

Planning & environment – Robin’s update for Committee 13 May 2021

PLANNING ISSUES

Government

1. **Planning reforms** – HM Q Elizabeth II, 11 May: ‘Laws to modernise the planning system, so that more homes can be built, will be brought forward.’
Theresa Villiers MP, 12 May: ‘I would urge the government to drop those parts of the white paper which reduce democratic involvement in the planning system.’
2. **Permitted development** – Despite opposition by BSoc & like-minded bodies, major ‘new freedoms’ to build without planning permission were made law on 31 March. They will impact high streets by allowing vacant commercial space to be converted to homes, & schools, colleges & hospitals will be able to expand up to 25%.

London

3. **London Green Belt Council** – Applied to become a charity, but rejected because of its potentially political aims. Now looking at forming a Community Interest Company. I have agreed to remain on the Executive Committee, & Derek’s spreadsheet skills have been much appreciated.

Council

4. **Barnet Local Plan** – The current draft is likely to be formally adopted in June. Amended to strengthen retention of family houses instead of conversion or rebuilding into flats, thanks to campaigning by Gordon Massey of BRA & FORAB.
5. **Councillor Shimon Ryde** has ‘stepped back’ from Barnet Conservatives to deal with ‘a personal matter’. Recently he has been a notably informed & engaged Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, & used his casting vote to refuse permission to the proposed development of the Whalebones estate.
6. **Limited review of Capita services** (including ‘ongoing performance issues, notably in highways and estates’).
7. **Chipping Barnet Community Plan** – The Council has informed the Town Team (in confidence) about the 5 projects, all composite, for detailed study. They include 8 of the 12 projects supported by BSoc. A formal announcement will be made in mid-June, & we will be invited to join workshops to develop the briefs. In our response to the consultation, Judith Clouston, Gail, Simon W, Susan & I offered to represent BSoc. We need to confirm our representatives.

... and the development of the site will be positioned to seek further funding to enable the project to be realised.

Timeline & Workshops

The studies will be carried out over a 3-4 month period, once the Community Plan is adopted by the Council.

The consultants will host three on-line workshops with the identified individuals from the engagement process (individuals that highlighted they would actively support these projects) with a maximum 12 participants per workshop. The workshops will be grouped in the following ways as there is crossover between certain projects:

- Workshop 1: Co working + Employment Hub
- Workshop 2: Routes & Riches Wayfinding + Activating the Public Realm
- Workshop 3: Play Masterplan

The workshops are an opportunity for key stakeholders to discuss the possibilities and practical considerations for each project, and together agree on what we hope to achieve, and map out the next steps for realising the projects.



Conservation Areas & Listed Buildings

8. **70 High Street** – BSoc submitted its representation to the Planning Inspectorate; decision awaited.
9. **1 Sunset View (LL)** – Planning Inspectorate decision awaited.
10. **Local List** – In response to the Council's invitation for additions to its list of assets of architectural or historic interest, BSoc submitted the following nominations:



(L-R) 163 Victoria Road; Holmside, Arkley Road; Ravenscroft Cottages, Grasvenor Avenue; Rowley Lodge, Rowley Lane

Thanks to Frances, Andreas, Susan & Guy for their suggestions & research.

Setbacks

11. **Victoria Quarter** – The developer claims to have listened to public criticisms and is revising its plans. BSoc sent its objections to the previous scheme (652 units) & suggestions for improvements. A further public consultation is promised for May/June.
12. **33 Lyonsdown Road (LL)** – Although the application to replace the Locally Listed villa with 20 flats was refused, the guardians have been evicted & demolition is threatened.
13. **Whalebones Estate (CA)** – The developer has appealed to the Secretary of State against Barnet's refusal of 152 homes, but the grounds for appeal are unclear. We await formal notification, but intend to submit a BSoc representation opposing it.

Threats

14. **The Spires sale** – There is a great deal of commercial interest, & the initial sale price (£25m) is likely to be exceeded. The prospectus illustrated how it could be partly redeveloped for housing. Its future is central to the regeneration of Chipping Barnet.



BSoc needs to decide how much retail & restaurant we think should be retained, & what other uses might be acceptable.

As ground landlord, the Council has a strong interest in the outcome, but despite requests from Theresa Villiers & Barnet Residents Association has not said how it intends to respond. In my view, it should at least prepare a planning brief in consultation with BSoc, the Town Team & the community.

15. **High Barnet & Cockfosters Station housing developments** – Applications awaited.

16. **Barnet House, Whetstone** – Application for 263 flats awaited.

