



LB OF BARNET'S PROPOSAL TO ADOPT ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS REGARDING CONVERSION OF EMPLOYMENT SPACES INTO RESIDENTIAL SPACES

RESPONSE BY THE BARNET SOCIETY

11 November 2018

The Barnet Society covers most of the constituency of Chipping Barnet, including parts of Whetstone and New Barnet. Our area has benefitted for many years from the presence of elements of office, light industrial and warehouse space in various localities, often at modest rents. This has enabled economic diversity, facilitated business start-ups and reduced commuting out of our area.

We have watched developments since introduction of the Prior Notice procedure with growing concern. Many commercial premises have already been converted in our area, especially in New Barnet and Whetstone, and others are in the pipeline. Although the additional housing is not unwelcome, it has come at disproportionate cost to our local economy, and to the inconvenience of residents who now have to travel further to access such useful services as garages and building materials suppliers.

For that reason we argued, successfully, three years ago for the inclusion of new office/workshop space on the Brake Shear House site (164 High Street), to complement other measures which we believe would help regenerate High Barnet town centre.

Conversely, we have several concerns about the residential accommodation that has replaced commercial space:

- The quantity of units concentrated in certain places (e.g. High Road, Whetstone, and Station Road, New Barnet, with nugatory amenity space.
- Space and environmental standards often below the Mayor of London's recommendations. Although sometimes true for conversions of modern buildings, e.g. Barnet House, Whetstone (17/1313/PNO), the worst examples are usually of Victorian or older buildings, e.g. Nos.6 & 6A Nesbitts Alley (18/6397/PNL & 18/6398/PNL).
- The disproportionate provision of 1 & 2-person units compared with family units.
- The lack of tenure variety.
- The community's loss of contribution to infrastructure.

We therefore completely support both the Council's 'Justification for the making of Article 4 Directions', and the locations selected.