

# Sunset View is key conservation victory

Robin Bishop, Annual Planning & Environment Report

*Our most significant planning success last year was the rejection of substantial extensions to No.1 Sunset View. It's a fine Arts & Crafts house in the Monken Hadley Conservation Area (CA) which we've nominated to join the Local List of buildings of architectural interest. Although the Council had refused it, the owner went to appeal. Had he succeeded, it would have defeated the whole point of a CA and severely impaired his neighbours' daylight and views. In gratitude for our advice and support over two years, Bill & Sherrie Foster most kindly donated £250 to the Society.*

Casework has been busier than I can recall. In the last year we've reviewed over 100 planning applications and commented on 35. We objected to 21, supported 11 and were neutral about 3. In 68% of the cases the planners have agreed with us. But several big cases we've been involved with are still unresolved.

Plans for 150 new homes on the Whalebones Estate were exhibited in February, but no application has yet been submitted. There's much to be said for the designs, but the necessity for so much development on this vital green space in the Wood Street CA hasn't been explained. Unless the plans are scaled down, the Committee is minded to oppose them.

We were neutral about the revised scheme for Brake Shear House (186 High Street) but objected to residential overdevelopments at Kingmaker House (New Barnet) and Meadow Works (Pricklers Hill, v2); planning decisions on all are awaited.

The most controversial case was for a Premier Inn on the old market site. After consulting our members, there was a clear majority in favour. The least controversial, for a care home on the former Marie Foster Home site, we also supported. The planners approved both.

Broader planning matters have also kept us busy. We stay abreast of developments in and around London via active membership of the Federation of Residents' Associations of Barnet, the London Forum and the London Green Belt Council (LGBC),



No.1 Sunset View, a fine Arts & Craft house has been nominated for the Local List. Extensions to the side and back of the property have been refused

and I've accepted an invitation to sit on the LGBC Executive Council.

We commented in detail on the Mayor of London's draft London Plan. We also commented on Hertsmere and Enfield's draft plans, both of which contain proposals to build on Green Belt land close to our borders.

Safeguarding our green spaces has been especially important. The biggest this year, Whalebones, I've already mentioned. We also objected to small but concerning proposals in the Green Belt off Meadway (new classrooms for The Pavilion Study Centre – decision awaited) and Barnet Road (a warehouse behind No.129 - refused). We expressed concern, too, about the Council's idea for a community and leisure hub on Barnet Playing Fields. Not

Finally, a few recent news items...

#### **Rejected:**

- Avalon, Rowley Lane – We had objected to this pretentious overdevelopment (8 flats behind a palazzo façade, v2).
- Cotswold Lodge, Stapylton Road – To our surprise, after we had supported this careful makeover proposal.
- 151-153 High Street – We were neutral about the replacement front extension and 7 homes that would have replaced HR Owen's car premises.

#### **Withdrawn:**

- 50 St Albans Road (fka The White Lion) – The former coaching inn's stables have been saved for now.

only would this be the size of a small primary school in the middle of Green Belt land, it would duplicate facilities supposed to be available for community use at the adjacent Ark Pioneer Academy! Elsewhere, in Haringey, we've objected to the Pinkham Way Site of Importance for Nature Conservation being included in the North London Waste Plan (to which Barnet belongs).

Barnet's own draft Local Plan should be out by the time you read this.

As part of that, we commented (generally favourably) on Barnet's draft Housing and Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategies. We also supported the Council's proposed policy to discontinue developers' right to convert commercial buildings into housing without needing planning permission.

We supported, too, the Council's proposed High Barnet Public Space Protection Order to control rough sleeping and public nuisance. We also opposed changes to some local bus routes, including reducing the number of streets served by the 384 (decision awaited).

In addition, we responded in detail to the Council's consultation on its contracts with Capita, particularly criticising the poor performance of regeneration, highways, planning enforcement and customer services. We favoured in-house services and argued for more joined-up approaches, including more meaningful engagement with local organisations like ours.