



October 2012

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

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| • The Federation of Residents' Association of Barnet | • The Friern Barnet & District Local History Society |
| • The Finchley Society | • Coppetts Wood Conservationists |
| • Friends of Friary Park | • The London Green Belt Council |
| • North Finchley Environmental Forum | • Open Spaces Society |

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Overdevelopment proposal threatens Sweets Way estate in Whetstone

A plan to increase population of Whetstone by about a thousand is being prepared for the Council's consideration—with more to come

Shortly Barnet Council will be presented with a proposal to develop the Sweets Way site in Whetstone. The proposal will be to provide over 400 units of housing on the site, made up of flats, terraced houses and semi-detached houses. Such a development will provide housing for about a thousand people.

The proposed development is being submitted by Annington Homes, a company now owned by a Japanese bank.

Sweets Way is an estate developed by the Ministry of Defence for housing Army personnel. In 1996 Annington Homes obtained over 57,000 homes from the Ministry of Defence. (MoD) and they lease these homes back to the armed services. Where the housing sites are surplus to requirements, Annington Homes are then in a position to have them redeveloped. Obviously, Whetstone is a desirable location for a large scale development.

Sweets Way is a turning off Friern Barnet Lane and is the main road that runs through the Sweets Way Estate. The estate is located near where Friern Barnet Lane and Oakleigh Road North both meet the High Road. The development proposal calls for a new road which will lead into Oakleigh Park North.

The estate was built in a spacious style in keeping with the townscape of Whetstone.. It is mostly made up of blocks of 2-storey terraced houses, with six in each block, but stepped in an interesting zigzag manner. Each house has a single opposing slopped roof.



View of one of the blocks just off Sweets Way. Notice the open space as well as opposing sloped roofs and staggered side entrance front doors

At present the blocks are spread out with plenty of green space between them. There are a number of green fields currently used for rest and relaxation—it is intended to build over these fields. What was once a very pleasant estate has been allowed to deteriorate over the last years.

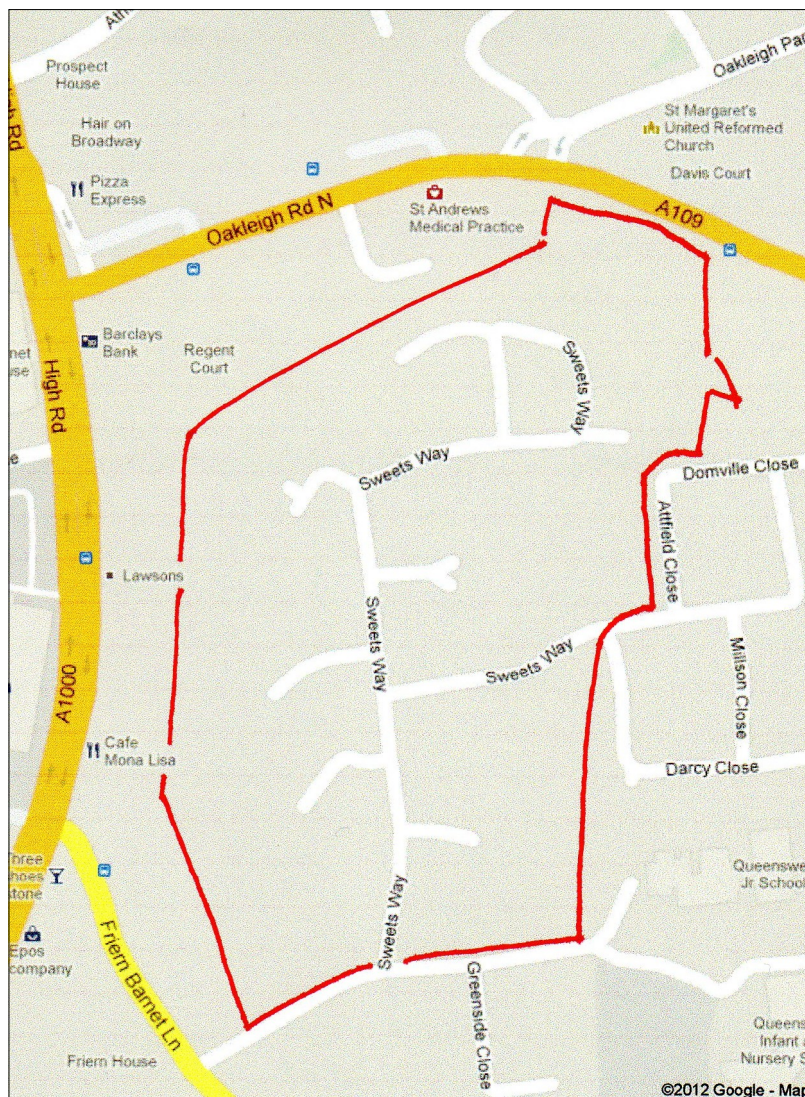
On the north side is the Sure Start Children's Centre. It is not clear what is going to happen to the Centre.

