

Save New Barnet

Newsletter



9th January 2017

Hello again, friends of the Save New Barnet Campaign. We have one major item of news in this edition.

Victoria Quarter - Planning Application (16/7601/FUL)

Proposal:

“Demolition of the existing residential and non-residential buildings (1 to 9 Victoria Road, 15 to 23 Victoria Road and 1A, 2 and 2A Albert Road) and construction of 115 residential units (Use Class C3) within Buildings A, H, J1 and J2 (an increase of 63 residential units across the Victoria Quarter Redevelopment Area), 623sqm of commercial/retail/office floorspace (Use Class A1-A4/B1/D1/D2) within Building A and Building J1, the creation of new publically accessible open spaces and pedestrian routes together with associated access, servicing, car parking, cycle parking and landscaping. Relocation of an existing sub-station.”

You will recall that One Housing, the owners of the gasworks site in Albert Road, held a public exhibition of their outline plans for what they describe as the 'gateway' into their Victoria Quarter development in October. A planning application was submitted to Barnet Council in December, and was validated just before the Christmas & New Year holiday shutdown.

The Save New Barnet Campaign has taken time to examine the planning application in detail and it is our view that it should be REFUSED in its present form.

The purpose of this newsletter is to alert you to the planning application and recommend that you contact Barnet Council with your comments, and to register your objection. The closing date for comments was originally Friday 13 January, but we have persuaded the planning department that due to the holiday season, the deadline should be extended to Friday 20 January.

Details of how to submit your opinion to Barnet Council can be found towards the end of this newsletter. You don't have long, but it can be done quickly online.

In our view, the main grounds for opposition are:

- Gross overdevelopment.
- Not in keeping with surrounding buildings and character of the area.
- Siting breaches relevant policies.
- Inappropriate design in terms of layout, scale and massing.
- Insufficient car parking numbers.
- Inadequate proposals to address traffic volumes in the area.

All the documents relating to the planning application can be found on the Council's planning website.

LINK: tinyurl.com/victoriaquarter1

We recognise that many people do not have the time to plough through lengthy planning documents, so we have created a summary in five single A4 pages of information. These should hopefully illustrate clearly what is proposed and why we think you should register your opposition.

- Victoria Quarter Site Plan
- Birds Eye View Sketch
- Building Heights
- Elevation Comparison
- Building Line Comparison

These five diagrams should be attached to this newsletter, or can be obtained from our website.

LINK: www.newbarnet.org.uk

Consented Scheme

There is already planning permission to build a residential development on the former gasworks site. Work to decontaminate the site started last summer. One Housing intend to build, as planned, the majority of this scheme - buildings B, C, D, E, F (flats) & H (townhouses).

New 'Gateway' Proposals

One Housing has subsequently purchased further property fronting Victoria Road to create a 'gateway' site at the entrance to the Victoria Quarter development. They have redesigned and extended three buildings from the consented scheme and added a fourth new block.

Additional buildings to be demolished to create the enlarged 'gateway' site:

5 Victoria Road - Dry Cleaners

7-11 Victoria Road - Two recently constructed 4 bed houses

15-19 Victoria Road - Three two storey houses

21-23 Victoria Road - Burlington Coachworks

Note that both the Salvation Army and the Gun Club will remain in their existing buildings.

The Issues

Whilst we welcome the redevelopment of the derelict Gasworks site, we have serious concerns about the height and density of the amended plans. The Save New Barnet Campaign have never been against development – just inappropriate development. We recognise that the area will and must evolve and that new buildings can breathe new life into run down areas, freshening up old and redundant sites. Our approach has always been to try and work with developers to adjust their plans to create schemes that respect exiting buildings so that old and new can work well together. The Tesco/SpenHill development successfully replaced the industrial OpTex site with modern houses that follow the building and roof lines of their Victoria Road neighbours, and limited the taller block of flats to the centre, away from the road.

The residential development on the gasworks was always going to be fairly dense in order to pay for the expensive clean up of this contaminated industrial site.

The tallest and least attractive building planned on the consented scheme ('A') was 6 storeys and although higher than we would have liked, it was at least sited towards the centre of the site reasonably away from Victoria Road.

Building A has now been redesigned as part of the gateway scheme and has somehow gained another 2 floors to become a 8 storey monster. This large tower block would loom over the development, and is deeply inappropriate for the area.

The most alarming proposal on the gateway is building 'H'. Not only does it replace 2 storey properties fronting Victoria Road with a 6 storey block, the established building line is being totally ignored. It is proposed to build right up to the edge of the already exceedingly narrow pavement along this part of the road, which would present a serious hazard to pedestrians and wheelchair users.

The planning documents clearly state that the developer has been encouraged to raise the height of this building, to create a 'landmark', by Barnet's planners. It is extremely disappointing to discover that a planning department, paid for by residents to oversee the development of the local area, is actively working against the interests of the community.

An innovative proposal sees three 2 storey mews houses proposed along the existing path down to Victoria Recreation Ground. However, they will be overshadowed for much of the day by block H in its proposed 6 storey form – we are concerned that this will reduce their appeal significantly.

