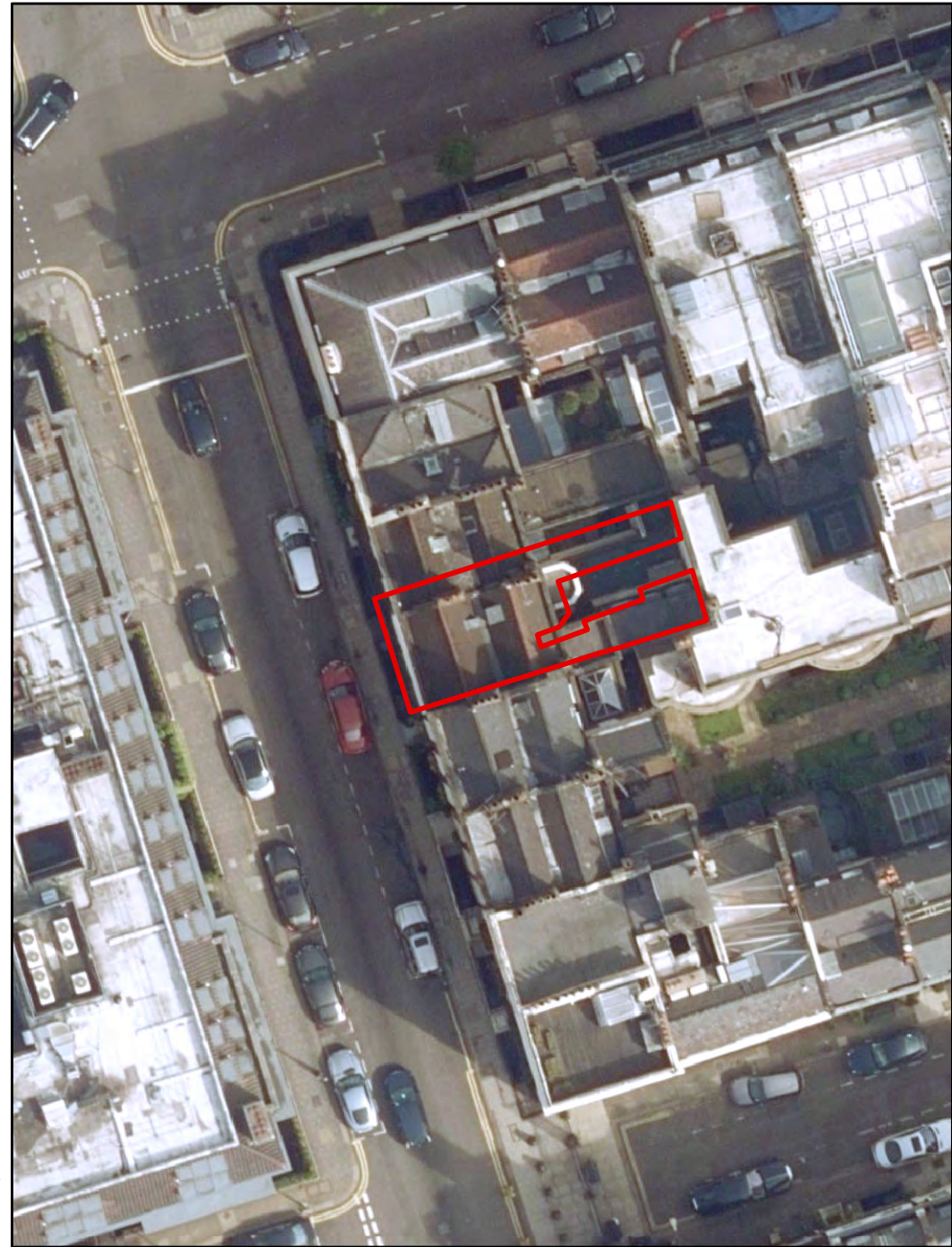
0 2.254.5 9 Meters

2010



10/08471/FULL

2014



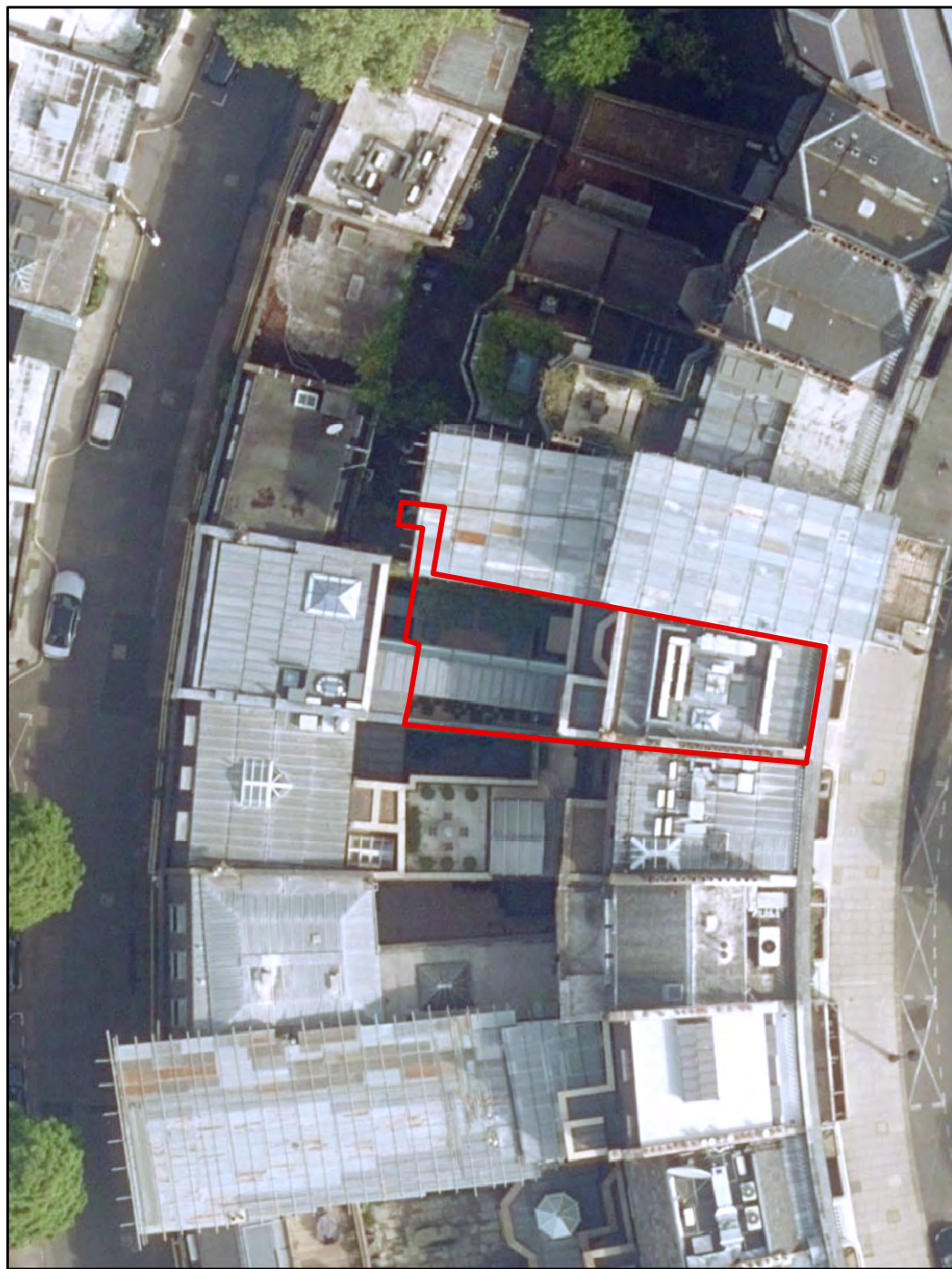
0 2.254.5 9 Meters
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

2010



10/09685/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters
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2010



10/10217/FULL



2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters
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2010



2014

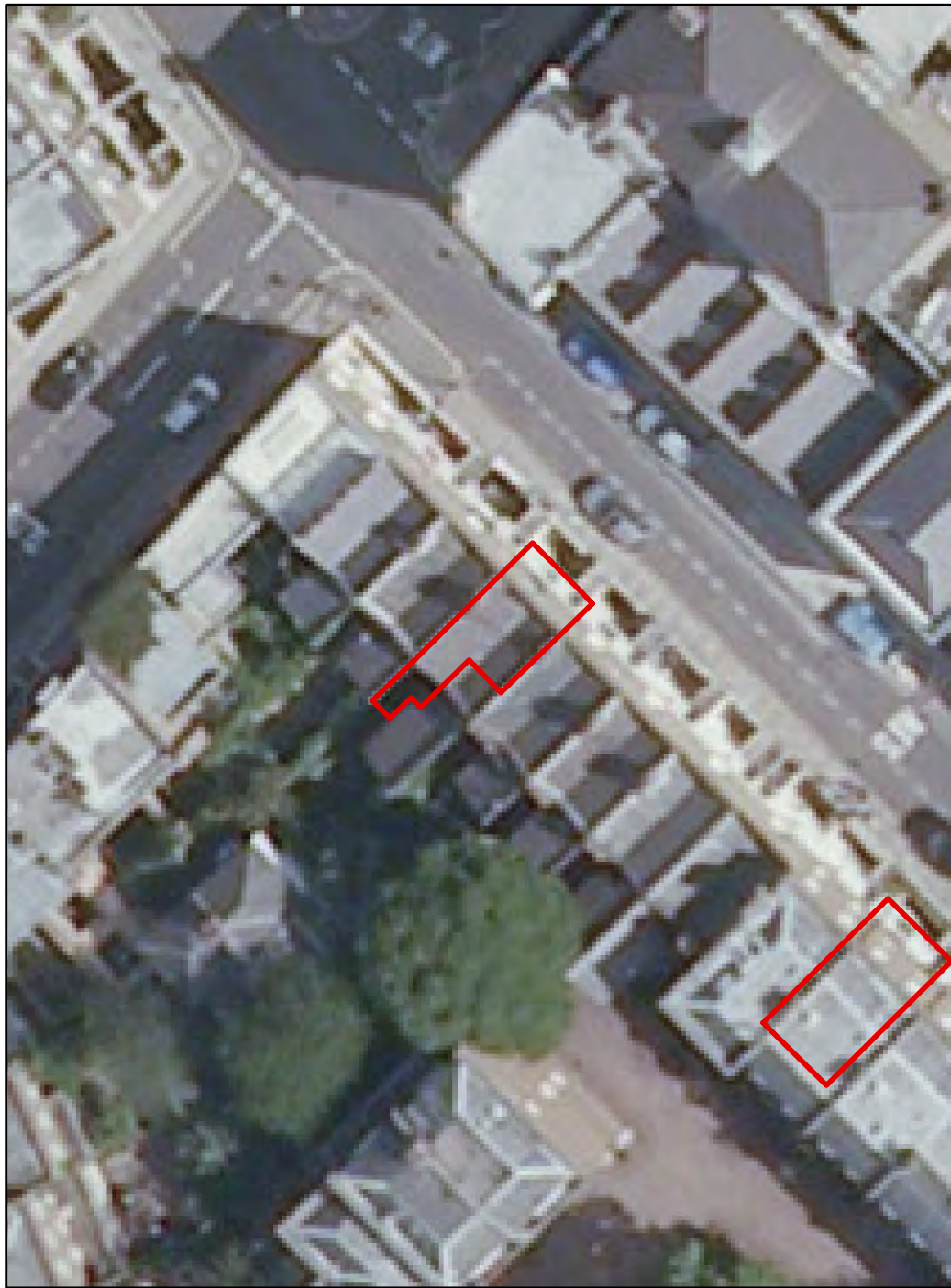


10/09911/FULL

0 2.254.5 9 Meters

 A scale bar with four segments, labeled with 0, 2.25, 4.5, and 9 Meters.

