



New Barnet Community Association

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Jason Traves
Planning Reception (2nd Floor)
Barnet House
1255, High Road
Whetstone
London
N20 0EJ

Dear Mr Traves,

REQUEST TO SPEAK AT COMMITTEE

By email and hard copy

Planning application- B/04834/14 Albert Road Gasworks site owned by ASDA in New Barnet EN4

I am writing on behalf of NBCA to **formally object** to this application as set out in the large collection of documents submitted to the Council.

We commend ASDA as the site owner and their project team for their positive and proactive approach to community involvement with this scheme. The original supermarket application led to a vociferous campaign of opposition. Week after week letters in the local papers, articles in the London Evening Standard and on the TV London News. Councillors' emails were overloaded and surgeries overrun as there were long queues to complain about the proposals. A petition with 2556 signatures was presented to the council. There were 1849 responses from the public to the council consultation; 21 in favour and 1828 against.

The campaign however brought the community together to fight, not just against what they did not want, but also to argue for what they did want. This led to the Save New Barnet Campaign and the Vision for New Barnet, a blueprint for a sustainable welcoming community.

The approach this time was completely different and is a text book example of how involving the community can be of benefit to all parties. Some of the discussions have been robust but eventually compromises acceptable to both sides have been reached.

This is a major redevelopment of a brown field site and will have a significant impact not only in the immediate vicinity but also to the North east corner of the Borough in terms of the infrastructure and environment.

We support:-

- The cleaning up of this heavily contaminated former gas works site

- The principle of housing although we feel that there should have been more houses and fewer flats. We note that there are two storey maisonettes which will increase the number of family units on the ground floor of the five storey blocks.
- The provision of a retail unit on the East Barnet Road frontage and the provision of D1 units although we consider the cost of the rent and service charges will exclude local charitable sports, or community users from taking them.
- The general layout of the site which broadly follows the master plan drawn up by professional architects for the Save New Barnet Campaign.
- The design of the buildings which overall is of a high quality although we consider that the heavy copper top floors of the blocks of flats should be of a material that is lighter in colour (light grey or pale blue) so they would blend better with the sky rather than a bold capping to the five storey blocks emphasizing their height.
- The integration of the site with the Recreation Ground and improving access from East Barnet Road.
- The local traffic remediation measures proposed in the documents in so far as they go and we commend the applicant for taking into account the potential phase two extension to the site at some future date (circa 75 family houses) where the gas holder and other installations are currently located.

If we support the basic principles of the scheme why are we objecting to the application?

This is the largest single development site in the New Barnet area and will therefore have not only a visual impact from all directions but also have a significant impact on the infrastructure of the wider community:-

- Increased traffic,
- More users for buses and trains,
- Increased demands on nursery and school places (primary and secondary),
- Increased demand on already overloaded doctors and dentists,
- Lack of, and poor quality, recreational facilities.

This is not the only growth in the area. There are 31 new homes on the three Tesco sites, 15 in approach Road. 12 on site in Lancaster Road and c40+ more in the same road over the next few years. 15 in the Alex PH site. C 30 in Lytton and Plantagenet Roads; over 200 new units in Groupama , Endeavour, Kingmaker, Durkan, Knight and Sapphire houses and various small shop to residential conversions under the prior permitted development rights legislation . These are only the ones we have heard about to date. All will add to the pressures on the community and its infrastructure.

New Barnet is the only Town Centre in Barnet to have a Town Centre Framework which is approved by a Planning Inspector, and was backed after the examination in Public of the Local Plan. This is based on the Vision for New Barnet produced in 2009 by the SNB group as a response to the two supermarket applications. It was drawn up by the community at a large public meeting, added to and consulted upon extensively both at open days and on line and modified until the majority of the community were happy with it.

- This application reflects many of the urban repair aspects of the Vision insofar as it lies within their control.
- It makes some small contribution to the traffic concerns but more needs to be done if gridlock is to be avoided

- It completely fails to address the lack of facilities and benefits for the community issues. A bit of tidying up the edges to the Rec and linking the Rec to the new development is totally inadequate.

The 75 page report on the developer's public consultation demonstrates that the feedback from the public is consistent with the community's aspirations and needs set out in the Vision :-

- Concerns about transport in general and traffic in particular,
- Pedestrians and road safety measures
- Links to and upgrading the Recreation Ground
- Lack of school places
- Nursery
- Lack of Doctors.
- And overwhelmingly demand for a swimming pool

We have discussed this at length with the developer and their position is that this scheme has to provide to the Council in excess of £3.5million in Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions which should be used to provide these community facilities.

Unfortunately over the past 20 years our experience is that money raised by the predecessor of CIL, Section 106 contributions, paid for by schemes in this area has not actually be used within the area. It has invariably gone to the major sites in the west side of the Borough or just disappeared.

The purpose of CIL was to address the infrastructure shortcomings of an area and especially the negative impacts of a new development in that area. Before this scheme is approved the Council must agree that the £3.5m+ CIL money is used to address the infrastructure and social issues raised by the developers consultation and set out in the Vision for New Barnet.

Generally this scheme meets the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework page 2 paragraph 7 including bullet points 1 Economic role and 3 an environment role apart from traffic pollution+.

The one exception is bullet point 2 the social role of a sustainable new development. This states that the scheme should be “ supporting strong vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of the present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural wellbeing.”

Conclusion.

While we support the scheme overall in terms of layout and design we cannot support the application until such time as the major negative existing and resulting shortcomings in the infrastructure are addressed in a legally binding way.

We therefore oppose this application in its present format and ask to address the committee.

Yours faithfully

David Howard
Trustee New Barnet Community Association