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overdevelopment proposal threatens Sweets Way estate in Whetstone ...

Also on the north side are two large public car parks, a large open field, equipped children's play area and a children's football pitch with small goalposts.

houses, mews houses as well as 1 and 2 bedroom apartments. The plans show some open spaces and an intention to keep the existing trees. It is not clear if they intend to keep **all** the existing trees.



Red line outlines the approximate extent of the proposed development

Also on the north side of the site are a number of two storey linear terraces with 4 houses per block. It is these houses on Oakleigh Road North where the developers want to build 3½ storey blocks of flats.

Sweets Way site was initially developed as a market garden nursery growing fruit including grapes, vegetables and flowers. This usage lasted into the 1920s and possibly later. By the time of WWII the site had been taken over by the Army. A barrage balloon and anti-aircraft guns were sited there, as was an Army mail sorting office. In the 1980s the site was developed as housing for Army families. In the early 2000s the Army started to move out and the Notting Hill Trust began to use it for short term tenancies.

The Outline Proposal

Ammington Homes proposal is for about 400 units of accommodation. It is for a mixture of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom

The main open space will be a new square constructed in the middle of the current Sweets Way. The plans show an intention to have a new road leading onto Oakleigh Road North.

Not all of the existing site will be redeveloped, some housing on the east side of the site will remain untouched for the time being. It is likely that this part of the site will be redeveloped some time in the future.

It is intended to locate two blocks of flats on the north side of the development. One would be the aforementioned 3½ storey block in Oakleigh Road North, the other a 5½ storey block behind Whetstone Close. Current plans indicate that these will have 6 levels of accommodation. The developers say that by having accommodation in the roof area the buildings are only 5½ storeys high. They say that this is a reasonable height for these buildings as Barrydene, on the north side of Oakleigh Road North, is a 6 storey building. But Barrydene is a spacious development with a lot of green space to the front, sides and back. The height of the proposed buildings on Oakleigh Road North is of immediate concern to existing residents who have the reasonable fear of losing their privacy.

The developers say that this will be a "sustainable development", which means that they intend to install solar panels on many of the roofs, which will lead to a 25% carbon dioxide reduction.

The proposal suggests 4 "formal public open spaces" that vary from 290 square metres (29 metres by 10 metres) to 990 square metres (49 metres by 20 metres). The total public open space comes to 2495 square metres (just under 50 metres by 50 metres).

There is no intention of building a new school to accommodate the children who will eventually come with such a development. Also, there does not seem to be any plan to expand the existing Queenswell Junior and Infant & Nursery Schools. The children who come to live on the new estate will go to the existing schools.

At the public exhibition representatives of the architects said that the head teachers of the school looked forward to the development. At the moment the school has children who come from miles around. This intake of children will diminish, and possibly stop, if the school in years to come is filled with local children as well as children from the

redeveloped estate. We know that children living far away have to go to the Sweets Way school because they cannot get into their local schools. This pushes the problem of finding school places elsewhere for Barnet council.

There was no interest as to what would happen to existing tenants. They were on short term leases and would have to move on when the existing houses were knocked down.

Barnet doesn't have a town plan for Whetstone. All it has is a general plan for the borough as a whole. Bit by bit, low rise low density Whetstone is being replaced by high rise high density. The open spacious suburban Whetstone is being taken over by intensive inner city style developments.

The developer's representatives stated that the road 'Sweets Way' would be unadopted (an unadopted road is one not maintained by the Council), as this is what the council wants. We know from other roads in Friern Barnet that an unadopted road is a road with unsolvable problems. When the drains block and sewage flows down the road, it is impossible to get the parties involved to respond.

The display boards produced by Ammington Homes for the public exhibition held on 12th and 13th September can be seen at the web site www.sweetswaypark.com and by navigating to "Latest Downloads" and then "Exhibition Boards".

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Uninvited squatters occupy Friern Barnet Library

On 5th September 2012 a group of squatters moved into the Friern Barnet library in Friern Barnet Road. The squatters move came as a complete surprise to the Save Friern Barnet Library Group, who have been working for the last 18 months to have a viable library in and for Friern Barnet.