2010



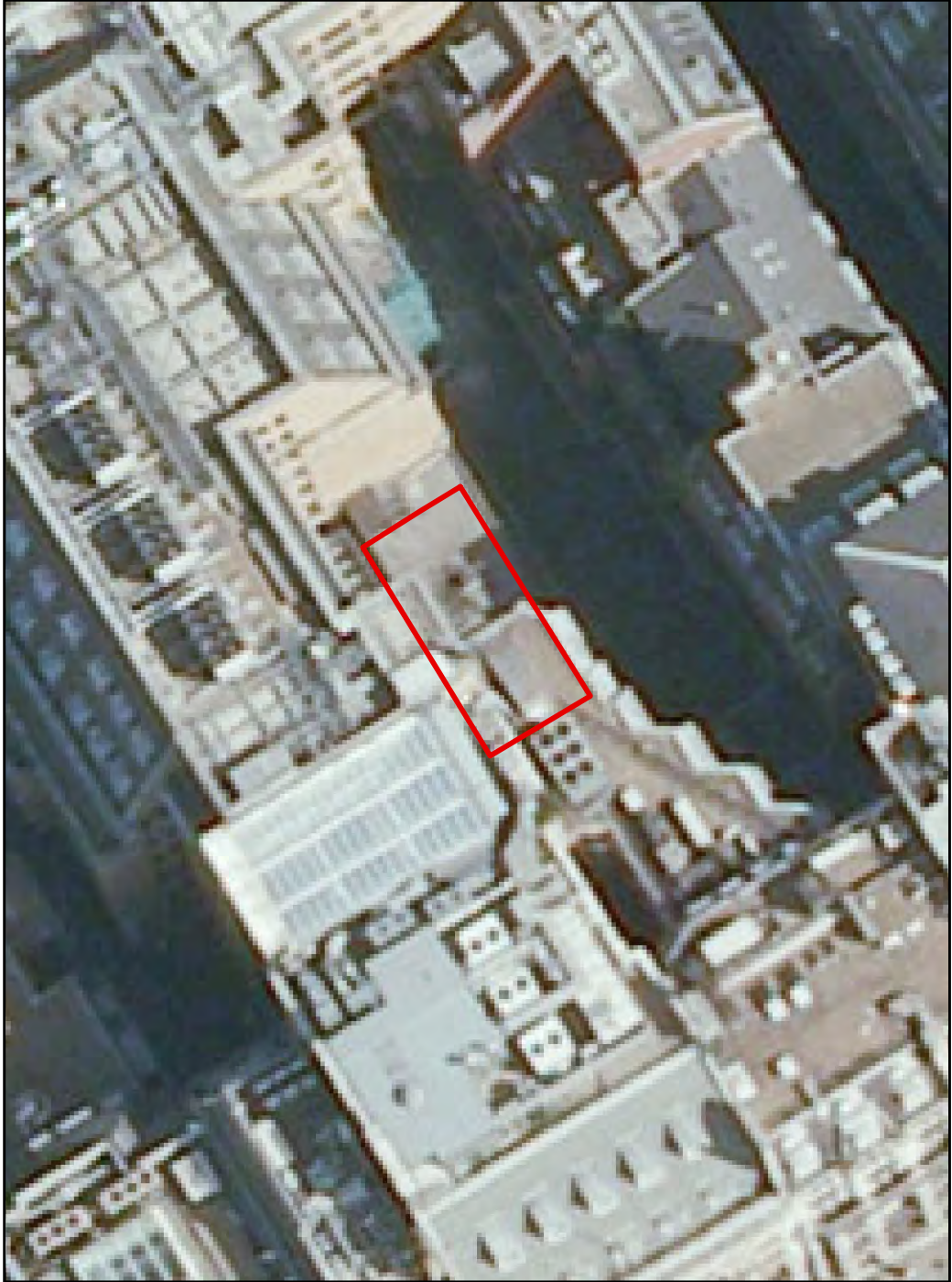
10/09063/FULL

2014



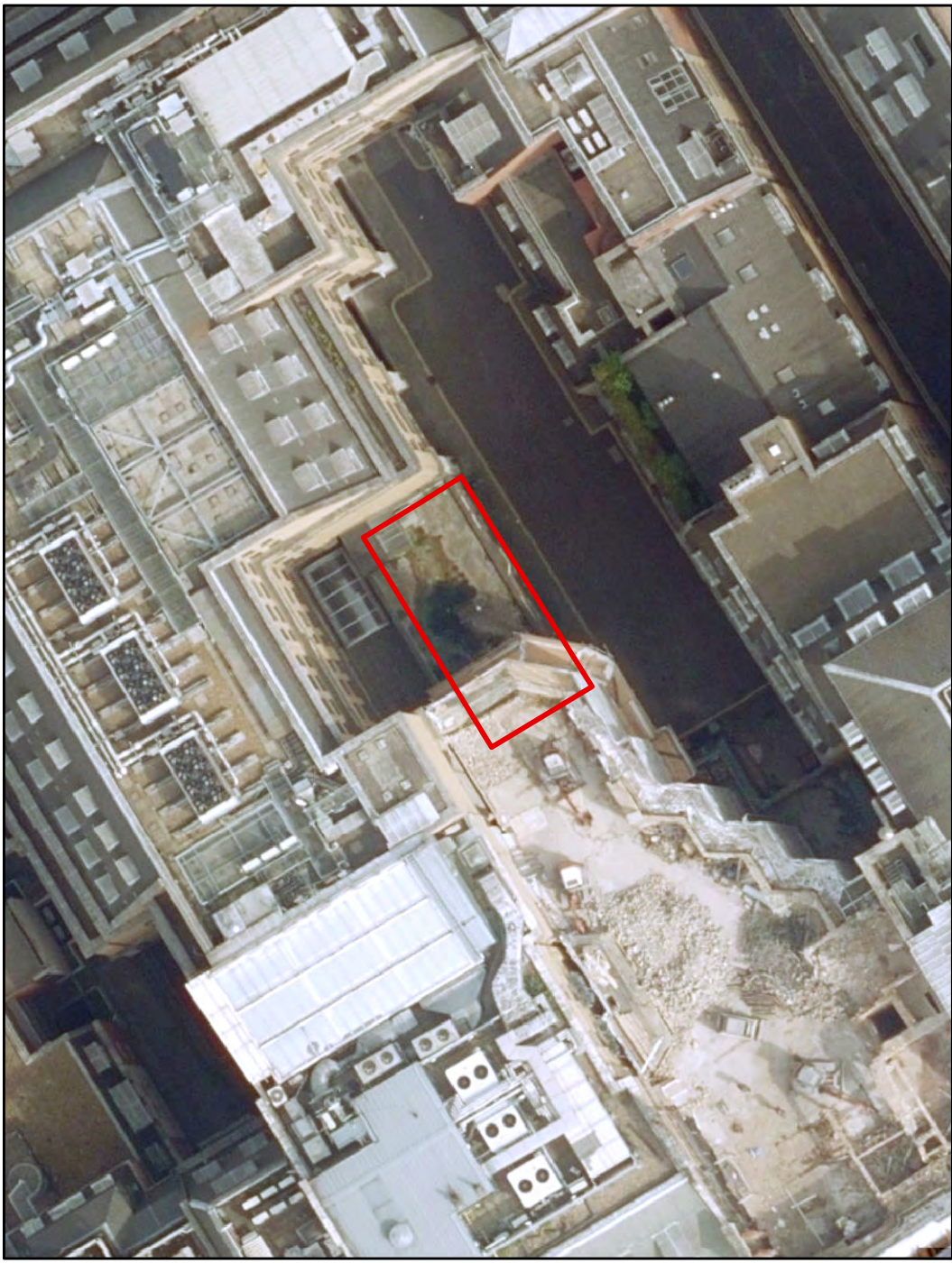
0 2.254.5 9 Meters
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2010



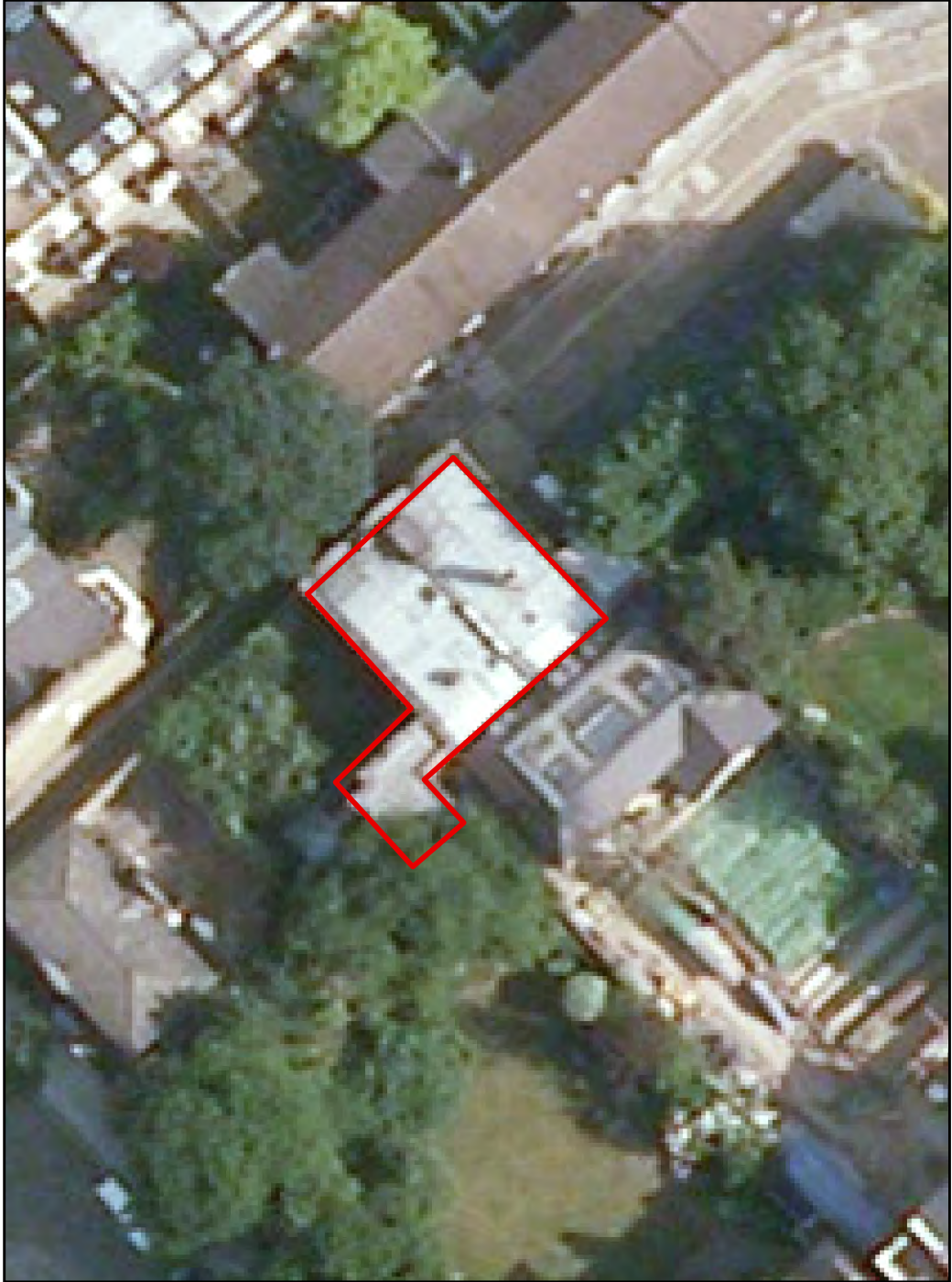
10/10855/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters

2010



10/10898/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters

 A scale bar with four segments, labeled 0, 2.25, 4.5, and 9 Meters.

2010



10/10596/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters
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2010



11/00747/FULL

2014



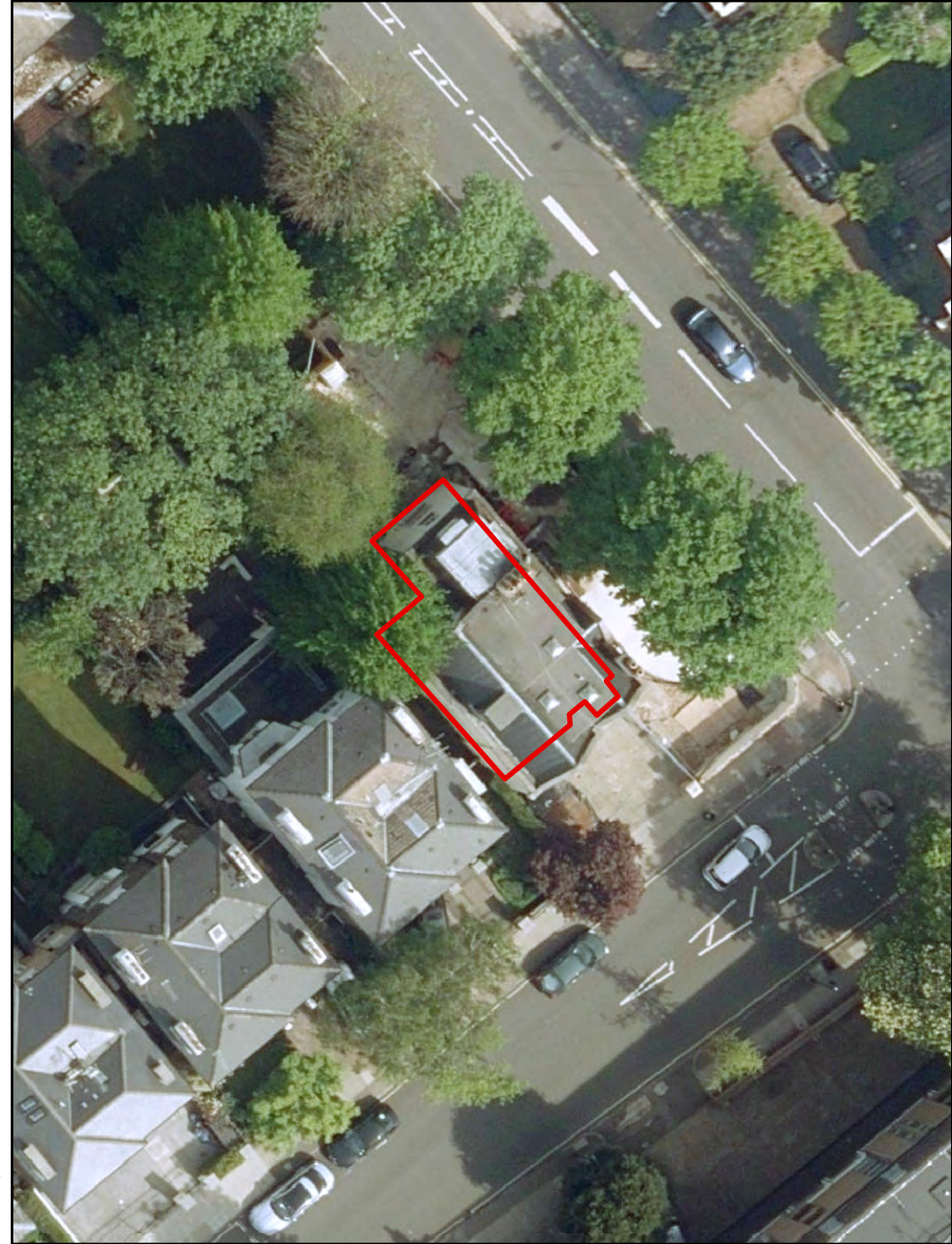
0 2.254.5 9 Meters

2010



10/09798/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters



2010



10/10570/FULL

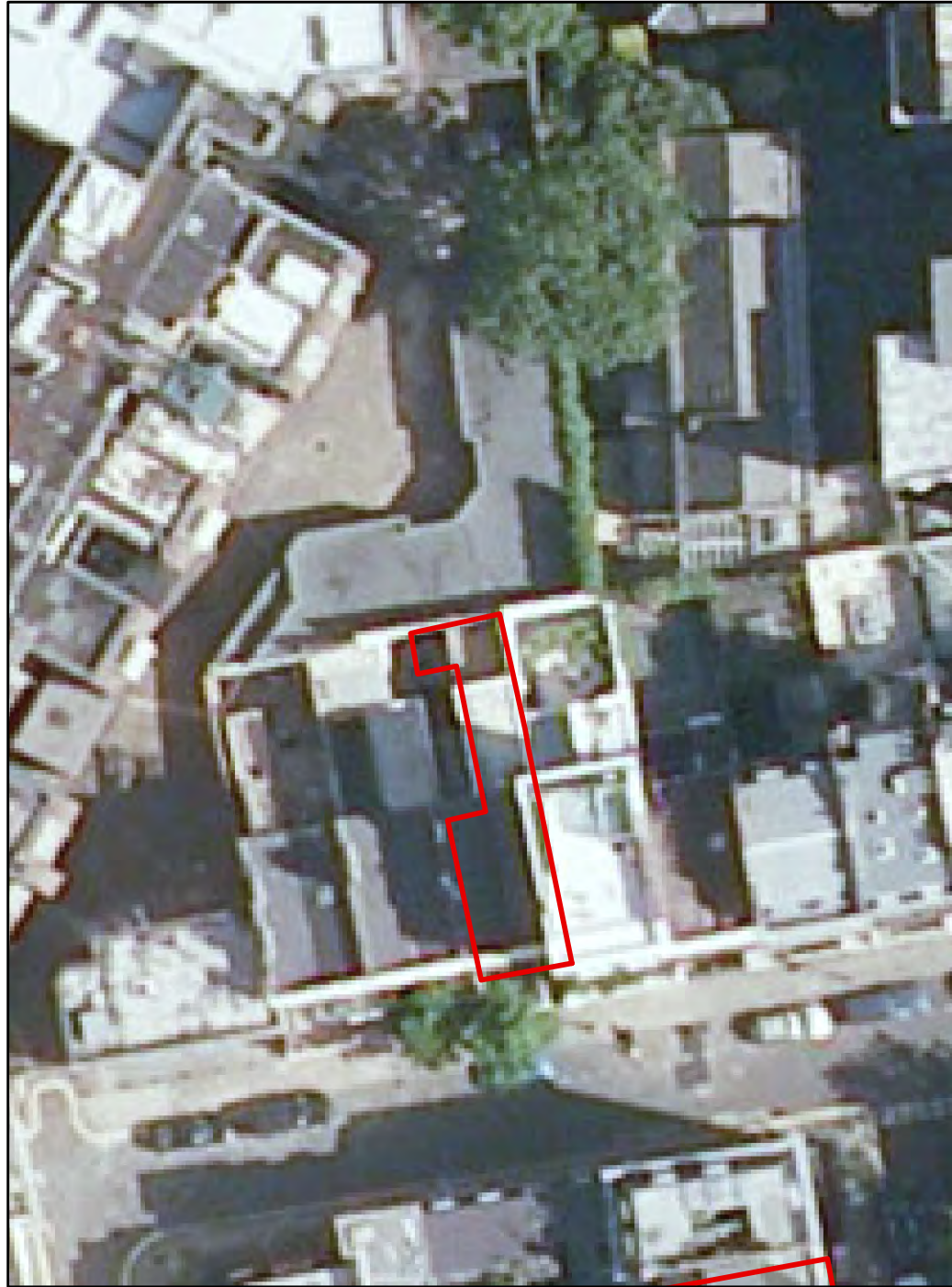
2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters

 A scale bar located at the bottom right of the 2014 image, with markings for 0, 2.25, 4.5, and 9 meters.

