

Planning & Environment – Robin’s update for Committee, 13 January 2022

PLANNING ISSUES

Metropolitan Green Belt

- **Campaign to Protect Rural England** – In November CPRE published *Recycling Our Land* showing that existing brownfield land has capacity for 1.3m homes. Despite this, between 2006 & 2017 use of greenfield land for housing increased by 148%. CPRE doesn't give more recent figures, but last year...
- **London Green Belt Council**...estimated that there were plans to build 233,276 new houses on land within the GB. It has asked Ministers to clarify the situation following successful appeals allowing substantial housing developments on Green Belt in Colney Heath & Codicote, contrary to stated government policy. Simon K & I heard about these and other developments at an online meeting of LGBC.
- **Hertsmere draft Local Plan** (Regulation 18 version) – With help from Bill Foster, Andrew, Simon R & Susan S, I submitted a detailed response – one of 12,000!
- **Land next to 56 Hendon Wood Lane, Arkley** - A renewed threat. For many years the owner used this GB land as a builder's yard. Council planners got an Enforcement Order, but it's being disregarded. If allowed to continue, the owner will be entitled to have the land redesignated as brownfield, i.e for building on.



Mayor of London

- **Sustainable transport** – Frances & I attended a (not very informative) TfL webinar on 17 November.
- **Urban greening factor (UGF)** – I viewed a (rather more informative) online update on this important new tool for designing sustainable buildings.

Council

- **Barnet Local Plan** – We await a date for the Plan's Examination in Public.
- **Chipping Barnet Community Plan** – Workshops with the Council & Architecture 00 have been promised before Xmas but have still not been scheduled for (1) shared workspace (Gail), (2) play masterplan (Simon W) & (3) public realm & wayfinding improvements (Gail & me).

RECENT CASEWORK (SELECTION)

Planning appeals

- **Arkley Riding School, Hedgerow Lane** – Another win! Four new houses in the Green Belt & on a site of wildlife interest turned down.
- **1 Sunset View** – Inspector's decision on unapproved alterations to Locally Listed house in Monken Hadley Conservation Area expected soon.
- **33 Lyonsdown Road (LL)** – Decision awaited.
- **Land to rear of 14 Hadley Highstone** – The Council is trying to enforce an appeal ruling to remove derelict artefacts on a Green Belt site.
- **33 Park Road** – Appeal against refusal of additional storeys on existing flats. Nick Saul & I submitted a BSoc objection to the Inspectorate.
- **202 High Street** – Appeal against refusal of 3-storey replacement of Bentleys. Guy Braithwaite & I submitted a BSoc objection to the Inspectorate.
- **204 High Street** – Appeal against refusal of 3-storey replacement of Statons. Guy Braithwaite & I submitted a BSoc objection to the Inspectorate.

Both Nos.202 & 204 High Street would raise the CA roofline from 1 to 3 storeys. We also disagree with both applicants' claims that their designs are in keeping with the CA's character.



High St now (L) & proposed (below)



Conservation Areas & Listed Buildings

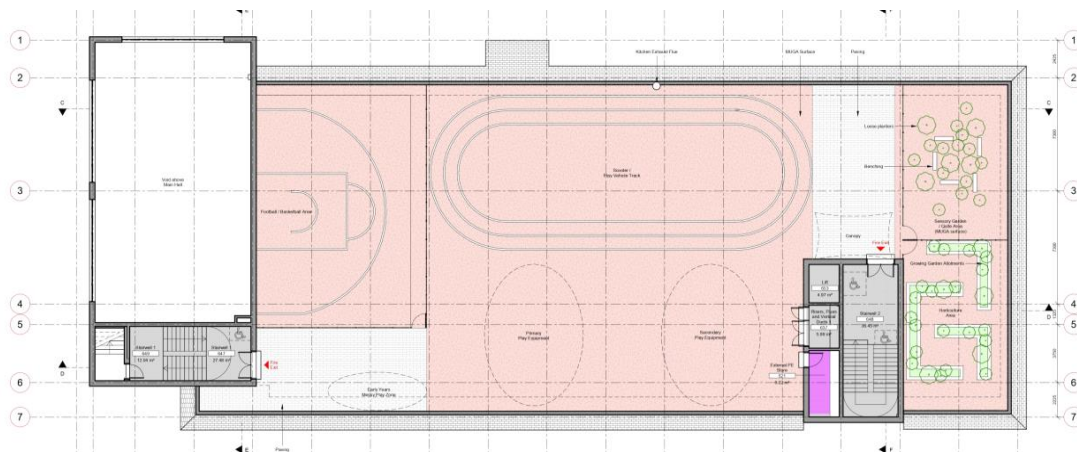
- **Rear of 69A, 71 & 73 High Street** – We objected. The proposal would neither preserve nor enhance the Wood Street Conservation Area, & was no improvement on the last application that was both refused & dismissed after appeal.
- **159 High Street** – We objected to roof alteration and addition of dormers.
- **2 Clyde Villas, Hadley Green Road** – We had objected to cramming 16 flats for people with special needs into this building & garden. I discussed a more acceptable proposal with the owner, and the application has been withdrawn.
- **74 Wood Street** – We had no objection to this low-key extension to a Listed building.
- **81 advertising banners on lamp-posts, High Street/Barnet Hill** – We objected.
- **Tudor Park pavilion** – *Simon C to provide update.*

Threats/opportunities

- **The Spires & former Barnet Market, Chipping Close** – No further news.
- **The Windmill School, 50 Moxon Street** – A special school for 90 pupils from 5 to 19 with ASD in a former office block. Gail, Simon K & I have severe concerns about its suitability and quality, particularly its completely inadequate rooftop outdoor playspace, & cannot support it. *See our detailed comments at the end of this report.*

Q.1 Does the Committee agree that BSoc should object or be neutral?

