

Planning & Environment – Robin’s update for Committee, 12 January 2023

PLANNING ISSUES

Government

Theresa Villiers MP and a coalition of over 100 MPs have forced the Government to make a number of improvements to the Levelling-Up & Regeneration Bill, notably abandoning centrally-imposed housing targets.

The Government is consulting on updating the **National Planning Policy Framework** and new **National Development Management Policies** that could supersede Barnet planning policies. We must scrutinise both and comment if necessary. The deadline is 2 March.

- *Who will help me scrutinise the NPPF & NDMP proposals?*

Michael Gove has backed a Policy Exchange report which calls for the creation of a new architecture school or ‘School of Place’ to teach students how to ‘deliver thriving, successful and beautiful places’ and ‘wholeheartedly revive traditional architecture’. Good luck with that. In 1982 our then Prince of Wales established an Institute of Architecture to do something similar, but it closed some 20 years later.

Barnet Council

The Council wants to develop a **Culture Strategy** ‘that puts Barnet on the map and celebrates its creativity, heritage and community’. BSoc ought to support this aim.

- *Would you be interested in joining the Culture Strategy Steering Group?*

As part of that, the Council is supporting the **London Festival of Architecture** in June. The LFA is looking for events¹ relating to this year’s theme, ‘In Common’. Most of our activity is for the common good of those who live, work or study in Chipping Barnet.

- *Could we come up with some public events?*

I’d like to offer a walk around the common spaces that have been the basis of Barnet’s existence: not just the markets, former Barnet Common and, Hadley Green & Wood but also the shared gardens of the almshouses and similar housing developments.

The Council has until 31 January to submit further documents to the Inspectors of **Barnet’s draft Local Plan**. We probably won’t know before then whether the draft housing targets for **Whalebones** and **High Barnet Station** will be adopted in the Plan. Final adoption of the Plan is unlikely before this autumn.

Barnet has launched its **Citizen’s Assembly**. 40 residents and 20 young people will look at how we can get to Net Zero. Unless a BSoc member has been selected we won’t be able to participate, but we ought to publicise its progress and recommendations (due in summer).

The Council has launched **Sponsor a Tree in Barnet**. For £250 you can get one planted in a street or certain parks. It’s also planting – free – 8 more trees as part of our Veep David Lee’s masterplan for **Barnet Hill**. Two of these are Irish Yews donated by member of ours, Doreen Martin. A Walnut has also been donated by someone with a terminal illness.

- *Please agree to my passing on the Committee’s thanks to all involved in this project.*

¹ Events can range from workshops to panel discussions, community activities, performances, installations, etc with the aim of making London greener, healthier, more inclusive and equitable. The deadline for submissions is 3 March.

RECENT CASEWORK (SELECTION)

The Spires



Proposed aerial view – IN CONFIDENCE

If you haven't heard the news about the redevelopment of much of The Spires, including its adjoining car parks, read about it [here](#).

Gail Laser, Simon Kaufman, Nick Saul, Nick Jones & I were shown the developer's first designs before Christmas. We found them unimaginative and disappointing, and have told them so in some detail. We've been assured that the scheme will be refined following further public consultations this month.

We're concerned that the Council has not been proactive; they're the ground landlord and freeholder, after all, and The Spires is crucial to the future of the town centre. Many other councils would have prepared a planning brief for developers identifying its – and our – key priorities. But so far BRA is content to wait, and the Town Team won't see the initial designs until 20 January.

Green Belt cases

49 Moxon Street – We objected strongly to this attempt to squeeze 92 flats and several businesses into a 7-storey building next to the Green Belt. Decision awaited.

Land off Mays Lane, Greengate Stables – Temporary classrooms have been approved with our support. We look forward to seeing a masterplan for the site.

Gaelic football pavilion, King George's playing field – Decision still awaited on this replacement for a previous pavilion. We were neutral.

Electricity battery, Partingdale Lane – Gone to appeal.

Cockfosters Station – Cockfosters Local Area Residents Associations (CLARA) has requested that the application be called in.

