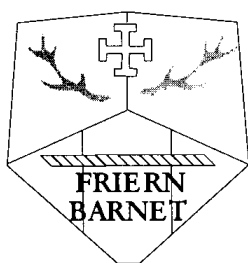


# Friern Barnet & Whetstone Residents' Association



January 2007

## Friern Barnet and Whetstone Residents Association

- We are non-political
- We work for all residents in the area
- We discuss issues with Local Councillors and Council Officials
- Associated with the following bodies
  - The Federation of Residents Association of Barnet
  - The Post Office Advisory Panel
  - The Finchley Society
  - Friends of Friary Park
  - The Friern Barnet & District Local History Society
  - Coppetts Wood Conservationists
  - The London Green Belt Council
  - North Finchley Local Agenda 21

## Surprise victory for York Way residents



*Residents of blocks of flats in York Way, off Oakleigh Road North, were alarmed by development proposals*

Local residents have recently scored two valuable victories. In both cases these were achieved by co-operation and streamlined opposition to unacceptable planning applications which were recommended by the planning officers for approval. In the previously reported fight against back garden development between Hemington Avenue and Hatley Close, the refusal of the application by Barnet Council was further vindicated by a parallel refusal handed down by the Inspector. Now the opposition of the residents of blocks of flats in York Way, with substantial support from this Association, has been similarly effective.

The developers' proposal was to raise an extra, third, storey on top of two blocks of Manor Court in York Way, which were originally built some 70 years ago; to add two narrow-chested new houses, where there are now double garages; and, inevitably, to sharply increase pavement parking in this narrow link road between Manor Drive and Oakleigh Road North. York Way permits through traffic (and a lot of it) only by the Local Authority closing both eyes to pavement parking on both sides of the road – an illegal practice elsewhere in the Borough.

The local people who would have been under siege by builders for a year or more, organised public meetings in the Methodist church hall at the

corner of Manor Drive and York Way, channeling the impressive unity of opposition into clearly defined arguments. These were taken on board by most of the Councillors, who turned down the proposal for the following reasons: visual obstruction; detrimental effect on the character of the area; loss of existing off street parking; and damage to the free flow of traffic.

One couple who had retired some years ago to one of the flats and who had invested all of their savings and a great deal of personal effort into making a comfortable and lasting home (and who are members of the association), acted as full-time organisers for the local feeling. They can be justly proud of the outcome, which was largely achieved by informing local Council members and local MPs of the potential damage to the area.

One lesson to be learned from these two developments might be that members of the Planning Committee be made fully aware of the need to protect the character and attractiveness of local features. Councillors should appreciate the help that residents can provide by giving them, in good time, a clearer picture of the potential damage threatened by developers, than the mere details of the applications are inclined to disclose.

We are here to help that process, irrespective of the size of the proposal.

## Plan to restore the octagon in Princess Manor Park

Residents of Friern Barnet have been concerned for a number of years about the state of the “Octagon” (its formal name is the “Well House”) in Princess Park Manor. The unusually-shaped eight sided building is deteriorating, tiles in the roof have been missing for years. It looks dilapidated and uncared for.

The developers have submitted a proposal to turn the Well House into a nursery for up to 60 children. Although the basic structure will be restored to its former glory, the nursery will be set in what is now the basement.

The existing basement occupies a much greater area than the building. The plan is to dig out and rebuild the basement as a normal ground floor space. From the submitted plans it appears that the objective is to produce a circular structure about 15 metres in diameter. The land will be banked around this new ground floor, so that the new ground floor cannot be seen from the surrounding parkland. Car parking for six cars is included in the proposal.

The upper two floors of the building (that part of the building visible at the moment) will be converted to provide a “good home and administration centre for the nursery operator”.

Although the restoration of the building is to be welcomed, we have reservations about the plans. The extended building, car park and car access road will eat into the public parkland. We hope this will be replaced elsewhere on the site. The parked cars will be an eyesore. Part of the