2010



11/01235/FULL

2014



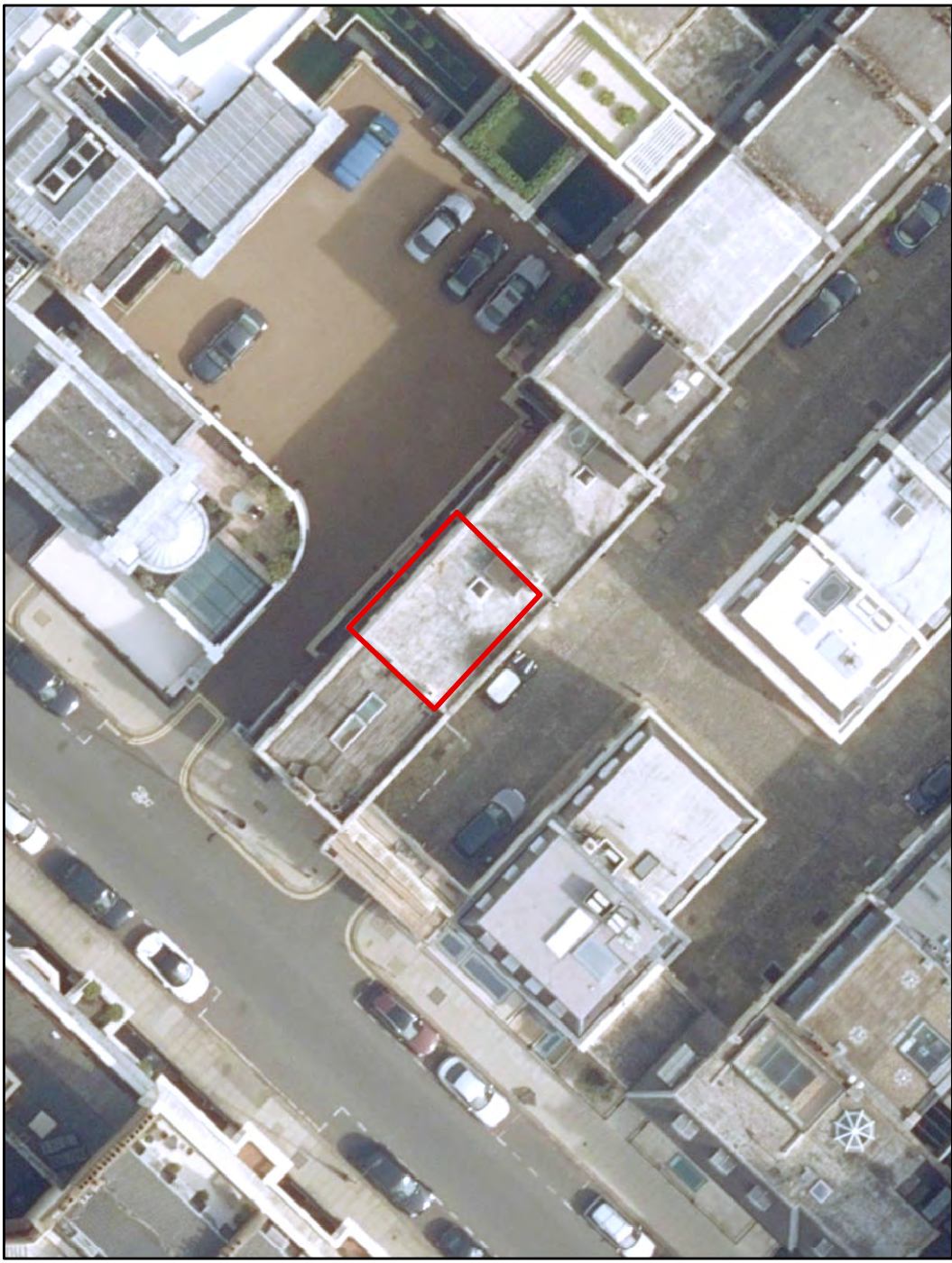
0 2.254.5 9 Meters
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2010



10/09788/FULL

2014



0 2.254.5 9 Meters

APPENDIX 4: NOISE COMPLAINTS

REFVAL	DETAILS	RECEPD	Planning application ref where possible to identify
12/01112/ENABS	sucking out water from the basement, it is very loud and been going on all morning, has to shout to hear each other in house. next door to edgeware road tube station.	11/01/2012	
12/06570/ENABS	contant drilling is going on in the basement area of 44 - this is a reoccurring problem - may have trouble accessing due to builders attitudes - as far as cust knows there is no building permission - cust wishes her name not to be disclosed (was previously confronted)	25/02/2012	
12/11082/ENABS	Loud drilling in basement	31/03/2012	
12/01375/ENABS	Building site next door are doing some very noisy drilling of concrete in basement area at 34 Lexington Street	13/01/2012	13/11267/FULL
12/06315/ENABS	Building site at no 3 Charlwood Place Basement and Ground floors there is a great deal of noise that is having an impact for the resident in no 5	23/02/2012	09/03267/FULL
12/07353/ENABS	builders causing lots of banging and drilling which is continous all day from 75 baker street basement they also work till after eight	02/03/2012	10/00297/FULL
12/13714/ENABS	drilling of a concrete slab in the basement - making whole house shake - contactor are call firmgo - been going on since jan	24/04/2012	Presume to be permitted development
12/19023/ENABS	drilling noises are coming from basement. is extremely loud. can be heard on the phone	07/06/2012	
12/12591/ENABS	Noisy building renovation in basement.	13/04/2012	
12/15897/ENABS	There noise coming from a property which are having building works in there basement and the drilling has been ongoing for a week	14/05/2012	11/01242/FULL

12/25693/ENABS	Noise coming from builders from the basement of 34 Luxborough Towers.	27/07/2012	
12/20227/ENABS	loud building works digging up the basement builders out on street shouting and swearing opposite no 10	18/06/2012	
12/27063/ENABS	builders doing a basement excavation caller advises noise is at 94.8 decibels and they have no party wall agreement	08/08/2012	11/10851/CLOPUD
13/23297/ENABS	(Incident Addr: basement to the left down stairs) flat below is carrying out renovations using power tools and keep working outwith permitted hours. noise is happening now. building is rattling. work after 6pm wk days also	27/07/2013	11/03752/FULL
13/21486/ENABS	Customer calling about builders which have started work at 07.00 this morning making a lot of noise this is coming from 93 Kilburn park Road basement customer stays at 87 Kilburn park Road	16/07/2013	
14/16437/ENABS	drills all day coming from basement	28/05/2014	13/04082/FULL
13/34856/ENABS	(Customer Addr: Ground and basement) (Incident Addr: Ground and basement) Noise from building site next door. Notice already served on 06/10	29/10/2013	12/10679/FULL
13/37755/ENABS	people at 88 lupus street using pneumatic drill in basement customer has asked them to stop ignored him	24/11/2013	
12/43326/ENABS	loud building works power drill non-stop works at basement flat below westholds antique shop	15/12/2012	
13/13060/ENABS	Noise from drilling and hammering from construction works. Started at 8AM still ongoing. Basement 130A Westbourne Terrace.	04/05/2013	12/06584/FULL
12/43397/ENABS	in the basement and ground floor building works loud drilling	16/12/2012	
14/13303/ENABS	basement of 79 hereford road loud building site drilling and hammering	03/05/2014	Presumed to be carried out under GPDO
14/01477/ENABS	building site noise coming the ground floor and basement at 103 mount Street, drilling and banging	15/01/2014	Presume to be carried out under GPDO

12/38348/ENABS	Builder using a grinder in the basement flat of 24 Devonshire Terrace. Started before midday.	04/11/2012	
12/39670/ENABS	Lots of noise coming from building site on Needham Rd - digging in basement	14/11/2012	14/09329/FULL
12/33955/ENABS	***PLEASE DO NOT ACTION - ALREADY EMAILED THROUGH** generator works at 22 - piling works by City Basements/ Morpheus	01/10/2012	08/07200
12/42514/ENABS	loud building noise ongoing refurbishment at 33 Moreton Terrace been going on all week working past 1pm in the basement	08/12/2012	11/12159/FULL
12/37727/ENABS	loud drilling coming from basement 34 goldney road. its on constant during the day and customer is next door to do. ear plugs, shut doors etc dont work. ongoing now.	30/10/2012	
13/40836/ENABS	(Incident Addr: Basement flat below is no.91 Coleshill Flats) Shop above property is having building work at the moment, work is ongoing at moment. Hammering, some sort of machine going at the moment. Dragging furniture across the floor.	20/12/2013	
13/36292/ENABS	(Incident Addr: basement of 57 to 59) contractors renovating a basement and making a lot of noise	11/11/2013	
13/09513/ENABS	Loud banging drilling and other construction noises coming from the basement, causing a noise disturbance	30/03/2013	
13/22340/ENABS	(Incident Addr: basement) building works taking place drilling banging	21/07/2013	
13/02213/ENABS	drilling and construction works. very loud drilling coming from basement	21/01/2013	probably 12/08992/LBC -
12/28556/ENABS	builders working at the chemist in the basement at berkeley court glentworth street side of building	19/08/2012	
13/17624/ENABS	(Customer Addr: 28 to 56) (Incident Addr: Prince Pharmacy) Loud building work in the basement of Pharmacy	14/06/2013	

13/10497/ENABS	noisy buildings works in the basement of 103 mount street	10/04/2013	Probably 12/09413/FULL - putting plant in a basement
13/29071/ENABS	building works, breaking of marble and making a basement. caller has had.	11/09/2013	12/02116/FULL probably
13/26407/ENABS	Ongoing work on basement flat by builders carrying on outside normal working hours despite Enforcement order already being served	21/08/2013	13/01747/FULL
12/42820/ENABS	Caller works at Live Masion,19-25 Argyll Street. She advsies builders are renovating the basement of the building. Loud drilling and banging.	11/12/2012	Presume to be carried out under GPDO
12/38109/ENABS	Noise from construction work in basement	01/11/2012	
14/00304/ENABS	drilling noise coming from 9 chester row from basement outside permitewd hours	04/01/2014	13/03112/FULL
14/08375/ENABS	compressor being used by builders doing digging in a basement is very loud this has been used for the last 2 or 3 weeks can we investigate and advise	18/03/2014	12/04904/FULL
14/04178/ENABS	Excessive noise - drilling etc. Advised of prescribed hours for building works but customer is still not happy. The works are being carried out the basement of 23	05/02/2014	13/02610/FULL
13/24516/ENABS	(Incident Addr: within building also on roof) drilling ongoing outwith agreed time scale, coming from basement, ground floor and roof area of 180 piccadilly	06/08/2013	
13/16041/ENABS	Very loud drilling at Building site in basement area of 102 Rochester Row can this be checked	01/06/2013	Relocation of Plant to basement
13/22167/ENABS	*** Gentleman advised that he does not need a callback***** (Incident Addr: Basement flat) Renovation being carried on on neighbouring property, power tools being used at the moment. Ongoing issue.	19/07/2013	12/11963/FULL
13/30797/ENABS	basement works at property very loud noise making it hard for business to run as can't hear customers of phone calls over the noise thinks it from number 2 but is only work on the street	26/09/2013	12/01924/FULL

13/08142/ENABS	very loud drilling coming from basement 34 dover street. affecting cust workplace as it is constant noise. ongoing for 4 weeks now.	18/03/2013	13/02811/FULL
13/33599/ENABS	builders at no 44 Hamilton Terrace using pneumatic drill to drill into basement this has been going on for the last two weeks	18/10/2013	11/03584/FULL
14/04738/ENABS	The drilling of a basement has been continuing 5 or 6 days a week since early December. I contacted the contractor by email to ask when it would end, but no reply was forthcoming. It seems endless!	10/02/2014	13/04618/FULL
14/01075/ENABS	Crane working and making a noise and lifting into a basement well at a medical building at 108 Harley Street.	11/01/2014	14/05817/LBC
14/17106/ENABS	building site is making very loud noise and is affecting the basement restaurant has being told this will go on for 2 weeks Wagga Mamma	03/06/2014	12/06445/CLOPUD
14/21114/ENABS	building work on basement using a conveyor for the rubble the problem is the conveyor noise it sounds like something needs greasing constant squeaking noise	03/07/2014	10/09798/FULL
14/25751/ENABS	Loud basement renovation works coming from 221 Sussex Gardens. Now 3:27pm	02/08/2014	10/07658/LBC ?
14/25798/ENABS	221 sussex garden in the basement there is drilling and sanding	03/08/2014	10/07658/LBC ?
14/27608/ENABS	heavy drilling on basement excavation noise intense and too frequent can we investigate and see if option to reduce noise schedule noise events noise happening now	18/08/2014	14/04186/FULL
14/29403/ENABS	builders starting work before 8am started this morning at approx 7.30 making very loud noise excavating basement they normally work until 6pm they usually start early	02/09/2014	12/01367/FULL
14/36032/ENBS45	Building work including very noisy basement excavation occurring at leamington road taking place on saturdays, loud drilling	23/10/2014	12/12313/FULL
14/37786/ENBS45	"Building site is 30 and 31 Eaton Mews North, digging a basement. The issue is the construction site is meant to have a insulating guard around, to stop the noise of the digging and breaking of stone/concrete floors getting out into the mews. What this company has is a hockey panel with no roof, which actually amplifies the drilling sound, making an unbearable noise during the day (i work a lot at home). Thank you for looking into this"	07/11/2014	13/04769/FULL

