

Planning & Environment – Robin’s update for Committee, 12 May 2022

PLANNING ISSUES

Government

Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill – Some good news in the Queen’s speech: the Government has promised to:

- Give councils new planning powers, including to force landlords in England to let out empty shops to rejuvenate high streets.
- Give people the right to vote on proposed property extensions in their area as part of new planning reforms*.

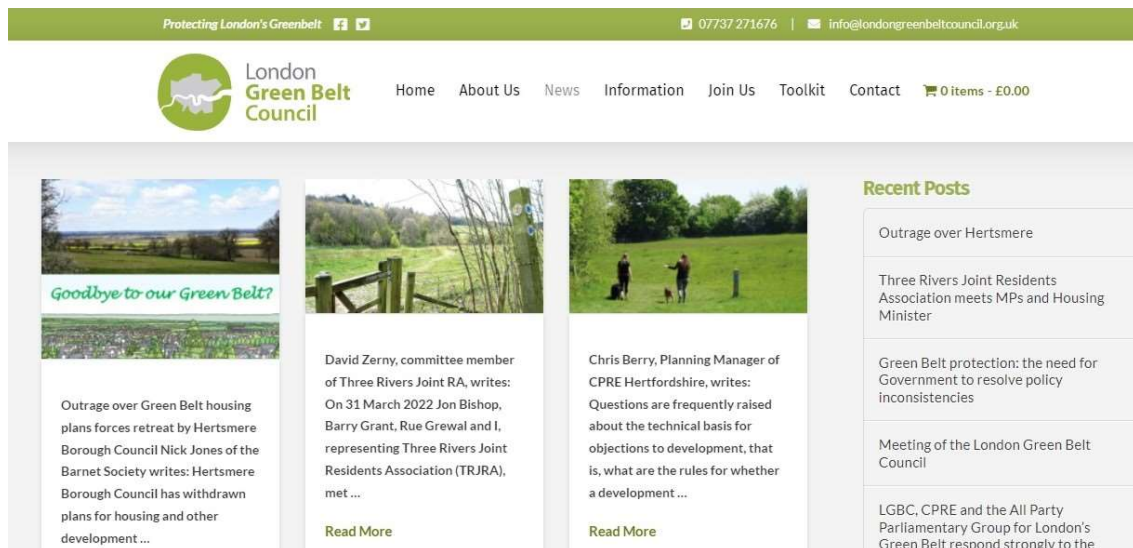
** This sounds like back-tracking on Permitted Development Rights (which reduce residents’ say over neighbours’ extensions) that the Government has greatly expanded since 2013.*

The speech was silent about other aspects of planning reform or the urgency of meeting its net-zero target e.g. by promoting energy-saving retrofit of existing homes. In *The Sunday Telegraph*, however, Michael Gove said that:

- Local design codes** will be used to allow residents to enshrine local rules for development, such as particular building layouts, material use or façade designs.
- Ministers will also look at how the Planning Inspectorate enforces housing-need targets, with the aim of reducing pressure on greenbelt land or areas of natural beauty currently burdened by ‘unrealistic’ targets. Gove said it would be *“no kind of success to simply hit a target if the homes that are built are shoddy, in the wrong place, don’t have the infrastructure required and are not contributing to beautiful communities”*.

*** West Finchley Residents Association has a design code as part of its Neighbourhood Plan, which took 5 years to complete. Mill Hill Neighbourhood Forum has been trying to produce a Neighbourhood Plan since 2015.*

London Green Belt Council



The screenshot shows the website for the London Green Belt Council. At the top, there is a green navigation bar with the text "Protecting London's Greenbelt" and social media icons. Below this is the council's logo and a main navigation menu with links for Home, About Us, News, Information, Join Us, Toolkit, and Contact. A shopping cart icon shows "0 items - £0.00". The main content area features a grid of three recent posts, each with a landscape image and a text snippet. The first post is titled "Goodbye to our Green Belt?" and discusses an outrage over housing plans in Hertsmere. The second post is by David Zerny, a committee member of the Three Rivers Joint RA, and discusses a meeting on 31 March 2022. The third post is by Chris Berry, Planning Manager of CPRE Hertfordshire, and discusses questions about the technical basis for objections to development. To the right of the grid is a "Recent Posts" sidebar with a list of the same three posts.

Sample page of LGBC’s makeover website. Spot the local views!

LGBC website – Derek & I have led a makeover of the website with IT support from Simon W. The need to publicise threats to the Green Belt in the draft Local Plans of many councils in and around London is urgent, as is LGBC’s need to attract new members.

Transport

84 bus – RIP, Barnet's link with Potters Bar.

