



Comments with regards to possible developments at

## **Pentavia Park, Watford Way, London NW7**

The Committee were generally in favour of the plans to refurbish the above referenced site, maintaining much of the existing A1 classification space and reconfiguring the current A3 space. We were in favour of changing some of the existing A1 space into D2 for a Trampoline Gym or Cinema, but we are wholly against the development of the site for residential C3 purposes. We accept that there is a Housing shortage in London and we are actively supporting the right developments in the right places, but this site is wholly inappropriate for Housing, being relatively small between the Mainline railway/M1 Motorway and the A1/A41 Trunk route on the other side, with limited real access to public transport.

We would have been pleased to see the development of a Leisure and Retail Park which could have contained a Cinema (small 2 screen), Skating Rink, 10-pin Bowling, plus 2-3 restaurants, maybe 2-3 related shops as well, perhaps such as “the Range”. The configuration of such could be contained within the existing built footprint and the current vehicular access and car park would cope well with expected visitor volumes. That said Barnet Council’s local plan only supports the development of such amenities within the designated Town Centres. We believe that Mill Hill and the immediately surrounding areas, which are expanding rapidly, mostly need leisure facilities and this site is ideally suited to supply such, serving a very wide and growing catchment area.

Having visited the recent exhibition held by Meadow Partners on 24<sup>th</sup> 25<sup>th</sup> November we will also comment as follows:

- 1) The questionnaire that was prepared for visitors to respond to, was at best contrived and at worst down right misleading. We are sure that most people would strongly agree with the questions asked but they bore absolutely no relevance to the specific development you were proposing.
- 2) The idea that the development would not meet or exceed the minimum 40% for “affordable” homes as stipulated in Barnet Council’s Local Plan is clearly unacceptable.
- 3) Central Government are calling for developers to build “Affordable Homes to BUY” not properties for rent. In fact they are positively discouraging “buy to let” and overseas investors who buy only as a safe-haven for their money but add little to the community locally. As a Neighbourhood Forum we are keen to increase the percentage of affordable Home Ownership, not deplete it, as we wish to increase the level of Community engagement which is usually lower when homes are rented for short periods and people fail to buy-in to the values of the community. It was specifically mentioned to one of our committee that your concept of “private rented” properties included the idea that the properties on this site could cater for transient professionals and specifically used the construction trade as an example, highlighting 1-3 month agreements. This concept is an anathema in a suburb targeted at family based communities, and we suspect as has happened in other locations such



transient people bring little regard for their surroundings, add little to the local community and often act as significant detractors.

- 4) Following an extensive survey of local residents our emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan will stipulate that buildings should be no higher than 4 possibly 5 storeys high (where the topography supports such) in NW7, to remain in keeping with their surroundings. Mill Hill is characterised by mainly semi & detached family homes that occupy ground and first floors and many have loft extensions. People move to Mill Hill typically from a flat in London to buy a house and start a family in a great, predominantly green, landscape that is still close for commuting. The proposal of a development, massing to 10 storeys, will be totally out of scale with surrounding properties. Your proposals do not seem to understand the nature of NW7 and the impact such tall buildings would have on the general character of the area.
- 5) While we will be encouraging a modal shift in transportation, this will not happen overnight and your renters will perhaps commute by walking to the station or catching a bus, or even cycling, but they will still need a car for weekends for outings, shopping trips, visiting parents, friends etc. Owning a car is aspirational for most professional people today, if not a necessity, and they have to be parked somewhere. In fact often people will have a Company vehicle for work and this is not available for private use, so they have their own vehicle as well. 80% of people living in Mill Hill own their own vehicle. While public transport provides acceptable radial links into Central London, orbital routes around North London are already very congested and poorly served by public transport. The distances to The Broadway station - mainline, and Mill Hill East tube stations, are outside the range considered as 'good accessibility' on the PTAL scale.

Barnet Council acknowledges that too little parking in developments can result in overspill parking which then could force the authority to introduce unpopular and potentially damaging parking restrictions. Clearly the site at Pentavia could not be allowed to overspill onto Bunns Lane or Graham Park Way; any and all requirements for parking **must** be contained within the site at all times. Barnet expect the allocation of parking in new developments to be at the "maximum" end of their residential standards within their Development Management Policies (DM17), and thus 1.5 car park spaces would be required for each flat. Hence we would expect a development of 750 flats with a mix of 1, 2 & 3 bedrooms to have a minimum of 1125 car park spaces before any additional spaces are added for any on-site Commercial Activities. Clearly the 450 spaces mentioned at the recent exhibition is a huge underestimation of the very real need.

- 6) The site has access currently via the A41/A1 trunk road and while that is adequate for current purposes it would not be appropriate for the residential development proposed. Further you have indicated that you may consider some commercial use of the South end of the site and while the BP Garage/ M&S Food Store will remain we do not accept that any other commercial use would be acceptable. Not only would such commercial additions not conform to the Council's local plan, they would attract more traffic to the site and this would be wholly inappropriate.



- 7) The idea that you could possibly open a vehicular access from the site into Bunns Lane would be opposed on two grounds; a) the old motorway access route should be strategically reserved for future transport solutions to relieve congestion in the Orbital links across North London, and b) Bunns lane is already beyond capacity and gridlocked, particular during morning and evening rush hours.
- 8) You mention that people would welcome a Cinema on this site and as already mentioned we would have supported this within the context of a redeveloped Leisure/retail park, even though it runs counter to Barnet Council's Local Plan. We would not however support such within a largely residential site and now have an alternative location for a Cinema, within our Town Centre, and this will conform to the Local Plan.
- 9) The light pollution expected from the proposed buildings is deemed to be considerable and totally unacceptable to the operation of the local observatory.
- 10) Development immediately adjacent to the railway lines and the Motorway/Trunk routes is exposed to significant levels of noise and vibration. The principal of locating noise sensitive residential here would require significant mitigation and design measures to meet BS8233:2014 and World Health Organisation Guidelines.

These are our initial thoughts based on the limited information you have provided to date on your plans for re-developing this site. We trust that you will take them into consideration before bringing any further ideas for consultation.