	Customer Comments through Westminster report it. Exact customer address not provided in email only postcode SW1X 8AR		
14/38187/ENBS45	Building site building a basement and is making a lot of noise	11/11/2014	Presume permitted development
14/40849/ENBS45	building site excavation. due to studios around the area they were apparently told not to use power tools. somewhere on hill road, a basement excavation.	01/12/2014	too broad to identify specific application
15/00398/ENBS45	Building works are going on in the basement of Robin Court - been going on for 2 months and it is so loud that the residents are having to leave their premises to escape the noise.	07/01/2015	13/00106/NMA
15/01728/ENBS45	Dust is coming into the customers property as there are builders working in the basement, the dust is going round the whole of the building and becoming really bad for the customers daughters chest.	23/01/2015	13/09756/FULL
15/01504/ENBS45	Ongoing building works taking place, looks like they are developing a basement. Noise is extremely loud and right outside property number 2 Rede Place. Caller is coming home having to walk through mud and 2 dumpsters have been left outside caller's property. This is happening every day and caller is very upset that nothing is being done about this.	20/01/2015	13/03466/FULL
15/01658/ENBS45	double basement development and noisy works disturbing complainant	22/01/2015	13/03466/FULL
15/03866/ENBS45	drilling and hammering and building works in the basement complainant flat 227a above	14/02/2015	14/08878/FULL
15/01594/ENBS45	I believe this noise is coming from a private housing development involving excavating a basement somewhere on Newton Road, but I cannot be sure; there is a drilling noise vibrating particularly the lower floors of the entire square, and it often starts before 08:00 and lasts until 18:00, including Saturdays. This has been ongoing daily for possibly over a month, and this is severely affecting the health and wellbeing of the many older and ill people who reside in the area which is usually extremely quiet. According to the Westminster noise strategy, there is a Policy that states that developers are required to demonstrate there will be no increase in noise levels, "including vigorous protection of the quiet side of properties". Not only is this ongoing project violating this policy and many others, nobody in	21/01/2015	14/12759/FULL

	<p>the neighbourhood was informed of any such development that would affect its wellbeing so drastically. Please let me know how we should proceed with this.</p>		
15/03868/ENBS45	<p>building works going on in the basement banging and drilling</p>	14/02/2015	15/00793/FULL
15/05109/ENBS45	<p>Customer has reported a pumping concrete noised on a construction site. Pumping it into a basement</p>	27/02/2015	14/03688/FULL
15/05579/ENBS45	<p>Building work happening next door, on the junction of Poland and Broadwick street. they are now working in the basement which is creating a lot of noise. but the vibrations are the main issue, as it can be felt on the second floor. The Pc's on the desks are shaking. its casuing bad working conditions. the work started at approx 10am and goes on through out the day. the stop for a while. as they are getting deeper into the basement, the vibrations are getting worse.</p>	05/03/2015	14/02855/FULL

APPENDIX 5: NEIGHBOUR RESPONSES TO BASEMENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS.

The following extracts show the range of issues that concern residents when basement extensions are proposed nearby. They are intended as a representative sample, to illustrate areas of particular concern.

The comments relate to a range of issues; the most common recurring themes are disruption, structural stability and hydrology.

12/12660/FULL Wellington Close / Artesian Road

“In the present climate of economic uncertainty there can be no guarantee that the developer will have the financial resources to be able to complete their construction. Should the developer or builder encounter financial difficulties, then the mews could remain in this deeply and inherently unsafe state for a significant period of time”

“We have suffered drainage blockages caused by the daily washing down of the mews and may yet suffer damage to drains, water, sewage systems”

“My wife and I have, in recent weeks, also been enduring the daily hell of the noise and vibration of pneumatic drills next door at no.3 due to another basement excavation (to be followed immediately by yet another at no. 2)

12/05143/FULL 1 Northumberland Place

“The disturbance would be intolerable.”

“a similar project in Artesian Road resulted in severe flooding that has led to neighbours having to move out of their house”

12/10312 31 Hamilton Gardens

“Residents are fed up with such schemes, particularly the disruption, noise, dust, congestion which they cause...I very strongly object to this proposal”

“[locating staff quarters] below ground with little natural light is inequitable”

“The plans to extend the basement under the garden will increase the danger of flooding and could destabilise the foundations of the house and the neighbouring houses”

“We have now gone through [more than] a year of construction disruption while two other houses in the same block had new cellars put in. The scale of this project seems much greater and fills me with dread”

13/06382/FULL – 4 Trevor Place

“Trevor Place cannot handle another major construction site at this time. There are currently five different construction projects on the street and the trucks, workers, and dumpsters associated with these projects block parking and the flow of traffic (cars are constantly honking because a van or truck is unloading supplies or double parked), cause dust and loud noises, and generally interfere with the other residents ability to live in their homes six days a week. For example, one project at 14 Trevor Place has been cutting/polishing small pieces of marble on the street and in the back garden for the past two weeks - it's insane! Please do not add another project to the street until one of the major construction permits on the street expires.”

“This application involves digging an enormous hole for a two-level basement extension within a few metres of our boundary wall. I most strongly object on the grounds that: 1. it will cause multiple years of noise of noise and disruptions to us and to other neighbours. 2. the double- depth excavation increases the risk of damage by subsidence to our property. 3. the double-depth excavation will affect the water table with heightened risk of damp problems to neighbouring properties including ours.”

13/09356/FULL 8 Chesterfield Gardens

“I object to potential loss of the mature tree in the courtyard which gives year-round visual uplift....Noise from the operation of the car-lift, especially at night...the potential for great disruption and discomfort during the period of work (including access, noise nuisance, loss of residents' parking bays, dust and dirt, exhaust fumes, etc...”

“the proposed extraction of 12,000+ square feet under 8 Chesterfield Gardens threatens the stability of 26 Charles St and neighbouring Grade 2 listed houses with the high risks it entails. These are that it will lift the water table which has been as high as two feet below the surface since 1990. At best this will call for extensive new damp protection, more alarmingly it threatens 18th century foundations. Further, subsidence may return which began after Prince Safris 1993 underground works forced the lower floors of 27 Charles Street to be relevelled (an eastward descent of about 8 degrees emerged at ground level), and also caused westward descent of three to four degrees here. Cracks in front and rear fabric also developed.”

“The streets surrounding the prospective excavation site are narrow, (Charles Street adjacent to the excavation site is exceedingly so), the supporting walls and near-by Georgian buildings old and fragile. A demolition and excavation of the size planned for 8 Chesterfield Street and Ancaster House cannot but last years; create a great unrelieved disturbance of filth, noise and congestion; involve the removal of a 1000 plus loads of soil, and place the physical fabric of the neighbourhood at risk from subsistence and ground heave, This

excavation will have a long-lasting negative effect on the neighbours, residents, and local business community, especially the financial service firms that abound in this vicinity.”

“Two mansions in Mayfair back on to each other, and the owners’ plan is to link them with a tunnel, creating a 14,000 sq ft underground area, with an enormous games room, sauna, pool, media room, car park and a plant room. Above that will be further bedrooms, staff rooms, two suites, a laundry room and security rooms. If and when it is completed, the combined home and its underground area will be marginally smaller than Westminster Cathedral”.

14/06899/FULL – 18 Northumberland Place

“I still stand by my objection to the extent of the sub basement and depth of the new basement due to the potential movement of neighbouring structures, subsidence and movement of ground water. Damage has occurred to homes in Courtnell St due to similar works. I would also like to point out that Northumberland Place already has an excessive amount of building projects under construction, our quality of life has been reduced over the last year through excess noise, traffic congestion, pollution and the looming threat of more and more extensive works.”

14/00182/FULL - 25-26 Ivor Place

“I am concerned about the effects of earth excavation, pile driving etc on the stability of the soil, flooding and subsidence to local properties, and the impact of this on infrastructure in the neighbourhood. The movement of water underground would be disrupted to an unforeseeable extent by this double basement proposal. Without being able to assess the impact of it and the size of the area it would affect I think it is an unwise move, for no community gain. Noise and disruption: I fear this development would cause much noise and disruption to myself and local residents during the two plus years construction period and thereafter. Also the use of the roof terrace could cause further noise and disruption.”

13/07471/FULL- 14 St Edmund's Close

Danes Court will be surrounded by noisy, dusty construction sites if this proposal is approved. There are already 2 huge construction sites at the top of St Edmunds Close. St Edmunds Terrace has 4 construction sites currently. The level of construction traffic on the small roads around St Edmunds Close from 4 separate sites is already dangerous and appears to have damaged the road surface at the top of Wells Rise. Any increase in construction traffic will be very difficult for residents as well as dangerous to cars, cyclists and pedestrians.

60 Westbourne Park Road - 13/07435/FULL

“ Every single resident will be adversely affected by this proposal. There is currently insufficient parking for residents when all bays are available. This development will result in lost parking spaces for many months. With on street parking occupied on both sides, there is little room for cars to pass on the road. On occasions when emergency vehicles arrive, the streets already become blocked. Rubbish collection requires sensitive behaviour by the dust-van men and the experience of scaffolders and online shopping deliveries is bad. The consequences of multiple daily material deliveries and spoil removal for this development are unimaginable . The noise and dust pollution of noisy conveyor belt-assisted working, 10 hours daily x 5 days, and also on Saturday mornings, will blight the lives of many families for up to a year. This application is made with no apparent consideration for current residents whose lives will be blighted by an inappropriate application, to create underground rooms in a huge house which already has substantial space. The potential structural and flooding problems for neighbouring properties is unimaginable... plus the loss of mature garden, trees and wildlife habitat is completely unacceptable. I believe that its time that Westminster Council starts to protect the boroughs historical and architectural authenticity for the future and that this redevelopment application is rejected.”

“The proposed basements are huge - to date we have only had basements under existing buildings and not under entire back gardens. We have no real evidence as to what this would do to surrounding properties - certainly we do know that properties which abut recent basement developments HAVE had to undergo substantial subsidence work following basement excavations. We have a river flowing under our road – the Westbourne. No one can be sure what the effect of such massive developments would be on our properties and this one is off the scale of what we've seen before. We URGE the Council in the strongest possible terms to refuse this application.”

“I am even more concerned, however, by the fact that there does not appear to be any expert assessment of the impact upon neighbouring properties of basement works on this scale, which far exceeds anything for which the Council has previously granted permission. In particular, it does not appear that any consideration has been given to the impact of such works upon water levels in respect of neighbouring properties (including my own!) and, in consequence, upon the environment, including trees both in gardens and in the street.”

APPENDIX 6: GARDEN PLANTING

Westminster is in the process of producing a conservation area audit (appraisal) for each of its 56 conservation areas. Thus far, 48 audits have been completed.

Many of the conservation area audits contain a chapter on the contribution of trees and soft landscaping to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Below are extracts from four of the conservation area audits with a bearing on basement developments; specifically, those which mention private garden trees as making a contribution to the character of the area.

Belgravia (draft) 2013

Planting in private gardens makes an important contribution to the character of the more formal parts of Belgravia where it is glimpsed from the public highway. Mature trees, visible through townscape gaps, from mews or over garden walls provide contrast with the white stucco and formal layout of the conservation area. They add interest to the townscape by hinting at the existence of the private realm.

St John's Wood (2008)

St John's Wood was originally envisaged as an Arcadian suburb and as its name accurately reflects it remains a wooded suburb where trees are very important in the townscape, though it is unlikely that any now present predate the buildings. These trees are not only along the roadside, but both in front gardens and the extensive groups of rear gardens that characterize the area. The domestic gardens with hedges and shrubs are critical constituents of the area's appeal.

The tree-lined avenues create a strong framework to many streets. For example, Hamilton Terrace, Maida Vale and Arbercorn Place are lined each side with mature London Plane trees, which are in proportion to the wider roads lined with large villas. They give a formal, light and open feeling to the local scene. By contrast parts of St John's Wood Terrace, are lined with smaller trees, which appear in scale with the smaller size of the properties. The formality of the planting and the size and types of trees give varying experiences and create different characters to the roads. For example, parts of Clifton Hill, Woronzow Road and Norfolk Road have a great variety of tree species within the front gardens rather than along the pavement and give a suburban, leafy feel to the road, which is less formal. Alternatively Springfield Road, Belgrave Gardens, Avenue Road and part of Cunningham Place are lined by trees of similar size and species which are equally attractive but create a formal pattern to the character of the road.

Apart from in the parks, church grounds or large groups of back garden there are few groups of trees or other landscape features. An exception is along St John's Wood Road where a

belt of trees and shrubs has been used to screen parking adjacent to the building. There are individual mature trees which are interesting in form and type and create a focal point, such as the weeping willow at the end of Acacia Place and a mature Ginko at the southern end of Ordnance Hill. Otherwise there are a few flowerbeds within the pavement area at St John's Wood Terrace and Caversham Road, and hanging baskets have been hung off the lampposts on part of Clifton Road. The trees and landscape of the area play a very important role and are one of the characteristics of the area. They should therefore be managed, preserved and enhanced in accordance with national and local legislation and advice. There are examples where front garden space and the associated vegetation have been lost due to the creation of off-street parking areas. This has the effect of breaking up the pattern of garden plots, changing the character of the street. (See negative features) New planting will be encouraged so that semi-mature tree will be established when older ones have to be removed or in order to improve the landscape of an area.

Due to the size of the gardens attached to the villas there are many very important groups of trees within the private spaces of this conservation area. They create a continuous overlapping of the green network and the built fabric and are an essential part of the character of this leafy suburb. The aerial view above shows the large number of mature trees and bushes in the rear gardens of properties along Maida Vale and Hamilton Terrace. It is important these groups of trees are protected and replaced or enhanced with new planting where it is practical to do so.

Westbourne (2000)

Groups of mature trees make a significant contribution to the townscape of Westbourne, enhancing the picturesque qualities of the spaces around Westbourne Gardens and Westbourne Park Road. Trees are also an important feature of Kildare and St. Stephen's Gardens. In the grid of streets that comprise the western portion of the conservation area mature trees create a domestic feeling, introduce scale and act to soften the architectural forms. Trees in back gardens (which perforce could not be indicated on Figure 7) come into view at junctions and perform the same function. UDP policy DES12 seeks to protect trees which make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of a conservation area. Guidance on this issue is available in a special design guide, Trees and Other Planting on Development Sites available from the Department of Environment and Planning.