Barnet Council

Barnet environmental hustings – On 20 April I attended a Zoom Q&A between residents and Conservative, Green, Labour & Lib Dem spokespeople. It was well organised by Barnet Climate Action Group, Barnet Friends of the Earth, Barnet Green Spaces Network & Better Streets for Barnet. Each party claimed to be at least as green as the others.

New Labour Council – It promises to deliver a cleaner, greener and safer Barnet, declare a climate emergency and set up a citizen's assembly to deliver an ambitious Climate Action Plan. Since funding is constrained and the Local Plan almost finalised, its options will be limited.

We must get our messages about planning and the environment across to Councillors and participate in the citizen's assembly.

Barnet draft Local Plan – Its Examination in Public will run from mid-September to early November. I (and maybe other BSoc members) will need to attend key sessions.

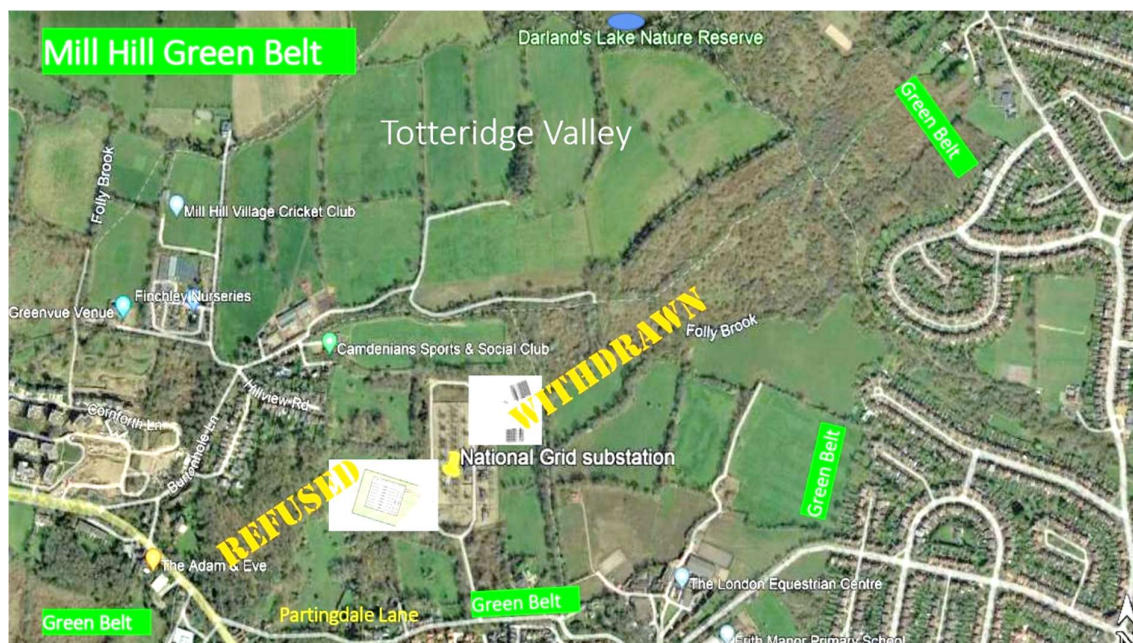
Hertsmere Council

Hertsmere draft Local Plan – Following nearly 18,000 responses (including the Society's), Hertsmere has scrapped its plan to build on about 10% of its (and our) Green Belt. It will work on a new Plan.

Aldenham reservoir – Agreement has been reached with the owners for a public right of way along the reservoir footpath.

RECENT CASEWORK (SELECTION)

Green Belt cases



Mill Hill Green Belt: REFUSED = electricity battery; WITHDRAWN = gas peaking plant

Electricity battery, Partingdale Lane – Refused by the Council – a significant decision. If the UK is serious about reaching zero-carbon, an alternative may still need be found somewhere in the vicinity. The Society was one of 912 objectors.

40 Barnet Lane (former cricket pavilion) – Decision awaited on this derelict building being used by the Rainbow Centre. We supported the proposal.

Land off Mays Lane near Vale Farm – A developer wanted Permission in Principle for up to nine houses on an open field. We objected and the Council has refused it.

Land off Mays Lane, Greengate Stables – Another developer wants to rebuild the derelict former stables. The first phase application is for a new manège and temporary buildings. We've supported it but asked for conditions to protect habitat and wildlife.

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

Arkley Riding Stables, Hedgerow Lane – Having lost last year's appeal the developer is back, this time with three instead of four single-storey houses, each on the footprint of derelict buildings. We're neutral, but have asked for planning conditions to protect the existing habitat, wildlife and a possible WWII gun or observation post.

Sky Studios backlot, Rowley Lane – Approved by Hertsmere Council. We and many others objected to this extension of the mega-studios into neighbouring fields.

Conservation Areas & Listed Buildings

1 Church Passage – Proposed roof extension above L'Antica Pizzeria. We objected.

Crown & Anchor, 47 High Street – Following our objection to lack of detail in the planning application, Guy Braithwaite & I met the owner. He has improved the façade and was receptive to our suggestions about replacement windows and doors.