Opportunities

17. **New special school, Moxon Street** – Gail, Simon K & I zoomed with the DfE & Academy team on 24 March, & subsequently emailed our comments & suggestions.
18. **Tudor Park cricket pavilion (LL)** – Following a huge & positive response to Simon C's survey of residents in March, access to the building was arranged via Cllr David Longstaff to review its condition & the Council's quotations of nearly £190k for repairs.



Simon C, Simon K & I met Cllr David & LBB's Andy Arliss there on 11 May. The main room is impressive, but the building is large & in generally poor condition. Thanks go to Simon K, who is preparing a pro bono survey report & costings.

19. **Open House, 4 & 5 September** – Volunteer(s) needed to investigate & organise applications for local buildings & open spaces. Apparently Barnet is a Borough Partner, so applications would be free. Places suggested: St John the Baptist, Church House, Tudor Hall, Barnet & Southgate College, OWCH, almshouses, water tower in Christchurch Lane, house(s) on Hadley Green & Common, Monkenhurst (ex-Milligan house), houses on Camlet Way, Brook Valley Gardens, Physic Well, Noah's Ark Hospice, Barnet Environment Centre, Arkley windmill & houses, 33 Lyonsdown Road.

RECENT CASEWORK (SELECTION)

Planning application approved

20. **24 banners, Station Road & East Barnet Road** – We did not comment on this.

Planning applications withdrawn

21. **Gas peaking plant, Partingdale Lane (GB)** – We objected to this abuse of the Green Belt.
22. **35-37 Station Road (LL)** – We objected to poor adaptations to this Locally Listed building.

Planning decisions awaited

23. **17 Park Road** (PD; 10th, 11th, 12th & 13th applications for between 9 & 25 bedsits) – We objected to them all.

24. **33 Park Road** – Two extra stories on this block of flats. As Permitted Development, it does not require permission, but we objected anyway.
Should we continue to do in cases of PD?



25. **81 advertising banners, Barnet High Street & Hill** (in CA) – We objected strongly.

26. **54A High Street** (LII; CA) – Probably medieval; results of dendrochronology test awaited. We supported this sensitive conversion of a Grade II Listed building.



(L-R) Nos.54A, 54 & 52 High Street – existing; 54A – proposed; 52-54 – proposed

27. **52-54 High Street** (LII; CA) – We objected to the thoughtless & insensitive grafting of a contemporary branded shopfront onto this Grade II Listed building.

28. **83 High Street (former Victoria Bakery) & 8 Union Street** (3 flats, 2 on backland) – No comment.

29. **202 High Street (former car showroom)** (CA; 4 shops & 6 flats/mews houses) – We objected to the proposed massing, details & lack of outdoor space.



(L) No.204 – proposed (M) No.202 – proposed (R) Nos.200...existing

30. **204 High Street (former Statons)** (CA; 6 flats) – We have objected on similar grounds as to No.202. Both are trying to cram as many units as possible into new 3-storey buildings replacing the present single-storey buildings.

31. **Hyde Institute, Church Passage** (LL) – We supported a proposed nursery in this Locally Listed Building.
32. **13 Sunset View** (CA) – The owner consulted us about the replacement of his front porch, & took our advice on keeping it in the Cape Dutch style of the rest of the façade. Unfortunately he also wants to replace the original garage door with a window & make landscaping changes, which we object to.
33. **39 Wood Street** (CA) – We objected to this proposed garden studio.
34. **54A Bulwer Road** – We objected to a proposed nursery in this former shop on the grounds of insufficient & unsuitable indoor and outdoor facilities and safety.
35. **46 Prospect Road** – We objected to this 3-storey front, side & back extension.
36. **Western half of Meadow Works site, Pricklers Hill** (8 3-storey houses) – We supported these new family homes & gardens.
37. **Electricity battery, Partingdale Lane** (GB) – We objected to this abuse of the Green Belt.

Further afield

38. **Hendon Hub** (CA) – Susan & I have been invited to consult about the proposed expansion of Middlesex University on The Burroughs site, including relocation of the Central Library.
39. **North London Business Park, Brunswick Park** – Last year, Comer Homes won approval for their scheme for 1,350 homes in blocks of up to nine storeys on appeal. They now propose to increase the number by 1,150 in blocks of up to 13 storeys.
40. **Hertsmere Local Plan** (GB) – Following an application for huge new Hertswood Studios (next to the recently approved Sky Studios) in the Green Belt by the A1, Hertsmere have delayed the publication of their Local Plan until the autumn.