Aldridge Road and Leamington Road Villas (2004)

Trees provide significant amenity value in an urban environment in both visual and environmental terms. They are important elements in the character and appearance of a conservation area contributing to the townscape in many ways. This can range from a single specimen providing a focal point, a group of mature trees forming part of an historic planting scheme or street trees forming an integral part of an estate layout.

Avenues of mature plane and Lime trees form an important element of the character of the conservation area. Aldridge Road Villas is arcaded along almost its entire length, while Leamington Road Villas and St Luke's Road both retain significant stretches. Many of the trees within the Conservation Area are subject to Tree Preservation orders, either individually or in groups, and the vast majority of these are located within the front gardens of the terraces and villas. A map showing protected trees can be found in the directory, at the back of this document.

Other species making a positive contribution to the conservation area include Black Poplar, Locust, Weeping Ash, Sycamore, Tree of Heaven, Lombardy Poplar, Thorn Tree and Birch.

The visual impact of this planting is fundamental in defining the character and appearance of the area. The mature trees which line the streets are a distinctive and attractive feature of the conservation area. They help soften the appearance of the properties, and serve to emphasise the regularity of the built form providing a unifying quality to the townscape.

The City Council recognises that the large number of lime trees in front gardens in the conservation area can cause inconvenience for residents, in particular because the trees support populations of aphids which, in summer months, secrete sticky honeydew onto surfaces below the trees. Whilst applications to remove lime trees are likely to be resisted in line with UDP policies, proposals for maintenance by crown reduction of the trees will be treated sympathetically. However, the City Council will continue to review this approach in line with public representations and any decisions by central Government on appeals against the Council's refusal of consent to remove trees.

APPENDIX 7 OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON RESIDENTS' ATTITUDES TO BASEMENTS

The views of residents were canvassed by Karen Buck MP on basements in Westminster with the results attached. Additionally there are extracts from the Knightsbridge Association Annual Report (December 2013), and the South East Bayswater Residents' Association (SEBRA) Newsletter (from Autumn 2013)

2013

Basement Developments- Neighbours' Survey- Westminster

Results and conclusions.



BASEMENT DEVELOPMENTS- NEIGHBOURS SURVEY- WESTMINSTER

2013

"Noise, filth penetration, blocked roads, restricted parking" (Respondent)



Introduction

The main purpose of this report is to understand and evaluate the effects on residents of basement developments within the Westminster North constituency.

The survey was distributed over three wards, Abbey Road (AR), Bayswater (BW) and Regent's Park (RP) to, 914 residents. From this we had a total of 84 respondents to the questionnaire; though a relatively small response, this issue feeds into the wider debate about housing within Westminster.

Westminster as a whole is currently suffering an acute housing crisis and the wealthier parts of borough are not immune from this. Though they may not be facing eviction from their properties and homelessness like a serious number residents are; there is in fact a seismic shift currently taking place within the borough, in terms of who are buying, developing and living in the most expensive areas and properties. This report aims to highlight one aspect of this in basement developments and how it is affecting resident's lives, and is a small step towards filling a far wider picture of the state of housing within Westminster.

Summery

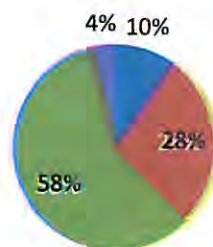
Though a handful of respondents felt basement works were not intrusive and necessary because of the lack of space in central London the majority of respondents cited a number of issues with these developments, whether they are direct next door neighbours or residents of the same street as a development.

The overwhelming number of respondents lived at their property wiliest the developments works were started, with 58% stating the works lasted 12 months or longer.

The length of time of the developments and the number of permitted excavation's kept being brought up by respondents as a major concern. The length and number of excavation especially on smaller streets and mews are compounding the other problems that these developments bring.

Thinking about the most recent basement development in the vicinity of your home, how long did the development take?

■ Up to 6 months ■ Between 6 and 12 months ■ 12 months or longer ■ Cannot say



A number of respondents gave examples of damage that had affected their property because of a basement development. As one wrote,

“Cracking in ceilings and walls, mice arriving from excavation into garden.”
(Respondent)

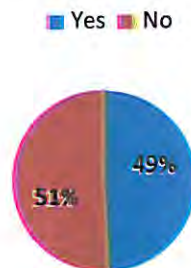
This is really concerning. Though not a huge proportion of respondents cited property damage or subsidence on this scale, every case such as this is disturbing. The lack of take up of Party Wall Agreements is also concerning, 49% of respondents stated they did not qualify in this regards, but with only 27% taking up this option who were eligible and 21% who are eligible not getting a Party Wall Agreement, is a concern.

One respondent goes to the heart of the matter,

“We are just starting the process of negotiating a Party Wall Agreement. We anticipate significant problems, because basically the developers do not care about our wellbeing or our right to peaceful enjoyment of our home. For example, the house is owned through an offshore company, which has been put in place to avoid UK taxation. The result is that the homeowner is essentially judgment-proof. So in the worst case scenario, if significant damage is caused to our property, we could have no recourse against the true owners because they have shielded themselves with the offshore company. The Party Wall Act provides that we can ask for security, which we will do, but we expect that to be contested because it is a cost item for the developers. We also want to be named as additional insureds on their insurance policy, but again expect resistance because it is a cost item for the developers.” (Respondent)

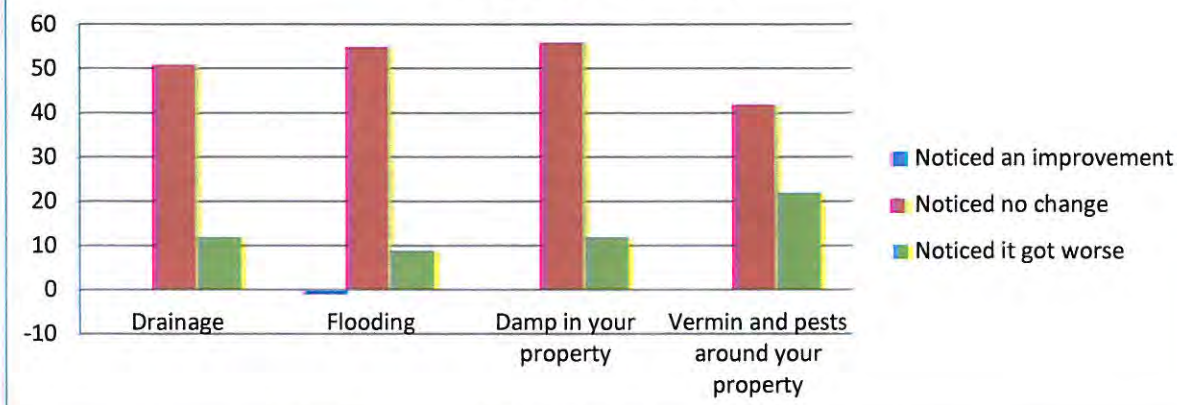
From the response it is nearly 50% split between residents whose property were affected and not affected.

Did you notice any impact on your own property as a result of the development?



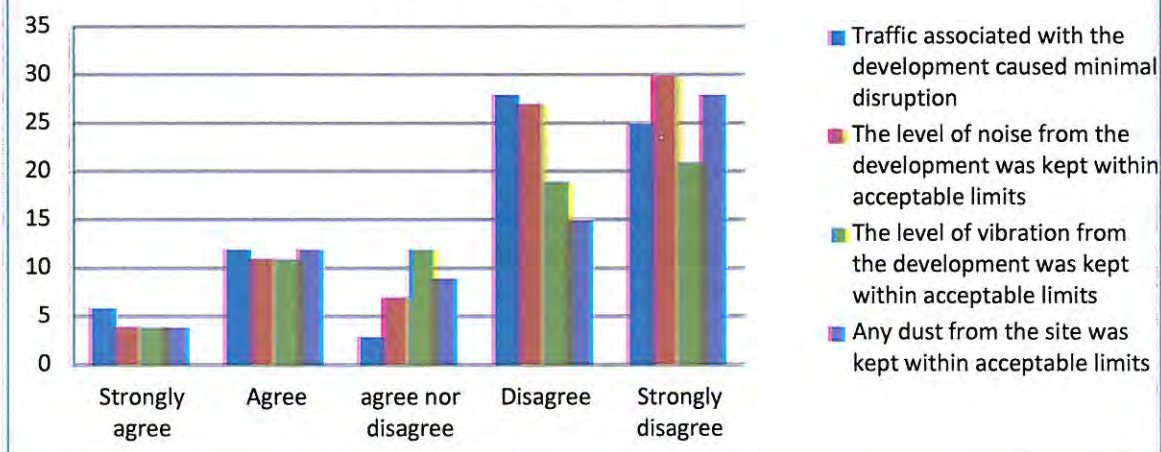
There were some who responded that these got worse during and after the developments. This was mainly with vermin and pest being dispersed from the excavation. Though most respondents noticed little or no change during or after the development's, in the terms of, drainage, flooding, damp to the property and vermin and pest around the property

During construction, did you notice any change to the following?



The following numbers reveals the true problems facing all residents regarding basement developments. Many of the respondents were affecting directly by works carried out by their neighbours, but non-direct neighbours of household's who were developing there below ground space are not preclude from being seriously affected by the works. Both groups have been clearly affected negatively by excavation works. This is most clearly shown in the answers submitted for question 8.

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



It is obvious from the graph; the problems for residents were the level of noise, traffic, vibration and dust associated with the developments. Many respondents cited there disbelief at the lack of care and attention these to aspects of the build the Council considered before approving the works. As one respondent put it,

"Constant noise and dust during the development and more than likely the movement of all the earth under so many properties undermines all the properties in the vicinity" (Respondent)

The evidence also suggests that many respondents were unhappy with the conduct of the builders used for the excavation and developments works, the suspension of parking bays, in some cases for over a year and up to 18m in length, the impact on the general environment, from dust to debris, to building materials being left on the pavement for indeterminate about of time. Respondents wanted a system where they could register formal complaints against this sort of behaviour.

Conclusion

Because of the niche nature of basement developments and lack of priority it receives in the national debate more needs to be done by local authorities. From the evidence we have received, a sensible step would be for local authorities to take a more holistic approach towards these developments. Kensington and Chelsea are starting to take this matter up and are pushing for a Traffic Management Plans which have to be provided and implemented with every application. Noise and traffic are major problems with these developments and affect everyone living within the area not just the next door neighbour.

Timing of developments should also be taken into account. With these developments taking on average over a year to finish it would not be unreasonably for a local authority to look at the current developments under construction in a given area and take this into consideration when approving any future developments. A residential street should not be turned into a building site as many respondents feels there's has.

"The development went on for over two years. The mews was filled with vans during that time. The mews appears to have sunk as a result of the excavation work. My house has cracked badly. Yet, I as a neighbour had no way of protecting my home and my interests unless I sued the developer which I could not afford. The developer has damaged the mews in a number of ways, yet it is impossible to get him to put the damage right. He had added two new bathrooms to the property and is now suggesting residents in the mews should install and pay for a new water and sewerage system, as the current (which the whole mews shares) cannot cope with all the extra loos and showers that he, and another developer, have added to their property. Everyone who lives in this mews objected to the basement being added, yet Westminster City Council granted permission for it, ignoring totally the potential damage to the mews, and the effect the development would have on the lives of the people living in the mews."(Respondent)

A feeling of helplessness in regards these developments' permeates many of the response. When a homeowner is facing a company which is hidden offshore, with money and resources they could never imagine, it is very difficult to see how an ordinary person can possibly hope to bring them see the damage they are causing their property and streetscape. Local authorities where basement developments are occurring need to work to rectify this inequality, because even after planning permission has been granted the job of supervising and enforcing the law on these developments still has to be done. This must be dealt with at the planning stage i.e. restrictions on traffic, working hours and basement depths and also an effective complaints and enforcement procedure involving the local the planning and environmental health departments to insure control and management of these developments.

The work of Kensington and Chelsea needs to be acknowledged in this area. An important step forward would be for Westminster to align itself with the proposed policies for basement developments K&C set out in its public consultation, as it seems to offer the clearest guidelines to improving this difficult area of planning.

Box 2: Proposed policy Policy CL7

Basements

Basement development must be of the highest quality. The Council will require Basement development to adhere to the following requirements:

- a. The basement must not exceed 75% of each garden of the property. Where the findings of the analysis of the surface water conditions of the site demonstrate surface water drainage will not be maintained, this percentage will be reduced. The unaffected garden must be in a single area.
- b. The basement must not comprise more than one additional storey except on larger sites which are less constrained and where it can be demonstrated that traffic and construction impacts can be successfully mitigated
- c. There must be no loss, damage or long term threat to trees of townscape or amenity value, and the ability of future tree planting of a suitable size and scale both on site and in neighbouring gardens must not be prejudiced.
- d. The scheme must not cause substantial harm to heritage assets¹⁵.
- e. The development must maintain and take opportunities to improve the character of the building, garden or wider area, with external elements such as light wells, roof lights, plant and means of escape being sensitively designed and discreetly sited.
- f. The basement must not introduce light wells and railings to the front or side of the property which are visible from the street, where these are not a feature of that street.
- g. The development must include a sustainable urban drainage scheme including a minimum of one metre of permeable soil above any part of the basement beneath a garden.
- h. Where the basement is to be constructed under an existing building, the dwelling or commercial property to which the basement relates must be adapted to a high level of performance in respect of carbon emissions and this must be verified at pre-assessment stage and after construction has been completed. Where a new building with a basement is proposed, the same applies to the entire building.
- i. The submitted application must demonstrate how traffic and construction activity will be organised so as not to harm road safety, significantly increase traffic congestion, nor place unreasonable inconvenience on the day to day life of those living and working nearby.

j. The submitted application must demonstrate how the construction will be carried out in such a way as to minimise potential impacts such as noise, vibration and dust for the duration of the works;

k. The submitted application must demonstrate how it is intended to safeguard the structural stability of the application building and nearby buildings.

Applicants are also advised to look at policy CE2, Flooding, in considering basement proposals.

References

RBKC: [Basements Review Draft Paper](#)

PLANNING AND CONSERVATION REPORT

BASEMENTS



As reported in the Autumn Newsletter both WCC and RBKC are grinding their way through the hoops of getting new policies adopted. It is a long drawn out process. Residents' concerns are readily countered by moneyed developers, who claim that neighbours don't mind excavations next door. Let us assure them they do. As Dr James Thompson of the Considerate Basement Development Group points out, part of the testing procedure in which the 'chiefs' (in this case RBKC) make the 'natives' (the residents) engage in is to plead, and plead again, eventually offering a 'concession'. As part of this procedure, residents who



for years have been writing to the council asking for some relief from blocked roads and parking bays, noise, vibration, structural damage and vermin are asked in questionnaires if they have any opinions about the digging of basements!