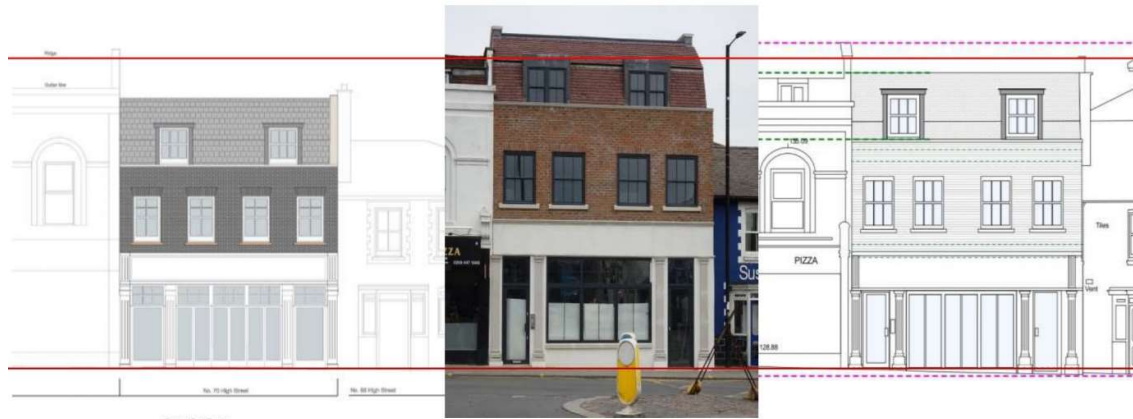
60 High Street (Balady) – A brash new shopfront, but maybe no worse than others nearby.

Q What do you think?



60 High Street: shopfront built without permission

70 High Street – The owner has applied to keep the ground floor but to reduce the heights of the two floors above. The street façade is a bit better than the design rejected last year by the Planning Inspector, but a visual mess and unworthy of the Wood Street CA. We've strongly objected and await the Council's decision.



70 HIGH STREET: APPROVED

AS BUILT

PROPOSED

118 High Street (fka TSB Bank & Barnet Press) – We objected to lack of detail for converting this Grade II building, one of the best in the High Street. It has been withdrawn.

159 High Street – We objected to a flat in the roofspace. It has been refused.

196 High Street – We objected to subdivision of this retail unit because of harm to a building on the Local List and shopfront design not conforming to design guidelines. It has been refused.

2 Clyde Villas, Hadley Green Road (LL) – We had objected to a previous proposal for 16 flats for people with special needs. This application reduces the number to 15. I am minded to support it – but only if the owner has taken my advice last year, particularly about number of residents, social space and use of the outdoors.

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

36 Park Road – Conversion of a Victorian villa on the Local List into four flats. We were neutral and it has been approved.

Tudor Park pavilion – Simon C reports:

About 20 people attended a meeting of Friends of Tudor Park on 19 April, and several volunteered to join a Working Group. The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 17 May at St Mark's Church hall (thanks, John), the aim of which will be to form a committee. I'm very concerned that according to Cllr Longstaff the election results could throw a spanner in the works in terms of CIL funding for the project. I will contact the new Councillors in Barnet Vale and invite them to visit Tudor Park in the near future.

Planning applications approved

220-222 High Street (fka The Present) – We had no comment on these shopfront alterations.

The Windmill School, 50 Moxon Street – Despite our objections, especially to its extremely limited rooftop playground, the Planning Committee approved it unanimously.

Planning application withdrawn

152 High Street – Another proposal for extension up to the roofline of neighbouring buildings. We objected because it would appear even taller and was poorly designed.

Planning decisions awaited

Land behind 36 Park Road – Nine new houses with gardens on vacant land behind it. We supported it.

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

Planning appeals

33 Lyonsdown Road – In March the Inspector ruled in favour of saving this Victorian villa on the Local List. The owners (Abbeytown, owned by Martyn Gerrard) left it unsecured and vandals got in and caused damage. It has now been secured but its future is uncertain.

1 Sunset View – The owner has six months to make good unapproved alterations to Locally Listed house in Monken Hadley CA.

Barnet House, Whetstone – We submitted a representation against. A 6-day public inquiry has begun into 260 homes proposed in and next to the Seifert & Partners slab.

33 Park Road – We submitted a representation against. Decision awaited.

202 High Street – We submitted a representation against. Decision awaited.

204 High Street – We submitted a representation against. Decision awaited.

Victoria Quarter – Has gone to appeal. We have submitted a representation against.

Arnos Grove Station – An Inspector has approved 162 flats on the car parks.



Arnos Grove Station: proposed housing (L & R of Charles Holden's listed booking hall)