

Planning & Environment – Robin’s update for Committee, 14 March 2024

David Lee sadly died in January. His funeral will take place at 2:00pm on Tuesday 19 March followed by a wake at The Mitre.

- *Please tell me if you’d like to attend.*

Not only has the Council undertaken to complete David’s planting masterplan for Barnet Hill, it has also offered to pay for a tree commemorating him, with a **ceremonial planting** this autumn. We’ll need to announce details in our May newsletter.

- *Any thoughts about a suitable (native) tree and the form of the ceremony?*

PLANNING ISSUES

Government

Michael Gove has shelved his most radical planning reforms, but revised the **National Planning Policy Framework** and is consulting on promotion of development on **brownfield sites** and further expansion of **Permitted Development Rights**. We must comment on the latter with 33 Lyonsdown Road in mind.

Barnet Council

The Council is consulting on a new **Parks & Open Spaces Strategy**. We’ve submitted detailed comments. You can add your own via the Council website until 18 March.

The Council has set up voluntary action groups to advise on its next steps to **Net Zero**. I’ve agreed to Co-Chair the group on Housing & Energy.

There’s a **Ward Walk** around Underhill with Councillors from 11am to 1pm on 15 March.

- *Is anyone going?*

Green initiatives

Our VP Jenny Remfry attended the AGM of the Dollis Valley Partnership Board. She reports some interest in their helping to plant **trees along the Dollis Valley** in association with the U3A.

She also participated in a web launch of **CPRE London’s Green Defenders Report**, which was mainly about defending local green spaces against developers.

RECENT CASEWORK (SELECTION)

Anticipated

Barnet FC – The Bees could return to a new stadium on the Ark Pioneer Academy’s playing fields at Underhill. Many of our members would welcome them back but we need a lot more information about the project, which is in the Green Belt, eg where the students will play.

In the long grass

The Spires – Shop units are being advertised to let, so presumably redevelopment is some way off.

Mini land grabs

Three cases of encroachment by householders onto adjacent public land without planning permission have been reported. Frances and I have investigated but concluded that there aren't sufficient grounds for BSoc to get involved.

- *How best to take this forward, if at all?*

See **Annex** below for further details.

Green Belt cases

Arkley Manor Farm, Rowley Lane – Two large scaffolding storage racks have been built in a scruffy yard. We've objected to a retrospective application for permission.

Sky Studios North, Rowley Lane – Decision still awaited on 10 more sound stages.

Land north of Barnet Lane, Borehamwood – Locals raised £23,000 to challenge the deregistration of **Woodcock Hill Village Green**; a High Court decision is imminent. 79 houses are proposed nearby at **Hartfield Avenue**.

Land off Langley Row, Hadley Highstone – Rebuilding of former stables in Green Belt. We didn't object. Decision awaited.

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

Wetland scheme, Hadley Wood – While we support the principle of nature-based drainage, Enfield Council's application was light on key environmental and organisational information. They invited Katy Staton and me to a video meeting and promised to supply more information. Decision awaited.

Greengate Stables, Mays Lane – We support plans for a new equine yard. Approved.

Lower Kitts End Farm – Conversion of most of the agricultural buildings to industrial and warehouse use. We had no comments; it's been approved.

Horses Field, north of Barnet Lane, Borehamwood – Taylor Wimpey's application to build 220 houses on this site has been refused.

Conservation Areas & Listed Buildings

Whalebones – Decision expected on 13 March.

98-100 High Street (fka Foxtons) – Workspace plus 12 flats above. We were neutral. Decision still awaited.

118 High Street (the Grade II-listed former TSB & Barnet Press) – An application for conversion of the flats above Costas. We were neutral. Decision awaited.

130-132 High Street – 5 flats behind and above 2-storey building. No comments. Decision awaited.

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

2 Clyde Villas, Hadley Green Road – Application for 12 adults recovering from mental illness in a Locally-Listed house. We were neutral but submitted comments. Decision awaited.

St Mary's Church House, Camlet Way – Application to replace existing building on Local List with a new community hall in Neo-Georgian style. We'd welcome a better hall, but have objected on the grounds that the structural and economic case for demolition of a locally-listed building is not made, that the replacement design is inadequate (eg not fully accessible, without proper changing rooms and light in storage), and that external works (eg parking, deliveries or waste collection, nor of landscaping) are insufficiently considered. Decision awaited.



Church House – existing



ELEVATION TO HADLEY COMMON AND GARDEN

& proposed

Decisions awaited

Victoria Quarter – Decision expected on 13 March.

Brookfields Garage, Victoria Lane – Three unashamedly modern but inconspicuous houses and workspace on a backland site. We had no comments.

Intec House, 49 Moxon Street – The developer claims that the scheme approved last year with 35% affordable housing is no longer viable. He's made a new application for 96 flats and more workspace. The 7-storey exterior remains almost the same as previously. We objected again.

Fortune House, Moxon Street – The Intec House developers propose a similar, but only 6-storey, building for 41 flats and 2 workspace units. It's not as bad as its neighbour and won't harm the GB, so we were neutral.

Western half of Meadow Works site, Pricklers Hill – We supported these 8 new family homes and gardens.

Gone to appeal

63A Union Street – We were neutral about the house proposed on this derelict shop site by Coe's Alley.

Thurleston, 45 Barnet Road – The owner has appealed against refusal of alterations to the main house and the construction of a large outbuilding.

Appeal dismissed

111 Hadley Road – Appeal against Council requirement to provide disabled access.

Further afield

Abbey Arts Centre, 87 Park Road, East Barnet – We objected to the proposed replacement and new buildings. The application has been refused.

Hendon Central Library – Refurbishment of the existing Library and addition of a rear extension for Middlesex University has been approved.

Former Homebase site, North Finchley – 149 homes approved. A triumph for the Finchley Society, which had fought off two bigger and uglier schemes.



Homebase site, North Finchley

ANNEX – Mini land grabs

Dear all

Frances and I have looked at the sites reported. In all cases some encroachment on adjacent land appears to have taken place without planning permission, though it's possible some other form of legal agreement has been reached. We've concluded that there aren't sufficient grounds for BSoc to get involved.

Clearly land grabs aren't something BSoc can condone, especially where the land is Council-owned and/or Green Belt, but we don't have resources to pursue more than the occasional serious case. I suggest the following rules of thumb:

1. Has any new or recent building work been carried out, or does it look likely?
2. Has the natural environment been significantly harmed, or is it threatened?
3. Have public rights of way or view been obstructed?
4. Is the site of substantial size - say an area more than about 100 square metres?

By these criteria, none of the three cases is serious. In fact they've been done reasonably sensibly, they don't take away any space easily usable by the public, and they've tidied up scrappy areas that would never be improved by the Council.

Best regards

Robin