Amongst the points that the KA has been pressing the councils to include in their policies are: no more than 50% of a garden should be excavated; developers should be required to put up a ten year bond to be held against any damage revealed during that timescale; that properties further than the immediate neighbour should be covered by something similar to a party wall agreement; and most importantly, no second basements where one already exists and only one basement where none exists. Basement

developments must be proportionate. We have seen some permissions where the underground development more than doubles or trebles the existing square footage.

As of November, judgment is awaited as to whether RBKC has followed sound and proper procedures in drawing up the special planning directive which would give residents a measure of relief from the consequences of basement



developments. Predictably, developers have been quick to respond, with armies of paid 'experts' weighing in with evidence contradicting the Council's stance that excavations should be limited. We are unlikely to see any significant progress on this front until the middle of 2014, but to echo the words of one councillor, "what is a few months' delay if we can outlaw icebergs forever?"

Spanning as it does both sides of the council border, the KA has also been commenting on WCC's emerging basement policies. Unusually for them, WCC is somewhat behind RBKC in this instance. Their next consultation document was published in October and we were considering our response as we went to press.

If permission is sought for basement excavation adjacent to your property, it is advisable to engage the services of a planning consultant. If it is granted, you should then appoint an independent party wall surveyor, whose fees have to be covered by the developer.



Taking another look . . .

This new section looks at major stories we have covered in recent issues of SEBRA NEWS. We update readers on what has happened since we last wrote about them.

Basements—dealing with ‘iceberg houses’

Council strategy

In several recent issues we included extensive coverage of the current worries about huge basement developments and their disruptive effect on the neighbourhood during their heavy construction work. In general terms the experience to date in the three London Boroughs most affected by this new trend is that local authority attempts to gain greater control over this phenomenon have not achieved any great degree of success, but have stimulated a rush of planning applications from wealthy owners wanting to get in quick before any restrictions come into effect. It also appears that getting control over excessive schemes is very difficult.

However, as we reported in our last (*Autumn 2013*) issue, Westminster City Council has said that it will be the first local authority in the UK to tackle the issue of mega-basements ‘in a pragmatic way’. On 10 October it set itself the task of implementing new rules in full by 2015, when it announced two linked initiatives to try to deal with the problem. One, the long-term solution, was to issue a draft new Policy. It is however estimated that it will be two years before this can be adopted, as part of the emerging Westminster City Plan. So at the same time the Council also issued a short-term draft ‘interim guidance’ document, which it said was to ‘gain as much control as possible on basement developments’ until its specific Planning Policy could be brought into force.

Now the Council has followed up to maintain the momentum of its efforts to control this modern craze. On 21 February, it announced a second stage consultation on a strengthening of its initial draft Interim Guidance Note—by a new ‘Supplementary Planning Document’ (SPD), which it has just issued. It says that this document will ‘strengthen’ the status of the original guidance issued last October, and will give the SPD ‘greater weight in decision-making on planning applications’. The new consultation phase will end on 24 March.

In the meantime, Councillor Robert Davis, the Council’s man in charge, has gone on record to explain what the Council will be looking for. He said: ‘For new basements this means naturally lit and well ventilated accommodation that has no negative visual impacts on the surrounding environment.’ This is quite a mouthful, but we wish the Council well in its efforts to find ways of curbing this modern scourge of quiet residential neighbourhoods, whose village character may be destroyed for ever.

Time to celebrate?

A formal decision is awaited on the highly controversial planning application for the thorough reconstruction of 60-62 Westbourne Park Road, on which we reported fully on pages 3 to 6 of our last issue. Indications are that the application will be refused, but this is not yet certain—more than one thing can still happen, as we explain below.

There has been huge local concern about and opposition to this proposal, which is for the almost total re-building above ground of two houses, together with the construction of enormous new basements extending to almost the entire length of their large back gardens. This led to a well stage-managed demonstration one Saturday morning recently, when local objectors turned out, to hold a banner the same length as the proposed basements. It does look extraordinarily long!

As we go to press the planning sub-committee meeting which will rule on these plans is still to meet; however, Councillor Robert Davis, Westminster’s planning ‘supremo’, has (perhaps surprisingly) already written to two of the most prominent local objectors about the 144 signature petition against the scheme which they had submitted. His letter (which SEBRA NEWS has seen) virtually promises that the application will be refused. It starts by saying that the applicants had already been informed ‘that the applications will be recommended for refusal by the City Council’s case officer’. Interestingly, the letter indicates that the main reasons for refusal ‘relate to the lack of justification for the extensive works of demolition of the existing buildings behind the retained front facades, the proposed roof extensions and the scale of the rear extensions. Certain issues do exist with the basement excavation in terms of their size and the lack of planting depth above, but these do not represent the primary basis for our recommendation.’ (*emphasis added*).

Old hands in the planning game have advised the already-jubilant protestors to keep the champagne corked for the time being. A common tactic in such cases is for the applicant to withdraw an application before it gets in front of the planning committee—to avoid the stain of a formal refusal of planning permission. But a very confident applicant with deep

pockets may not withdraw. It may allow the hearing to occur and suffer refusal, but then mount a formal appeal—heard by an independent Inspector—which it might win.

Otherwise, withdrawal of this application could be the end of the matter, but the developer might modify its plans and try again—all part of the game, say those in the know. This may just happen in this case—especially if other local applicants for huge basements win appeal cases against refusal of planning permission. The developer may claim that it was this aspect of the case which really led to the refusal of planning consent.

In this case, however, Robert Davis has been—as ever—quite canny. He is on much safer ground when indicating that refusal might be based on the above-ground aspects of the proposal. There are many tried and tested precedents for the refusal of planning permission for such reasons, and the whole scheme has gone so far over the top in its ambitions that modifications which would gain planning permission would seem unlikely. Refusal of the plans due to the basement element alone would be much less likely to succeed.

But nothing is certain so far. We don’t want to cast undue gloom in Westbourne Park Road, but this case is not necessarily all over yet.

Planning conflict and bizarre decisions

That ‘Bizarre’ decision

On pages 23 to 26 of our last issue, we wrote extensively about a strange planning decision in the complicated case of the rebuilding of the Tesco Metro store at 138/144 Queensway and 20 flats behind it.

We said that the decision had been pushed through against advice by Councillor Robert Davis, and that we thought he was being unwise. Developments in the case since then seem to be proving us right. The big fuss was all about the odd decision to switch big money due from the developer to pay for Affordable Housing under a ‘Section 106 Agreement’.

Robert Davis decided that these funds would better be spent on improving the Queensway streetscape. Apart from technical doubts on whether such a switch is legally permissible, it is unfortunate that a payment meant to help the disadvan-

taged has become an investment in the property’s value by its owner (and

developer). Many people have pointed this out, not the least such political opponents as the Labour Opposition on the Council and the local Lib Dems (*see the letter from their well-known Sue Baring on page 70*).

Briefly, the original planning permission for the block of flats fronting onto Inverness Terrace involved the building of a number of ‘affordable housing’ flats as part of it. This element of the building, as approved, required the construction of a second ‘residential core’, to provide a separate entrance, lifts etc, to the affordable housing flats. This sort of segregation is normal in such a ‘mixed development’.

But then the developer decided to do away with this element and to build only ‘open market’ flats, with just one core and one street entrance to the block. This would inevitably give rise to a substantial Section 106 payment for affordable housing elsewhere (eventually calculated by standard formula as being £1,070,788). It is this amount to which the ‘bizarre decision’ relates—under the Committee ruling only £608,000 is to go to the Affordable Housing Fund, while £462,788 has been switched to the Queensway Public Realm scheme (*which, as reported in our article about it on page 36*) is not yet agreed, and may or may not ever proceed.

When deciding not to include the affordable housing element, the developer needed a ‘minor variation’ to the planning consent to allow the omission of the second core. SEBRA has always been dubious about all this, and we have said so consistently over a long period. Now it looks as though the payment due into the affordable housing fund has not yet been made . . . but the building work continues, without proper planning permission for the single core.

And now, to confuse the issue still further, DCD Properties the developers and owners until now, are in the final stages of selling the whole property (Tesco store and flats) to the new owners of large parts of Queensway. Indeed, the purchaser is so near completing the deal (which was due at the end of February) that it is now paying for the continuing building costs.

The development is slightly behind schedule. There is talk that the new owners might apply to add an additional residential floor; this is highly unlikely

to get planning permission, however, as the new building is already going to be higher than those on either side; an extra storey would reduce the light into those adjacent residential properties too much. And the date for Tesco Metro to reopen has slipped; this now may not be until early next year.

Listening to objections

Another subject we raised in our last issue (*see page 20 especially*) is that Westminster Council, almost alone, does not allow objectors to planning applications to speak at planning committee meetings. We mentioned that a formal approach about this to the Council was being made on behalf of all major local amenity groups and similar bodies. This was duly done on 23 October last by the Westminster Amenity Society Forum (WASF), of which SEBRA is a member, which wrote to Philippa Roe, Leader of the Council. It is no great surprise to learn that her reply of 6 November gave WASF a firm brush-off, only just politely.

The main reason she gave (some would call it an excuse) was that Westminster Council has the largest planning application workload in the country. Her letter then says (rather rudely one might think) that WASF ‘assert that all other London Councils allow some form of representation to objectors.’ The Leader goes on to imply that WASF had not got its facts right, in that two other (named) London authorities receive ‘only written deputations . . .’. (No doubt Ms Roe meant to use the word ‘representations’ here; there is no such thing as a ‘written deputation’). What a shame that she and her staff do not check their letters properly! We hope never to make such a basic howler in SEBRA NEWS, and work very hard to avoid such embarrassments. The error persisted—on 28 November the Leader wrote a very similar letter still containing this mistake to the Westminster Lib Dems.)

So poor old WASF got rather short shrift; partly, it might be said, for putting its case less powerfully than it might have done. But the matter is unlikely to be left to rest there. Is Westminster City Council able to swim against the tide for ever, or will the strong and growing undercurrent of local discontent about some recent pretty arbitrary planning decisions become irresistible?

There are quite a number of very disgruntled recent objectors locally—not least to the redevelopment of the for-



APPENDIX 8: MEDIA SUMMARY 2012-2015

Plans submitted for £70m super home in heart of Mayfair

Plans have been submitted to turn a series of properties in Mayfair into a £70m super home. The mansion at Eight Grosvenor Square would come with an underground leisure complex and, at 190ft - more than half the size of a football pitch - could become the longest in London. The 18th Century building, on the corner of Grosvenor Square, Mayfair, will stretch all the way back so it incorporates the mews homes on Duke's Yard. Previous proposals for work on 8 Grosvenor Square have been approved, but fresh plans submitted to Westminster City Council includes work on a new sub-basement, basement and ground floors.

Get West London

Date: Tuesday 2 June 2015

Half of prime London basement builds fail safety spot-checks

An inspection carried out by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) covering 127 domestic basement builds in Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, and the City of Westminster, has found that 49% failed to meet required standards. Last year, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea passed new planning guidance allowing it to limit the depth and footprint of basement excavations. Hammersmith & Fulham introduced its own local restrictions on basement building earlier, and Westminster City Council is considering the introduction of tougher basement-extension guidance as part of its City Plan.

Architects Journal

Date: Wednesday 6 May 2015

Residents pin blame on basement digs as tree crashes down in communal gardens

A spate of basement digging in one of London's most exclusive neighbourhoods has been blamed for a tree crashing down in a communal garden. The gardens between Elgin Crescent and Blenheim Crescent, in Notting Hill, are regularly used by local residents including singer Rita Ora, documentary maker Molly Dineen, comedians Harry Enfield and Ruby Wax and writer Rachel Johnson. Some residents have called for an urgent investigation to ensure the dozen other large trees are safe amid concerns the estimated 50 basements dug on the streets since 2000 have altered drainage, compromising the trees' stability. [P25](#).

The Evening Standard

Date: Tuesday 21st April 2015

The war over billionaire basements

The Times 2 supplement runs a feature on the phenomenon of 'mega-basements', which have been attracting headlines once again following news that the Beckhams are carrying out major renovations at their home in Holland Park. Meanwhile, in Mayfair, John Caudwell, the billionaire founder of Phones4u, has submitted plans to turn a 1960s car park into a "super prime" development to rival One Hyde Park. Kirsty Bertarelli, the former Miss UK who is Britain's richest woman, received approval for a two-storey underground extension to a Belgravia mews house last month. The Times reports that Kensington and Chelsea Council has ruled that it will no longer approve basements of more than one storey, and that they should not extend beneath more than 50 percent of a garden. They had previously been allowed to stretch beneath 85 percent. They report Westminster City Council is planning similar measures.

The Times 2

Date: Tuesday 7 April 2015

Kirsty Bertarelli is Britain's richest woman and might be the country's worst neighbour

The richest women in Britain, Kirsty Bertarelli, has just won planning permission from Westminster City Council to build a £10 million "mega basement" underneath her £5.5 million house on one of London's wealthiest streets. The plans to turn her mews house, which she shares with her

husband and three children, into an "iceberg," as the basement will be two storeys deep. Effectively, she is turning her basement into a secret underground lair that would make any evil genius from a James Bond movie proud. They note that there have been a large number of objections from other residents within the mews," said John Walker, Westminster City Council's operational director of development planning, in a report cited by The Telegraph. He added: "Concern has been raised by residents that the use of the basements has not been specified, and that they might be used as recording studios. They are concerned that the excavation of new basements is a risky construction process, with potential harm to the property and adjoining buildings." The Times notes that despite Westminster City Council banning "iceberg" developments by end of this year, it approved the application.

US business Insider **Date: Friday 13 March 2015**

The Daily Express **Date: Friday 13 March 2015**

Get West London **Date: Friday 13 March 2015**

Britain's richest woman wins council approval for 'mega basement' at £10m Westminster home

Britain's richest woman has upset her neighbours with a two-storey "iceberg" mega basement that will almost double the size of her lavish home. Her £7billion fortune from being wed to a pharmaceuticals magnate makes former Miss UK Kirsty Bertarelli worth more than JK Rowling and the Queen combined. Westminster City Council's planning committee approved the controversial application at a meeting on Tuesday evening despite the "large number" of objections. Westminster City Council is to introduce a similar policy to limit the size of basement extensions by the end of this year. Council spokesman Nick Thompson said: "This application was approved by committee on Tuesday night. We have a basement policy that is coming in very shortly which will restrict this type of development, as we recognise the disruption that residents in Westminster are having to live with."

The Daily Telegraph **Date: Thursday 12 March 2015**

The Times **Date: Friday 13 March 2015**

The Daily Mail **Date: Friday 13 March 2015**

Lib Dem donor angers neighbours with plans for 'iceberg home' with vast subterranean complex including cinema and pool under his £20m Belgravia mansion.

