

Environment and Planning



Robin Bishop, writes

Headline cases

Our two biggest projects in High Barnet for years have been the 'Tube flats' and Whalebones development. On the first, TfL has scaled down its initial proposals from building about 450 properties to 300 - a welcome reduction.

My initial response, as I have written on Page 2, is that the revisions are a step in the right direction but fall short in vital respects, particularly the monotonous design and the six block of flats' dominance of the views.

The second, the planning application for 152 homes on the Whalebones estate, has yet to go to the Planning Committee. Opposition has been massive: our objection was one of over 330 submitted by members of the public – and, significantly, by the Mayor of London. The developers may have been hoping that, because their plans exceeded Sadiq Khan's threshold of 150 homes, he would overturn a refusal by Barnet Council. In fact, Khan wants the quantity of housing to be reduced and the public park to be increased.

We have been told that the pavement widening of **Chipping Barnet High Street** will be ready for the Christmas Fayre on 1 December. Tree planting and street furniture will follow in the New Year.

Several **Battle of Barnet information boards** have also been installed in the High Street and Hadley which have been widely welcomed – though not by Barnet Highways, who promptly removed the one outside The Mitre on grounds of risk to health and safety, or by St John the Baptist's Church, for being sited on hallowed ground. (See separate story on Page 9)

Thankfully, planning applications for three **communication hubs** have been refused. There is one already outside Carluccio and another, already approved by planners, to come outside Melange. That would have meant a total of five within a quarter of a mile of the High Street, adding clutter - not to mention health and safety concerns - just at a time when we were trying to declutter the High Street. We objected strongly.



Other recent cases:

Approved

We supported two applications: *Fern Room site, Salisbury Road* – nine residential units and a community space (though who will run or use the latter is unclear) sympathetic to their neighbours.

152A High Street – A new maisonette above Hopscotch, filling a gap between existing buildings.

Refused

We objected successfully to two fresh attempts to convert commercial buildings into micro-studios via prior notifications (circumventing planning applications):

49 Moxon Street – This time just for 39 (instead of 107) units.

17 Park Road – 36 units were refused, but the developer is now trying again with 15 units.

Awaiting a decision

We objected to the following applications:

46-48 High Street – A roof extension above the former Londis and a new rear block, for 4 flats in all plus offices.

Rear of 141-143 High Street – Back again for a 4th attempt to build flats and offices on this car park, but as dull as before.

2 Bruce Road – 8 units in a house for multiple occupation (HMO) next to the Premier Inn.

We were neutral about the following:

133 High Street – 5 flats above and behind KFC.

164 High Street – 58 flats and houses on the Brake Shear House site, now over a year without a decision.

27 Wood Street – Roof and rear extensions to the Old Courthouse Surgery. The building is listed Grade II, and more care for the historic fabric is required. We were neutral about the application.

37 Dury Road, Hadley – Replacement of a large but nondescript extension to a locally listed building with a new block of flats. The design is unusually sensitive, neatly blending traditional and new materials and motifs

Gone to appeal

Still no word on *Meadow Works, Pricklers Hill; Avalon palazzo, Barnet Road or 151-153 High Street.*

Appeal dismissed

Cotswold Lodge, Stapylton Road – We had supported the proposed alterations.

Kingmaker House – The massive roof and side extensions (for 145 homes) have been rejected, as we hoped. But a slightly reduced scheme has now been submitted.



Finally, some welcome action by the Planning Enforcement team:

1 Sunset View – Following roof demolition and gutting of this locally listed building, planners have been monitoring the replacement work closely.

70 High Street (fka After Office Hours) – Planning permission was granted over two years ago for this site next to The Bull for 7 residential units above a bar. Since (illegally) demolishing the old building, a glaring gap has existed with little sign of building work. The Council has served a notice that work must be completed or the former building restored by May 2020 – a big ask! Watch this space...