Sky Studios North, Rowley Lane – Application for 10 more sound stages on the Green Belt. A decision is awaited.

Conservation Areas & Listed Buildings

Crown & Anchor, 47 High Street – We objected to an application for a pergola beside, and new building behind, the pub (Locally Listed and in the Wood Street CA). It's been refused.

52-54 High Street – We objected to the shopfront and inadequate heritage statement. The applicant seemed unaware that the building may share probably London's oldest timber frame with No.54A.

The Mitre, 58 High Street – We objected and the planners have refused permission on the grounds that *'The submitted proposals are inaccurate, lack recognition of the building's historic significance and in their present form would be harmful to its special significance as a statutory listed building, whilst failing to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Wood Street Conservation Area'*.

70 High Street – Yet another application has just been submitted in the owner's attempt to avoid having to demolish his new building. We've yet to take a view.

98-100 High Street (fka Foxtons) – We were neutral.

118 High Street (fka TSB Bank & Barnet Press) – Although the licensing arm of the Council had previously approved the application for a 'bingo' gaming licence, the planners have refused change of use. (The signage for this Grade II-listed building had already been refused.) But an appeal can be expected.

159 High Street – We objected to a flat in the roofspace, which would alter its roof.

202 High Street (fka Bentleys) – The developer is back again with a reduced scheme (commercial + 4 flats and 1 mews house). We've objected again.

2 Clyde Villas, Hadley Green Road (LL) – This application for adults recovering from mental illness involves less damage to house and garden. We are neutral but submitted some comments.

81 advertising banners on lamp-posts, High Street/Barnet Hill – Still no decision.

63A Union Street – Another application for this site by Coe's Alley. We were neutral again.

1 Raydean Road – Amendments are proposed to recently approved plans for this Locally Listed house and its new near-replica. We had no objection.

33 Lyonsdown Road – Still standing?

Tudor Park pavilion

- *Simon Kaufman/John Hay to report*

Tudor Park playground – The proposed new equipment has been modified to take account of some of our criticisms.

Planning applications approved

150 High Street – We objected to an amended shopfront design, but at least the upper-floor décor has been omitted.

Land behind 36 Park Road – 6 new houses on vacant backland. We supported them.

Planning applications refused

158 High Street – We had no objection to this backland development.

Planning decisions awaited

130-132 High Street – No comments.

152 High Street – Extension up to the roofline of neighbouring buildings. We objected.

Former public WCs, Great North & Station Roads – We're neutral about this internet café.

Western half of Meadow Works site, Pricklers Hill (8 x 3-storey houses) – We supported these new family homes and gardens.

1 Albert Road, New Barnet – We objected to the overdevelopment and poor environment of this 5-storey block of flats by the railway line and next to the Victoria Quarter.

Victoria Quarter – A judicial ruling on Fairview's appeal against the Planning Inspector's dismissal of their appeal to build 554 flats will be handed down on 18 January. Curiously, in the meanwhile Fairview have submitted a series of amendments to the scheme for 371 homes that was approved in 2017. We and Save New Barnet have not objected, but have requested a number of conditions to prevent erosion of the original scheme.

Planning appeal decision ignored

1 Sunset View – Still no remedial work appears to have been done.

Planning appeals dismissed

1-9 & 10-15 Richard Court, Alston Road – We objected to extra storeys on both these blocks of flats.

In the pipeline

Barnet Homes' proposals for land at **1-7 Moxon Street** and **adjacent to Whittings Hill Primary School** were exhibited in November. Not only have they consulted the public at an early stage, they have appointed a promising design team. Thanks to BSoc members who gave me their comments, which were generally very favourable. On 12 December I passed these on to the BH team, but pointed out a number of details that could be improved.



Peter Barber Architects: sketch views and plans of (L) Moxon Street & (R) Whittings Road

Further afield

North London Business Park – Not satisfied with the permission they had been granted on appeal for 1,350 homes in 2020, Comer Homes re-applied last year for 2,419 homes in towers of up to 13 stories high. Theresa Villiers and hundreds of locals campaigned against the scheme, which has been refused.