A Liberal Democrat donor has angered his neighbours with plans for a two-storey basement under his £20m house in Belgravia. Bhanu Choudhrie, who with his father Sudhir Choudri has given more than £1million to the political party, was given the green light by Westminster City Council last week for his extensive plans last week. Neighbours next to the Grade II listed property are less than pleased about the 'grotesque' plans, with one resident saying he feared a nightmare of lorries charging up and down the street as they carried out the work. A spokesman for the Choudhries said: 'Planning permission has been granted and that's that. As far as the SFO investigation goes they have not been interviewed or talked to again.' Basement extensions several storeys below the ground have become increasingly popular in some of the capital's most expensive neighbourhoods as home-owners attempt to increase their living space without infringing strict planning controls.

Daily Mail **Date: Saturday 21 February 2015**

Grade II listed building in Piccadilly that was once home to Lord Palmerston to be reborn as £70 million four-bedroom Victorian home

The dilapidated Grade II listed Victorian landmark at 95 Piccadilly in London is set for a rebirth as a four-bedroom residence that will boast a price tag of £70million. The exclusive location overlooking Green Park, and the fact Buckingham Palace is a close neighbour, are among the reasons that justify such an 'eye-watering sum' for the building that was most recently the members-only American Club. Water ingress, dry rot and vermin infestation have left the Mayfair mansion in 'poor condition'. Planning permission has been granted by Westminster City Council to completely refurbish the home, change the layout and create a new basement level which will feature a swimming pool and spa. When completed, 95 Piccadilly will have a passenger lift, while an additional staircase will be built to access the new basement, which will include a swimming pool, lounge, gym and spa. The basement will feature a large kitchen and dining room, wine cellars and staff accommodation.

Daily Mail

Date: Friday 20 February 2015

Lord Byron's former London home to be transformed into £45 million mansion

The former home of the Romantic poet Lord Byron, No. 139 Piccadilly, is to be converted from offices to a £45 million mansion with swimming pool and gym. David and Simon Reuben have been given planning permission by Westminster Council to convert the building into an eight-bedroom mansion with swimming pool, sauna and staff quarters, worth an estimated £45 million. Westminster's planning committee gave the Reuben brothers permission to extend the Grade II-listed building to a total 17,800 square feet of space, including a new basement for a gym and swimming pool and a roof terrace. Planning conditions include a payment of £500,000 by the Reuben brothers towards Westminster council's affordable housing fund. Their conversion of the Grade I-listed mansion – which had been on English Heritage's at risk register – was approved by Westminster after a last-minute increase in the developers' contribution. The Reuben brothers had offered the council only £1.8 million towards affordable housing. The council considered this unacceptable and was set to refuse the scheme until the Reubens raised their offer to £5.5 million in April 2013.

The Daily Telegraph **Date: Friday 20 February 2015**

Almacantar Marble Arch Tower approved

Property Week report that developer Almacantar has been granted planning permission by Westminster City Council for its revised redevelopment of the Marble Arch Tower. Under the proposals, the existing tower will be demolished and replaced with a residential building and an office building, both providing retail and leisure facilities on basement, ground and first floor. Almacantar originally received planning permission for the scheme in June 2014 and submitted revised plans late last year. These revised plans will increase the height of the building from 17 storeys to 18 and will marginally reduce the number of apartments from 53 to 49. Almacantar will also create a new build multi-screen Odeon cinema, plus 18,000 sq ft of new retail. Kathrin Hersel, development director of Almacantar, said: "The plans will address The Portman Estate's requirements for additional office floor space. Also, the scheme will unlock a very important affordable housing project for the City of Westminster. This gateway location overlooking the finest of the Royal Parks deserves a world class development."

Property Week

Date: Wednesday 18 February 2015

JFK's childhood home has £300m price tag

The London mansion where John F Kennedy once lived is set to become the capital's most expensive home, with an estimated price tag approaching £300m. The stucco-fronted property on Prince's Gate in Knightsbridge, which was once the US ambassador's residence, is being turned into a huge home by developers. It quietly changed hands for around £70mn last week and is believed to have been snapped up by a billionaire Saudi family. Plans lodged with Westminster City Council show a huge double basement which includes a leisure complex and underground car park, works estimated to cost £30mn.

Gulf Times

Date: Wednesday 28 January 2015

Planners approve 'totally monstrous' basement dig

Proposals to dig one of biggest basements in Camden were given the go-ahead despite being described as a "totally monstrous" by Town Hall planning chiefs. Camden Council is considering new basement regulations that could limit the size and scale of excavations, similar to those set to be introduced by Westminster Council, but currently has limited powers to refuse basement works.

Camden News Journal **Date: Monday 29th January 2015**

Kensington wins battle of the basements

Kensington and Chelsea Council has succeeded in placing restrictions on multi-storey basement extensions, the Financial Times reports. The planning inspectorate approved strict new rules that would restrict "dig downs" to one storey below ground. Neighbouring boroughs such as Westminster City Council and Hammersmith and Fulham Council are experiencing a similar boom in underground development. Tim Coleridge, Kensington and Chelsea Council's member for planning policy said: "This ruling is a victory not only for the council but also for our residents."

The Financial Times **Date: Wednesday 3 December 2014** **P3**

Permission to move in next door to the Queen

Westminster City Council has approved plans for a luxury residential development at No. 1 Palace Street, next door to Buckingham Palace. The developer promises that the massive 302,377 sq ft scheme will "set a new standard for ultra-prime residential developments in London". The company was appointed development manager on the scheme in January by the Palace Real Estate Partners and Abu Dhabi Financial Group, which jointly own the site. The property, which comprises five buildings and faces Buckingham Gate, was built as a grand hotel in the 19th century. According to the original sale plans, the development will include 72 luxury apartments, basement space for parking and a pool, a spa, a gym and a concierge service. However, it has not been confirmed whether these plans remain in place

Daily Telegraph **Date: Friday 14 November 2014** **P3**

Luxury flats at MacDonald House approved

A scheme to redevelop the Canadian High Commission building in Mayfair into luxury apartments has won planning consent. Westminster City Council this week approved plans by Mumbai-based developer Lodha Group to convert the 125,000 square foot MacDonald House into 41 flats. The scheme also includes a gym, a swimming pool and a banqueting suite for use by residents and 53 basement parking spaces. An offer from the developer either to pay £22 million towards the council's affordable housing fund or provide ten affordable flats off-site and a payment in lieu was accepted by the council.

Estates Gazette **Date: Wednesday 12 November 2014**

Westminster resolves to approve luxury residential redevelopment of Canadian High Commission building in Mayfair

Westminster City Council has approved a scheme to redevelop the Canadian High Commission building in London's Mayfair to provide 41 luxury apartments. Developer Lodha Group applied to the Council in June for permission to demolish the existing, seven-storey building at 1-3 Grosvenor Square and replace it with a nine-storey building containing 41 luxury apartments with between one and six bedrooms. The scheme also includes a gym, a swimming pool and a banqueting suite for use by residents and 53 basement parking spaces. A late offer from the developer to provide 10 affordable units off-site and a payment of £17,295,053, was accepted by the council and a resolution was made to grant planning permission for the scheme. The existing Grosvenor Square and Grosvenor Street facades will be retained under the plans.

Out-Law.com **Date: Wednesday 12 November 2014**

TfL's old Art Deco home to become luxury flats

Transport for London has revealed plans to transform its Twenties headquarters into luxurious apartments, including several penthouses, valet parking and a basement swimming pool. TfL's Grade I-listed offices overlooking St James's Park are "no longer considered fit for purpose", according to new plans submitted to Westminster City Council. The development, which faces opposition from the

Twentieth Century Society, will include 35 affordable homes. The planning application is due to be considered by Westminster City Council next year.

Evening Standard

Date: Thursday 6 November 2014

Excessive basement building branded a modern pestilence

Wood & Vale

Date: Thursday 26 June 2014

Pricey basement with free digger

West End Extra

Date: Friday 13 June 2014

Mayor should crack down on basements

West End Extra

Date: Friday 11 April 2014

Tory donor's plan to build 'megabasement' below £20m London mansion is foiled because of two 60ft trees in his garden

A Conservative Party donor who had planned to build one of the largest and most opulent basement extensions ever seen in central London has been thwarted — by a pair of trees. Kensington & Chelsea Council has thrown out plans for a triple-decker subterranean complex beneath a Victorian villa in Holland Park. Mr Lazarus, 45, made his fortune as an investment banker before setting up private equity firm Bregal Capital in 2002. He studied at Oxford, where he became a close friend of Education Secretary Michael Gove, and is a former Westminster City Councillor.

Daily Mail

Date: Friday 28 March 2014

Mega-basements are rejected

Wood & Vale

Date: Thursday 20 March 2014

The second wave of basement extensions

Opponents of subterranean developments, which they fear could lead to damp and subsidence in some of the capital's most expensive streets, are facing a second wave of basement extensions. The latest Londoner to take up the trend is Swedish-born Johan Eliasch, 51, who has applied for consent to add a second basement storey beneath his Grade II* listed four-storey Georgian townhouse in Mayfair. The house already has a sub-basement level featuring a gym, kitchen, staff quarters, and vaults. Kensington and Chelsea Council is currently consulting on proposals to limit the size and depths of basements, while Westminster City Council is expected to introduce a policy early next year.

Homes & Property

Date: Tuesday 18 March 2014

Mayor told to curb big basements

West End Extra

Date: Friday 14 March 2014

Comment: The actions taken to tackle basement problem welcomed

Westminster Chronicle

Date: Friday 7 March 2014

London's Underground resistance

The Evening Standard runs a feature piece on basement extensions, in which "thousands" of homeowners in Kensington & Chelsea, Westminster, Wandsworth, Hammersmith & Fulham are building down. A public consultation has been launched this month by Kensington & Chelsea Council to crack down on basement excavations. Westminster City Council is to begin its own consultation on similar proposals. Westminster City Council's Strategic Director for the Built Environment, Rosemarie MacQueen, told the Standard that, if she succeeds, "You're not going to get people building large garages underground to house their fifteen Maseratis in our borough."

Evening Standard

Date: Thursday 27 February 2014

P20

Caudwell's car park gets the green light

Several newspapers run the story of John Caudwell the millionaire founder of Phones 4 U £250m basement extension in Mayfair. Planning permission was granted by Westminster City Council last week.

Telegraph
Mail Online

Date: Sunday 19 January 2014
Date: Saturday 18 January 2014

Page 33

Phones 4U billionaire gets go ahead to turn his two back-to-back Mayfair mansions into one enormous home with a 14,000 sq ft underground extension

The billionaire founder of Phones 4U has been given permission to create a £250million 'mega mansion' with an enormous underground extension to his two linked mansions. John Caudwell - who is worth an estimated £1.5billion - has been given the go-ahead to build a 14,000sq ft 'iceberg' extension to his back-to-back Mayfair properties. Cllr Robert Davis, Deputy Leader of Westminster City Council, said: "The council has to make planning decisions based on its current policies, and we are now consulting on changes to strengthen those policies to manage large basements developments in the city. Residents have asked us to tackle this issue and that is exactly what we are doing."

Daily Mail

Date: Thursday 16 January 2014

Homes4U: Phone entrepreneur win approval for mega-mansion

City AM reports that Westminster City Council reluctantly approved the plans for a large basement extension to the owner of Phones4U John Caudwell's Mayfair property. Cllr Robert Davis, deputy Leader of Westminster City Council was quoted as saying " The Council has to make planning decisions based on its current policies, we are now consulting on changes to strengthen those policies to manage large basement developments in the city – residents have asked us to tackle this issue and that is exactly what we are doing." **City AM**

Date Thursday 16 January 2014

2014

Basement excavations boom as London house prices soar

Residents and councils are turning against the trend of homeowners to burrow down into the earth, the FT reports today. Kensington and Chelsea Council has seen a 140% increase in applications for basement extensions compared to 2011-2013. Westminster City Council is the only area adjacent to Kensington and Chelsea to have seen a drop in applications, according to the FT. Its deputy leader, Cllr Robert Davis said that planning guidance issued last year may have helped dissuade developers. He said: "our policy is still to be formally adopted, but we have issued advice to developers already and it looks like that might be helping the situation. We think our approach to limiting mega-basements is pragmatic and sensible and will help to curb the disruption experienced by many residents in Westminster."

Financial Times

Date: Friday 10 January 2014

P2 &

Evening Standard

Date: Monday 6 January 2014

Page: 24

'Batcave' car tunnel under £9m home of ex-Arsenal boss

His plans to demolish and rebuild his Mayfair home, adding a two storey basement complete with pool and gym, has already made headlines. Now it can be revealed there is a Batcave-style car ramp leading into his neighbours' underground garage. Last week he was given the go ahead by Westminster City Council to demolish his five bedroom house and dig down two storeys to build a 12-metre swimming pool, gym and staff quarters beneath the new home.

Evening Standard

Date: Monday 2 December 2013

P35

Neighbours kick out as ex-Arsenal chief David Dein plans mega-basement home

Plans submitted to Westminster City Council by former Arsenal vice-chairman David Dein who wants to extend his Mayfair mansion to include a two-storey basement have been criticised by his new neighbours. Residents fear the quiet street off Berkeley Square will face considerable disruption as a result of the work, and one is quoted complaining about existing noise from a Westminster City Council street cleaning depot. Cllr Michael Brahams, who chaired the planning committee, said: "When we get a planning application we expect to improve the looks rather than the reverse. I do have doubts about the appearance of it, but other than that everyone is agreed it's okay."

Hypocritical council planning basement building of its own

Wood & Vale

Date: Thursday 21 November 2013

Basements plea by MP

Wood & Vale

Date: Thursday 14 November 2013

Digging deep to find extra value in your property

A piece discussing large basement extensions says the trend began five years ago “when the London housing market took an extended dip”, since creating more underground space is a way of maximising the value of an existing property. Given the disruption that such extensions can cause, the article says it is hardly surprising that Westminster City Council and Kensington & Chelsea Council are leading the way in developing specific planning policies to restrict basement excavations.

Fabric Magazine

Date: Friday 1 November 2013

P81

Mega-basements should not disturb Westminster streets

Westminster City Council’s deputy leader and cabinet member for the built environment, Cllr Robert Davis, writes a piece in Property Week discussing plans for a new policy to restrict basement extensions. He points out that Westminster alone has seen the number of applications for basement excavations more than double over the past three years, and that similar proceedings are already underway in neighbouring boroughs such as Kensington and Chelsea. Westminster’s policy, currently under consultation, will limit basement extensions to one storey and no more than 50 percent of a property’s garden size. Cllr Davis writes: “Our proposals are part of the council’s new local plan, which is being developed to cover a wide range of planning aspects, and will promote high-quality developments while respecting Westminster’s unique heritage.”