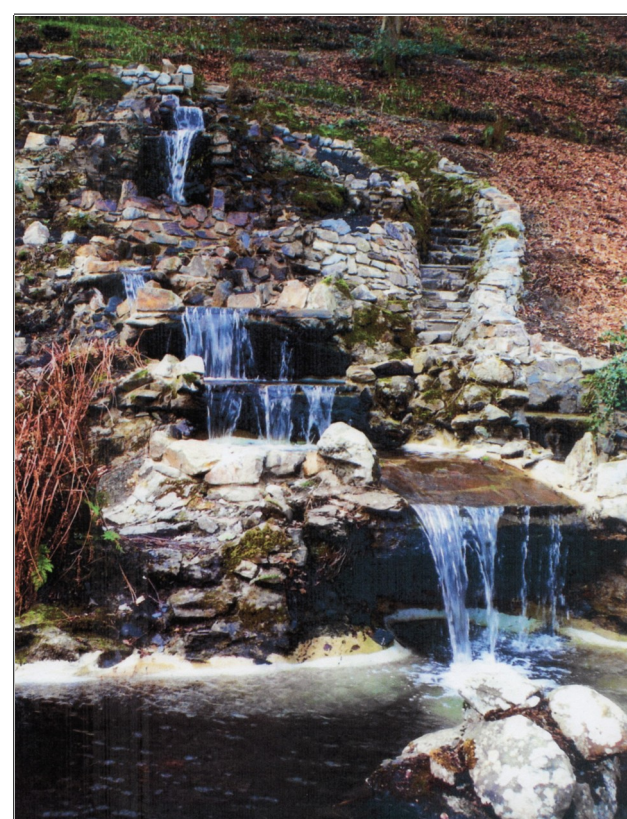


developers’ plan is to plant trees between the Well House and the surrounding houses and flats; these will spoil views of the building.

The planners state that they do not expect users of the nursery to come from Princess Park Manor itself. They hope there will be sufficient demand to be found in the local area for the nursery to be a viable business. We are curious what backup plans the developers have should the nursery fail (or the business does not get off the ground in the first place).

HH

## FRIARY PARK AIMS TO TWIN WITH SIMMONS PARK, OKEHAMPTON



*Water feature in Simmons Park in Okehampton, Devon*

When Sydney Simmons gave Friary Park to the people of Friern Barnet in 1909, this wasn’t the first park he had donated.

In 1906, Sydney gave Simmons Park, in his hometown of Okehampton, Devon, to the local townsfolk. He also paid for the almshouses in the park, bowling greens, and an area called Kempley Meadows. Other facilities in their beautiful park, which runs along the East Okement River, include a swimming pool, gym, sports hall, tennis courts, putting green and football pitch.

In July 1907 there was a grand opening with the Lord Mayor of London, Sir William Treloar, attending. In July 2002, the town council re-dedicated the park to the people of Okehampton. This time, the festivities included street entertainment, a guided walk, a mayoral reception and a ceremonial procession, as well as a grand fête and a party in the park.

Friary Park is maintained by Barnet Council. Simmons Park is looked after by Okehampton Town Council.

The Friends of Friary Park are trying to organise a “twinning” of Simmons Park and Friary Park. It seems natural that Sydney Simmons’ two parks should be in contact with one another — after all, they have the same “father”.

HH



# Mayor's study plots the downfall of Friern Barnet

*Expensive Report commissioned by the Mayor of London suggest large scale inappropriate development for Friern Barnet*



*The TEN report suggests demolishing Friern Bridge retail park and replacing it with high-rise development of shops, offices and flats*

A recently published study of increasing building densities in ten town centres in London is of interest to us as it has sections on North Finchley and Friern Barnet. Known as the TEN study, it was conducted by a Dutch based company "Urhahn Urban Design" and was commissioned by the London Development Agency (an office belonging to the Mayor of London) and the Government Office for London (an office belonging to central Government). The study tells us that Barnet is one of the four designated London Opportunity Boroughs; and, that the Mayor of London's strategy known as the London Plan anticipates an additional 345,000 new dwellings in London by 2016.

## North Finchley car parks

The TEN study for North Finchley basically suggests replacing the existing municipal car parks with blocks of flats. The Torrington car park would be redeveloped to contain a number of 8-storey blocks of flats. Car parking for shoppers would be provided below the blocks of flats. There would be no car parking places for the newly created flats because "existing congestion and good public transport" would make car ownership superfluous.

The shops on the High Road either side of Stanhope Road would be redeveloped, roughly from Autumn House to Abbey, and from Woolworths to Robert Dyas. From the diagrams in the study it is not clear exactly how many of the existing shops would have to go. The new development would provide for shops set back from the current line of shops (to provide some mini public spaces). Additional dwellings would be created above the new shops. The car parks currently on either side of Stanhope Road would be redeveloped as mews type dwellings.

## Friern Bridge retail park proposal

The TEN study reserves its "best" ideas for Friern Barnet. The buildings currently occupied by the Friern Bridge Retail Park would be replaced by high density housing (about 1000 to 1500 dwellings) placed above a new set of shops, offices and leisure facilities. It is suggested that a

large building, possibly a cinema, be placed between the housing development and the North Circular to act as a shield from the traffic noise.

The study also suggests that the road system for the new high density development is integrated with the road system around Balmoral Avenue (the housing development between Princess Park Manor and the Friern Bridge Retail Park), with the current cul-de-sacs being replaced with through roads. As with the other proposals in the study, this development suggests the loss of Metropolitan Open Land.

## Proposal to build on Coppetts Wood

The TEN study also suggests that the Coppetts Wood Nature Reserve would be "enhanced" by building low density executive housing upon it. They propose that the nature reserve could be made more accessible, attractive and safe by building 374 houses upon it. However, the authors suggest that the new buildings could be environmentally enhanced by having green or brown roofs.