Q.2 Should we consult our members (remember the Premier Inn fuss)?



Moxon Street elevation (above); rooftop play area (below)

Planning applications approved

- **26-32 High Street (outside Police Station)** – We objected to yet another InLink telecom hub.
- **5 Plantaganet Road** – We supported this modest and sympathetic conversion and addition.

Planning applications refused

- **1-15 Richard Court, Alston Road** – Permitted Development under the government's latest relaxations, but planners refused an extra floor on these flats. We objected.

Planning decisions awaited



Existing (L) & proposed (R)

- **196 High Street** – We objected to subdivision of this retail unit because of harm to a building on the Local List & shopfront design not conforming to design guidelines.
- **40 Barnet Lane (former cricket pavilion)** – We supported this derelict building being used by the Rainbow Centre. It will obviate the Council's wish to rebuild the Centre in the middle of Barnet Playing Fields.
- **Former Quinta Club, Mays Lane** – We support conversion of this derelict building into a facility for the storage, archiving & dispatching of library books.
- **Victoria Quarter** – We objected to this development of 554 flats.
- **Western half of Meadow Works site, Pricklers Hill** (8 3-storey houses) – We supported these new family homes & gardens.
- **Gaelic football pavilion, King George's playing field (GB)** – A replacement for a previous building.
- **Barnet House, 1255 High Street** – We've objected to this application for 260 homes.
- **Electricity battery, Partingdale Lane (GB)** – We objected to this abuse of Green Belt.
- **Cockfosters Station** – We've objected to Enfield about these four towers.

PROPOSED WINDMILL ASD SCHOOL - 21/6488/FUL DRAFT COMMENTS

In principle the Barnet Society would welcome a new school in Chipping Barnet for pupils with special needs that are not often well provided for. But the present proposals give rise to a number of concerns, some severe:

1. **Vehicular movement** is unsatisfactory. At the beginning and end of the day the school would have 9 buses and 9-10 parents' cars all arriving / leaving at a similar time. Although quiet in the mornings, at the end of the day when school closes around 3-5pm, Moxon Street is busy with traffic. Any vehicles backing up off-site into the road would cause serious local congestion problems.
2. The scheme relies on vehicles stacking around the single-lane slip road to **drop off and pick up** pupils. This will be an ongoing management problem, exacerbated by the very wide age range and sometimes challenging behaviours of pupils.
3. Reliance on the Moxon Street public **car park** for permanent staff may be acceptable. But peripatic staff visiting for only a few hours would find the lack of on-site parking very inconvenient and time-wasting, especially those needing to carry equipment.
4. The **façade** shows little of the colour and imagination expected of a 21st-century school. The proportions of building elements such as the sloping rooftop and entrance features are clumsy; there are no distinctive or interesting features such as the sports hall "box" which could have been treated with higher quality materials or colour; and materials generally are basic and cheap render. The design fails either to enhance, re-invent or celebrate the existing building's strong underlying 1960s aesthetic.
5. The external environment and facades offer disappointingly little "**greening**".
6. The long **internal corridor** with no natural daylight could be oppressive for children, and result in lights being on all day and high energy costs. The internal group rooms appear to have no glazed panels, which would be claustrophobic.
7. The area of the **rooftop playground** is not stated, but the consultation plans last spring showed 995 square metres, some of which have been lost to stairs and a store in the latest plan. This represents only about 20% of the DfE's minimum area recommendation for a school of this size and type. This causes us great concern, particularly in a school with pupils whose ages range from 5 to 19 - and are therefore unable to share different-sized play facilities, and with behaviours that are often solitary and challenging - and so require more personal space than other children.
8. Not only is the outdoor play tiny for the number of pupils - even if they access it in shifts - it is sadly short of **greenery and views** except of the sky. Given the proven benefits of a rich outdoor environment for all children, and especially for those with ASD, this deepens our concern.
9. There is no clear strategy for giving the children access to **off-site green spaces and play facilities**. Although that might go some way to mitigating the school's own shortage, it would place additional demands on teachers and time lost accessing them.

10. There is insufficient consideration of **overlooking and privacy** to habitable rooms of adjacent nearby residential dwellings in Hornbeam Court & Laburnham Close, which are in close proximity to the south.

Conclusion

The Society is keen to see a high quality addition to the local town centre that would become a proud part of the local community. But to be successful on this site it is essential that the qualitative aspects of the proposal (landscape, facades, internal daylight, functionality, etc) are of high quality, and that the amount of management required (for vehicles, access and pupils) for the school to operate on a basic level is minimised. Otherwise the premises could become an enduring problem for staff and pupils, and lead to high operating costs, unhappy users and ultimately its failure.

Unless these serious issues are addressed the proposal as presented cannot be supported by the Barnet Society.