Property Week

Date: Friday 1 November 2013

Billionaire phones 4u founder to create 14,000-sq-ft mega-basement under Mayfair mansions

Mobile phone magnate John Caudwell has submitted plans to link two Mayfair properties via a subterranean extension to Westminster City Council. Once complete, the home will contain twelve bedrooms, a swimming pool, sauna, media room, salon and car park. The proposals will have to satisfy Westminster City Council’s planning committee following an announcement that the local authority is consulting on a policy to limit basement extensions. Cllr Robert Davis, Westminster City Council’s deputy leader, said recently: “It is about restricting developments akin to the decks of a nuclear submarine that are too large and cause real disruption for our residents.”

London Loves Business

Date: Friday 25 October 2013

Developers accused of blocking basement ban

Planning minister Nick Boles has hit out at wealthy homeowners who try to make huge profits by selling properties with newly extended basements. Speaking at the London Property Summit, which was also attended by Westminster City Council’s operational director of planning John Walker, Mr Boles accused homeowners of taking people for “mugs”. Answering a question from John Walker, he also predicted the trend would prove to be a passing fad, saying: “The market will work and people won’t do it so much.”

Building Design

Date: Wednesday 30 October 2013

Mobile phone magnate to link two Mayfair mansions by basement

The founder of mobile phone company phones4u has submitted plans to Westminster City Council to turn two mansions in Mayfair into a single residence only slightly smaller than Westminster Cathedral. John Caudwell wants to excavate beneath the existing properties to make space for a games room, swimming pool, sauna, kitchen, salon, media room, plant room and car park. The Telegraph suggests that Caudwell may face difficulties securing approval for the plans, following an announcement from Westminster City Council that it is cracking down on underground extensions. Recent comments from the deputy leader of Westminster City Council, Cllr Robert Davis, are quoted in the reports. He said:

“It is about restricting developments akin to the decks of a nuclear submarine that are too large and cause real disruption for our residents.”

Daily Telegraph

Date: Thursday 24 October 2013

Daily Mail

Date: Thursday 24 October 2013

Times

Date: Friday 25 October 2013

Westminster plans to ban big basement extensions

Westminster City Council is considering plans to block large underground excavations following a dramatic surge in the number of applications it has received. Basement extensions, which can be up to three storeys high, are particularly popular in affluent areas such as Knightsbridge, Mayfair and Belgravia. The deputy leader of Westminster City Council, Cllr Robert Davis, said: “It is about restricting developments akin to the depths of a nuclear submarine that cause real disruption for our residents. Our residents have asked us to tackle this issue and this is what we are doing.” A consultation has begun on the plans, with the new proposals expected to come into force in 2015.

Building Design

Date: Friday 18 October 2013

P5

Blairs set for for £1m profit on house for son Euan in just three years

A four-storey house bought by Euan Blair and Cherie Blair three years ago has been put on the market advertising a separate apartment in the home, for which no planning permission has ever been granted. The Blairs spokesperson has said that Westminster City Council is aware that the property has been split into two, as per the two separate council tax bills at the property. A spokesman for Westminster Council said: “No planning application has been received to divide this house into two dwellings – and following information received we have now started an investigation.” He added that council tax valuations had no bearing on whether planning permission had been issued for the basement flat to be a separate dwelling.

Daily Mail

Date: Saturday 19 October 2013

P7 &

Concerns run deep on fears of basement ‘frenzy’

West End Extra

Date: Friday 18 October 2013

Tougher rules on basements

Wood and Vale

Date: Thursday 17 October 2013

Is it the end for millionaire mega-basements?

Westminster City Council’s plans to stamp down on multi-storey basement excavations are discussed in a comment piece on the Guardian’s Architecture and Design blog. It reports that the council received almost 200 basement extension applications during 2011/12, and is currently consulting on a policy to limit extensions to 50% of the property’s garden size, with a 1.2m minimum depth of soil between a garden and the roof of a basement extension. Cllr Robert Davis, deputy leader of Westminster City Council, is quoted as saying: “It is about restricting developments akin to the decks of a nuclear submarine that are too large and cause real disruption for our residents,” adding that “Our residents have asked us to tackle this issue; this is what we are doing.” The piece also predicts that the period before the policy could come into effect in 2015 is likely to see a “frenzied flood of applications.”

Guardian

Date: Tuesday 15 October 2013

Westminster City Council’s deputy leader Cllr Robert Davis was interviewed live on flagship BBC consumer programme You and Yours to talk about why Westminster is leading the way in restricting mega-basements that threaten to blight the lives of residents in the city. The council has described the larger construction projects as similar to the “decks of a nuclear submarine” and wants to restrict developments to one storey and 50% of the property’s garden space. Cllr Davis said: “Some of these basements are massive – up to 3 floors – and include private cinemas, spas and gyms. We are not saying that people shouldn’t build a basement, the problem is the inconvenience for residents. My mailbox is inundated at the moment because this is the new thing to do, and we have seen a doubling in the last year. Developers need to respect neighbours and only go down one floor; only then we will give consent, except in very special circumstances.”

Radio 4

Date: Monday 14 October 2013

Time: 12.45pm

Council clamps down on London's 'iceberg homes' with new basement planning rules

Westminster City Council is consulting on a new planning policy to limit the size of basement extensions as it looks to clamp down on so-called "iceberg homes". The local authority said it had seen the number of planning applications for underground extensions more than double over the past three years, and that they were particularly prevalent in areas including Belgravia, Mayfair and Knightsbridge. Cllr Robert Davis, deputy leader of Westminster City Council, said: "This is about restricting developments akin to the decks of a nuclear submarine that are too large and cause real disruption for our residents."

Building Design

Date: Tuesday 15 October 2013

Council clamps down on London's 'iceberg homes' with new basement planning rules

Westminster City Council is considering a new planning policy to limit the size of basement extensions as it looks to clamp down on so-called "iceberg homes". The local authority said it had seen the number of planning applications for underground extensions more than double over the past three years. Cllr Robert Davis, deputy leader of Westminster City Council, said: "This is about restricting developments akin to the decks of a nuclear submarine that are too large and cause real disruption for our residents. Currently the national planning guidance allows developers and homeowners to just dig down, put in a periscope and build whatever size they like. Our residents have asked us to tackle this issue, and this is what we are doing."

London24

Date: Friday 11 October 2013

New rules could crack down on 'disruptive' double basements

West End Extra

Date: Friday 11 October 2013

Council digs deep to halt vast basement extensions

Huge residential basement extensions "akin to the decks of a nuclear submarine" could be refused planning permission under a policy being considered by Westminster City Council. The local authority has today produced guidelines for developers, before consulting on whether to introduce permanent restrictions. Cllr Robert Davis, Westminster City Council deputy leader and cabinet member for built environment, said: "This is about hunting for those Red Octobers that are too large and cause real disruption for our residents. Currently, the national planning guidance allows developers and homeowners to build just whatever size they like – our residents have asked us to tackle this issue and this is what we are doing."

**The Times
online**

Date: Thursday 10 October 2013

P17 &

A new policy to restrict multi-storey basement excavations being considered by Westminster City Council was mentioned on BBC London news bulletins.

BBC London 94.9

Date: Thursday 10 October 2013

Time: 6am

Westminster bid to crack down on 'iceberg homes'

Huge residential basement excavations "akin to the decks of a nuclear submarine" could be refused planning permission under a policy being considered by Westminster City Council. The local authority has seen the number of applications for underground extensions more than double over the last three years, the Evening Standard reports. Cllr Robert Davis, Westminster City Council deputy leader and cabinet member for built environment, said: "It is about restricting developments akin to the decks of a nuclear submarine that are too large and cause real disruption for our residents."

Evening Standard

Date: Thursday 10 October 2013

P8

Historic £20m conversion

Westminster City Council has given the green light for a £20m conversion of a historic courthouse into a hotel. The scheme involves constructing several extensions to Bow Street Magistrates Court and Police Station, and an additional basement, to turn the buildings into a 99-bedroom hotel.

H&V News

Date: Wednesday 2 October 2013

Page: 8

Green light for McLaren's £20m Westminster hotel

Westminster City Council has given the go-ahead for a £20m conversion of Bow Street Magistrates court and police station into a 99-bedroom boutique hotel. The Grade-II listed building will undergo several extensions including an additional basement and, according to construction intelligence provider Glenigan, is set for completion in September 2015. Substantial contributions are also expected under a Section 106 agreement.

Hospitality and Catering NewsDate: **Wednesday 25 September 2013**

Westminster Council 'missed chance' to take stand against mega-basements

Westminster City Council's planning committee has approved plans to excavate a double basement as part of a scheme to build three townhouses in Marylebone. The article includes quotes from local residents who believe the council's decision to approve the development of Oldbury Mews represents a "missed opportunity" to take a stand against basement excavations. Cllr Robert Davis, Westminster City Council's deputy leader, said: "We are continuing to do everything we can to limit their spread and ensure where basement extensions do take place, they are sensitive to the local area. I believe our policy, which you will shortly see for consultation, reflects this position. Whilst it may not be the silver bullet many residents hope for, the policy will be as robust as we can be on this issue, within the existing law."

Ham&High

Date: Tuesday 24 September 2013

Council 'missed chance' to fight basement plan

Wood&Vale

Date: Thursday 19 September 2013

Broadcaster's £40m home upsets neighbours

Westminster City Council has granted planning permission to proposals submitted by former Crimewatch presenter Nick Ross for a new £40 million super home in west London, subject to a few amendments to the exterior design. Ross, 66, plans to build a six-storey, five bedroom house behind the facade of his £17 million Grade-II listed Georgian villa in Bayswater, including a two-storey basement, swimming pool, gym and staff quarters. The plans have encountered opposition from some local residents who claimed they were 'out of character' with the area. Cllr Robert Davis, Westminster City Council's deputy leader and chairman of the planning sub-committee, compared the house to Marmite: "you either like it or you don't", adding: "I'm afraid I really like it."

The Daily Telegraph

Date: Thursday 19 September 2013

P13

The Times

Date: Thursday 19 September 2013

P22

Daily Express

Date: Thursday 19 September 2013

P3

Daily Mail

Date: Thursday 19 September 2013

P35

Nick Ross and neighbours at war over £40m mansion plan

Former Crimewatch presenter Nick Ross is embroiled in a dispute with his neighbours over plans to "substantially demolish" his £17m grade II-listed home. The broadcaster wants to build a new six-storey home on the site which would include five bedrooms, a garage, a two-storey basement, a gym and a wine cellar. Some residents are claiming that the plans – due to go before Westminster City Council's planning committee on Tuesday – are out of character with the area, and council officials have already recommended that the scheme be turned down. Westminster councillor Andrew Smith said: "There are concerns about both the design of the proposed building and the implications for privacy".

Mail on Sunday

Date: Sunday 15 September 2013

P42 &

Double basements given the go-ahead

West End Extra

Date: Friday 13 September 2013

Developers hit back at Kensington clampdown

Residential developers are fighting new planning policies that would restrict the size of luxury schemes in Kensington and Chelsea. Amazon, Finchatton and Northacre have joined forces to oppose proposals to increase the amount of affordable housing by restricting large units to 25% of overall floor space, requiring planning permission to combine adjacent properties, and limiting the size

of basement developments. As wealthy foreign investors continue to buy up property, other London councils are taking action to restrict super-prime developments. The article in Property Week reports that Westminster City Council is considering following Kensington and Chelsea in limiting the number of large homes allowed in any scheme.

PropertyWeek

Friday 30 August

Basement row victory in sight

Wood &Vale
2013

Date: Thursday 15 August

Residents' plea: 'Save us from basement excavations'

West End Extra

Date: Friday 16 August 2013

Botched UK basement extensions lead to rise in claims

Westminster City Council is mentioned in a Financial Times article on an increase in the popularity of basement excavations, which is seeing growing numbers of housebuilders facing claims from homeowners whose extensions have been botched. Kensington and Chelsea Council is introducing planning regulations to crack down on underground extensions as a result of the noise and disruption they cause, and the article notes that Westminster City Council is likely to follow suit.

Financial Times

Date: Monday August 5 2013

Planning in London

Date: Saturday August 3 2013

P42

Basement blaze

West End Extra

Date: Friday 12 July 2013

Notes from the underground

The Wall Street Journal runs a feature on policies being implemented by Westminster City Council and Kensington & Chelsea Council to curb the rise of so-called "mega-basements". The number of applications for basement expansion projects submitted to Westminster City Council doubled between 2008 and 2012, but new rules will make it more difficult to secure planning permission for these schemes. John Walker, Westminster City Council's operational director of planning, said the plans were designed not to ban basements but instead to "contain" them. "We are trying to create a balance," he said.

The Wall Street Journal

Date: Thursday 27 June 2013

P9

Broadcast

Cllr Nickie Aiken, Westminster City Council cabinet member for community protection and premises, was interviewed by the BBC over the Court of Appeal's decision to uphold a ruling prohibiting councils from charging fees to cover the costs of prosecuting unlicensed sex shops. The package featured the basement room containing 30,000 illegal items seized by the council. Cllr Aiken said: "Our main concern is if we don't have a properly managed industry then we are going to see unlicensed goods being sold in shops across London."

BBC London

Date: Tuesday 4 June 2013

Time: 1.30pm & 6.30pm

Mews neighbours fight plans for 'excessive' basement conversion

Residents in a historic Marylebone mews are fighting plans to turn a Victorian building containing offices and flats into three townhouses, each with a home cinema and gym in a basement conversion. Millionaire Ajoy Kapoor, who runs a property and finance empire in India, has applied to Westminster City Council for planning permission after recently buying the building in Oldbury Place, part of Harley

Street conservation area. Residents, who have until the end of the month to object, say the plans are “excessive”.

Evening Standard

Date: Friday 17 May 2013

Page 35

Campaigners urge council to take action on basements

Wood & Vale
2013

Date: Thursday 16 May

Billionaire sultan’s basement row

The Sultan of Brunei, one of the world’s richest men, is the latest property owner to fall foul of the anti-basement brigade. Residents in Bayswater want Westminster City Council to follow Kensington’s lead by considering a ban on subterranean extensions after the sultan ordered an upgrade of Brunei House, a listed property in Leinster Square. Neighbours fear his application to dig a new basement will mean months of disruption for them.

Evening Standard

Date: Wednesday 27 March 2013

p2

(Homes and Property)

Street fighters

London’s richest boroughs threaten to outlaw super-basements, with fears new rules will lead to a surge in “under the wire” applications. Last week Kensington and Chelsea council threatened to ban all but the most modest basement extensions. Westminster councillors are considering similar proposals.

Evening Standard

Date: Monday 25 March 2013

p20

Noisy basement work blights people’s lives

Wood & Vale
2013

Date: Thursday 7 March

Oriana phase II development given green light by Westminster Council

Plans to redevelop 26-48 Oxford Street have been approved by Westminster City Council subject to the signing of a section 106 agreement. The scheme will create a mixed-use, retail led development, which will extend to 76,500 sq ft over the basement, ground and first floors. The joint venture between Land Securities and Frogmore also includes 18 high quality private apartments.

4-traders

Date: Wednesday 6 March 2013



City of Westminster

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