The study also suggests redevelopment of what they call the Muswell Hill Golf Course site. What they are referring to is the old sewerage works on the other side of the Friern Bridge Retail Park. The land adjacent to the North Circular would be occupied by leisure, community and workspace buildings, and behind those would be medium density housing. It is suggested that this part of the proposal could provide 425 dwellings, which would be attractive to elderly people who like playing golf. The "golf course" development would be enhanced by building upon part of the golf course.

Thankfully, the study concludes that as far as Friern Barnet is concerned the proposals are impractical, because developing Metropolitan Open Land "cuts across several key London Plan policies" and "major changes in policy are needed to overcome these policy obstacles".

Councillor Brian Salinger has stated that in his opinion this report is "a waste of taxpayers money" and that it is "a waste of time and should be thrown in a bin". Many of us wholeheartedly agree with him.

HG

# Tesco expansion plans spell difficulties for local shops

You must know our corner grocer's shop – it's at the junction of Colney Hatch Lane and the North Circular Road. Of course, - it's Tesco. It was built in the late 1980s and opened for trading in April 1988. Extension followed in 1994 and, so strong was its trade and profits, that its managers applied for further expansion. But some local nuisances objected so strongly that Barnet Council voted unanimously to reject the Tesco proposals.

Tesco responded by going to a public inquiry but was rattled by the robust strength of public opinion. At the public inquiry last July Tesco and Barnet Council successfully postponed the public . Then in October Tesco submitted another planning application and in November 2006, Barnet Council granted permission for it to expand its store.

There will be single storey extensions at the rear and western end of the store, increasing its gross floor area from about 7,600 sq m to 10,000 sq m – about 31% increase, indeed a massive expansion. What will take place inside? Well Tesco want to sell all kinds of goods including "white goods" such as fridges, washing machines and cookers.

## Other shopping centres

So will this affect other shopping centres in the district? The Government's Policy Planning Statements indicate that Town Centres need to be supported by local councils by keeping their viability and vitality. Yet many feel that Barnet Council – supported by our own ward councillors – impose all manner of financial penalties on shopkeepers in our local shopping centres.

Tesco claims that the shops in North Finchley, Whetstone, Wood Green, Muswell Hill, Southgate and other centres big and small will be unaffected by their proposed expansion. However, their table of Trade Diversion (a term used for taking trade from other shops) shows that Tesco (from mainly food items) expects to take over £1 million a year from Sainsbury's in North Finchley; nearly £300K from Asda in Southgate; over £130K from Sainsbury's in Muswell Hill. It also expects to divert nearly £800K from its own shop in Finchley Central (which makes one wonder about the long term future of that shop). However, from

goods such as electrical, clothes and car accessories it expects to take £600K from the shops in North Finchley; £1.25 million from Wood Green; £600K from Muswell Hill; £300K from Finchley Central; £200K from Palmers Green; and, £300K from Southgate.

If Tesco's consultants predict such massive trade diversions for the large food stores, then what will the real figure be for the smaller shops?

## Restrictions on asking Councillors questions

At Barnet Council's "Planning and Environment" committee Dr Natelson (local environment campaigner) was allowed to give an account of this complex issue for only three minutes. The chairman allowed only three councillors to ask questions (a poor example of "democracy" in action).

None of our councillors asked about the effect on small food shops such as the Co-op, M & S, small grocers, or newsagents, chemists, hardware, health foods, stationery, music, phone, photography and book shops found in every shopping centre across north London. Dr Natelson explained that being blind he cannot access Tesco at all from the pavements. We have to ask why does Barnet Council seem to ignore needs of the elderly and the disabled – Tesco has no disabled access for those coming by public transport. This may be illegal.

The Council should bear in mind the increasing proportion of elderly and disabled people in our community. One quarter of all families in this part of north London do not have access to a car. So once local shops have been forced to close, there is nowhere else that the elderly, the disabled and car-less can go for their shopping or prescriptions.

It seems that Barnet Council ignores the views of local people; ignores the needs of our local shopping centres; favours large-scale developers at the expense of our community. Our Residents Association battles on your behalf to get its voice heard in the council chambers – but it is fighting an uphill battle.

ON

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS OF FRIERN BARNET AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Wed 24 Jan  
Great North Road—Middlesex &  
Hertfordshire  
by Harry Gluck

Wed 28 Feb  
Unknown Whetstone  
by John Heathfield

All meetings take place at St John's Church  
Hall, next to Whetstone Police Station I Friern  
Barnet Lane. Starts 7:45 p.m. ; cost £2  
to non-members.

## incognito theatre

Sun 21st—Sat 27th January 2007

*Charlotte Brontë's*

*Jane Eyre*

Adapted for the stage by Willis  
Hall

Incognito Theatre is located in  
Holly Park Road (behind the  
Health Centre) Friern Barnet  
London N11 3EB

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