There is an additional planning application (16/7602/FUL) to create a temporary 83 space car park on part of the site. Most of the parking for the flats on the site will be in an underground car park below blocks A, C, D, E & F, using the space created by excavation of contaminated soil. Due to the phased nature of the development, this underground parking will not be available until later and so this temporary car park will serve the 'gateway' flats which will be built first. The consented scheme currently has a parking ratio of 1.25 spaces per unit. When the 83 space temporary car park closes after 3 years, 'gateway' residents will also have to use the underground car park which reduces the parking density on the whole scheme to 1 space per unit.

It is clearly important to encourage the use of public transport, but car ownership by many residents in the outermost suburbs of London is inevitable. We are concerned that the proposed ratio of parking spaces to dwellings will lead to parked cars overflowing from this large development onto the very narrow local roads.

Local Plans & Policies

All proposals should abide by the approved local development plans.

The following are quotes from the Barnet Local Plan:

- *Throughout these documents there is reference to areas that are suburban in character which should be protected and enhanced.*
- *Densities should be optimised not maximised.*
- *The appearance, scale, mass, height and pattern of new buildings must respect, preserve or enhance the local character of the surroundings,*
- *Proposals which are out of keeping will be refused. Development which is considered to be detrimental to local character will be refused.*
- *Areas must be protected and new buildings will only be permitted where they enhance the area.*
- *The tension between protection and growth is recognised and notes that it is important to maintain the quality of life which includes environment and character of an area.*
- *Any growth must conserve and enhance the character of the area.*
- *The Core Strategy aims to address strategic needs for family accommodation.*
- *New housing should be of high quality which should aim to create places that meet the needs of people, and maintain and improve the local character. They should contribute to the local character and integrate with the social, green and physical infrastructure.*
- *New homes including family and Lifetime homes should meet the Boroughs priorities and not undermine the suburban character or local distinctiveness.*
- *Flatted schemes can weaken the traditional street style.*
- *For Barnet to grow successfully it is imperative that safeguards are in place to protect and enhance the suburban quality of the borough.*

We think it is quite obvious that this 'gateway' development fails to comply and so should be **REJECTED**.

This application does not comply with the following Policies set out in the Approved Local Plan Core strategy:

- CS 1 "Protect and enhance high quality suburbs"
- CS 4 "Providing quality homes"
- CS 5 "Protecting and enhancing Barnet's character to create high quality places"
"Protect heritage and character"
- CS 6 "Promoting Barnet's town centre"

and Development Management Policies:-

- DM 01 "Protecting Barnet's character and amenity"
- DM 11 "Development principles in the town centres"
- DM 17 "Parking standards"

How To Comment On The Planning Application

The quickest way to is to use the form on Barnet Council's planning website

<https://publicaccess.barnet.gov.uk>

Enter the reference **16/7601/FUL** in the bottom box marked "Enter a keyword..."

Or just use this direct link: tinyurl.com/victoriaquarter2

Alternatively if you want to make more detailed comments (or the website is not working) you can send an email or write a letter. You must quote the reference **16/7601/FUL** and include your full name and address.

email planning.consultation@barnet.gov.uk

post Development Management & Building Control Service
Barnet House, 1255 High Road, Whetstone, London, N20 0JE

Who Else Can I Contact?

The first and most important action is to register your objection with Barnet's planning department, but you may also want to contact your local elected representatives to let them know your views.

The development site is in East Barnet Ward, but is less than 100m from both Oakleigh Ward & High Barnet Ward. Note that some councillors serve on the planning committee so may not be able to respond.

East Barnet Ward Councillors

Cllr Rebecca Challice	cllr.r.challice@barnet.gov.uk
Cllr Philip Cohen	cllr.p.cohen@barnet.gov.uk
Cllr Laurie Williams	cllr.l.williams@barnet.gov.uk

High Barnet Ward Councillors

Cllr David Longstaff	cllr.d.longstaff@barnet.gov.uk
Cllr Bridget Perry	cllr.b.perry@barnet.gov.uk
Cllr Wendy Prentice	cllr.w.prentice@barnet.gov.uk

Oakleigh Ward Councillors

Cllr Sachin Rajput	cllr.s.rajput@barnet.gov.uk
Cllr Brian Salinger	cllr.b.salinger@barnet.gov.uk
Cllr Stephen Sowerby	cllr.s.sowerby@barnet.gov.uk

Member of Parliament for Chipping Barnet

Theresa Villiers MP
LINK: www.theresavilliers.co.uk

Finally, the Save New Barnet Campaign is always interested to hear your views. Contact details below.

Tell A Friend

Please pass this newsletter on to friends and neighbours who may not be on our mailing list. Copies in printable form can be found on our website.

That's all for now.

Regards,

Save New Barnet Campaign Team

Save New Barnet Campaign

website: www.newbarnet.org.uk
facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/18590613740
twitter: www.twitter.com/NewBarnet
email: info@newbarnet.org.uk
post: % The Community Centre, 48/50 Victoria Road, New Barnet, EN4 9PF

Save New Barnet Campaign is a non-political group of local residents fighting for a better New Barnet. The group seeks to inform the local community about potential changes to the area, and oppose inappropriate developments. The group aims to promote a clear vision for how New Barnet could be developed for the benefit of the community based on the views of local people.

The campaign is funded entirely by donations from individuals. It is not bankrolled by any company or commercial organisation.