



**NEW BARNET COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
COMMUNITY CENTRE 48/50 VICTORIA ROAD
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Martin Cowie
Barnet Planning Dept
North London Business Park
N11 1NP

BY EMAIL

Dear Martin,

Consultation on replacement location for Church Farm swimming pool

I am writing on behalf of NBCA regarding the proposal to build a new swimming pool to replace Church Farm plus a leisure centre and other facilities in the East Barnet ward.

We believe that the proposals for the Victoria Recreation Ground set out in the recent consultation could be good for the Recreation Ground and wider community of New Barnet.

We can SUPPORT the PRINCIPLE for the following reasons:-

It will regenerate the Rec and provide long overdue and much needed investment.

We are aware that the Council needs to find £98.4million more savings by 2020 hence there will be no revenue funding for future improvements or even to sustain the present low standards. We are also aware of the Asset Management Strategy/Implementation Plan and the need to find new sources of funding to keep existing amenities open. Unfortunately New Barnet has no large businesses to sponsor the Rec.

The redevelopment of the TESCO sites has led to extensive house improvements, extensions and even new homes along the rest of Victoria Road. The large Edwardian island block between Station Road and Station Approach is being given a face lift and all of the empty units are being refurbished a few at the time.

A well designed swimming pool and leisure centre could make the new complex and the Rec self sufficient. The outdoor gym trail and other usable sports facilities will bring in new users. The Pymmes Brook Trail will be enhanced as will the gardens. The café, toilets, new LED lighting and greater use will reduce the feeling that the Rec is unsafe encouraging additional users thus putting the Rec onto an upward spiral of greater use by the community.

The general proposals are in line with the Save New Barnet Vision for New Barnet.

The swimming pool was number one and the leisure centre number two on all the consultations undertaken by NBCA, ASDA, Tesco and the Borough over the past seven years.

The regeneration will provide much needed open space and public amenities to the existing residents plus those moving in to the 800 -1,000 new homes mainly studios, one or two bed apartments that are either here or coming to New Barnet.

However we cannot give an unqualified support because:-

We do not know how many amenities will be included? Your colleagues were going to give us an indication of which of the various options were most popular following the last of the open public sessions. Is that available please? The list of possible improvements excited people, so knowing what is included, and what is omitted and why, is an important part of the consultation process. The full public consultation closes on Wednesday. How soon after that will you have the final report please?

Where will the building be located?

What will it look like? An ultra modern high tech glass and steel structure that will be alien to the Rec and the whole area, will lead to mass protests. However a more traditional building that blends in with the Rec, and the trees and shrubs that surround it would find support, as happened on the ASDA site. This is critical for getting mass public support.

How big will it be? Height? One or two storeys? Basement?

Amount of land that it will take? We are keen to keep as much green grassed area as possible. What balance will be struck between height and loss of green space? This is where good design comes in.

Impact on neighbouring properties?

Amount and location of parking bearing in mind comments above?

Impact on traffic on roads in the area? Query are any traffic management plans proposed? After the Highways Department Officer's recent disastrous proposals to address the speeding problem in Victoria Road it is essential that the community is consulted at an early stage.

Whatever happens there will be an increase of traffic in New Barnet and this makes sorting out a bus bay southbound opposite Sainsburys critical to the success of the

area. There is CIL and S106 money to pay for this and other mitigation measures which were put forward by the ASDA traffic consultant as part of their planning application but rejected by Barnet with no reasons given.

We OPPOSE the DANEGROVE PLAYING FIELD site for the following reasons:-

The site is too small and will be too close to neighbouring houses. It will be visually intrusive in a conspicuous position.

There are severe site constraints regarding flooding, springs on the slopes of the wider Cat Hill area and swallow holes which will make any development very expensive and especially one with a large pool of water as a key feature.

Major traffic and congestion concerns both from parking and moving traffic. In the past every sports day, donkey derby, fireworks show and car boot sale caused chaos in the area with parking and just sheer volume of traffic on a busy cross roads. This will get worse with several large developments planned for the East Barnet to Enfield Road.

Threat to East Barnet cafes from a café with a car park on the site.

There is a better site available at the other end of Park Road.

Conclusion

We welcome and support the general principle set out in the consultation but as always the devil is in the detail and we have no details of what actually is proposed.

As the Council is working to a tight timetable it is vital that representatives of NBCA/SNB meet the relevant officers to look at the areas of concern to see if there is scope for addressing them. This needs to be done as soon as possible. We might be able to come to a daytime meeting if that is more convenient.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Regards.

David

David Howard
Trustee New Barnet Community Association

Copy by email to:-
Andy Spriggs
Commercial Lead Sport and Physical Activity Project