The Council has got itself all knotted up with the libraries in Friern Barnet and North Finchley. They said initially that they had to sell off Friern Barnet and North Finchley libraries in order to upgrade other libraries in Barnet and to provide a "landmark" library in the Tally Ho Arts Centre.

It was obvious from early on that Barnet did not have enough money for a "landmark" library, unless it was willing to use a million or two from its reserves to pay for it. An attempt was made to obtain funds from the Arts Council, but they too are strapped for cash. Why should the Arts Council help fund a "landmark" library for Barnet, when Barnet has two landmark libraries, while there are places in the country that do not have even one.

The temporary library at the Tally Ho Arts Depot is open only 3 hours a day for 4 days week. It is an expensive embarrassment and one from which Barnet council needs to extricate itself.

When Barnet council's plan was announced members of the Association were concerned that they would see a replay of the Totteridge library sell-off. Some years ago the Totteridge library was sold off with the promise that a new more suitable library in the area would be provided. The building was sold, the money was spent elsewhere and Totteridge goes without a library.

At a Council meeting in September 2011, when the Totteridge debacle was pointed out to Councillor Rams, who is in charge of libraries in Barnet, he famously said, *"That happened on somebody else's watch, it won't happen on mine."*

Barnet Council is taking court action for the eviction of the squatters. The court hearing of 10th October was adjourned for a full court hearing between December 17 – 21.

Friary Park News

* The Council have now erected a green metal fence around the whole playground so this now incorporates the children's picnic area and the section intended for disabled children. Since the last edition the trampoline has been repaired.

* The Friends made a bid for some trees which were offered by the Woodland Trust nationally to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee year. About sixty saplings will be delivered in the early part of November and the Wren Academy have agreed to provide some students to assist with the planting. Most of the trees will be located in the area between Torrington Park and the brook.

* The circular bed on the main drive where the Friends' tree is planted. They have agreed to look after the bed which needs some attention. The Friends' intend to plant it with some new shrubs around the outside, and have applied to one of our large stores for a donation.

* There is an ongoing problem with daytime parking outside the Park, particularly in Friary Road. This is mainly due to motorists parking outside the CPZ, the boundary of which ends in the dip at the bottom of Friary Road. It seems that some cars belong to commuters working in North Finchley, but also to a local garage which

tends to park customers' cars there too. The Friends have written to the Council but they are unable to offer a solution. This is detrimental to the community groups who use Friary House, and to those parents with children who need to park nearby.

* The Friends keep an eye on maintenance of the Park and notify the Council where standards appear to be falling. The Park seems to have suffered recently due to cut-backs and the withdrawal of the permanent park keeper. Areas such as the 'quiet garden' off the main drive need some attention to the flowerbeds. There are tall weeds overgrowing the brook and they need to be cut back. RT

Officers of Friern Barnet & Whetstone Residents' Association

Chairman:	Harry Gluck
Deputy Chairman:	Len Bull
Treasurer:	Bruce Standing
Secretary:	Michael Harold
Environment:	Ollie Natelson
Membership Secretary & Web:	Lol Patel
Parks:	Richard Testar

Friern Barnet Summer Show 2012

The 2012 Friern Barnet Summer Show will be remembered for many things, but probably, mainly, because it was the last show the Rev. Adrian Benjamin organised before he left the area for his well-earned retirement in Lincolnshire.

The other thing that the Summer Show will have us all talking about will be the weather. If you remember, March 2012 was unusually hot, April and the first part of May were the wettest on record. Then came unsettled June and July, before we were hit on the Summer Show weekend when temperatures reached 32°.

The visiting numbers were definitely down. Maybe it was the heat that kept people away or maybe it was the time to have a quick get-away holiday in between the Olympics and Paralympics before going back to work or school, but there didn't seem to be as many visitors as in previous years.

East Barnet Festival due to start on 6th July, had been cancelled on health and safety grounds this year, because the torrential rain made the use of electrics highly dangerous. A contingent set up some stalls in Friary Park and they were welcomed into our Show.

There were the regular contributors of charity and local organisations who pitched up their gazebos. Whether they were sheltered under the sweltering heat, it's difficult to say. The horticultural, arts and craft marquees were fairly well stocked, although not quite as much as in the past.

The entertainment was, as ever delightful. We had the

Amazing Dress Circle. An imaginative act with a crinoline draped lady eight-feet up and on 'wheels' which when she opened her 'skirt' revealed two actresses who did a quite mind-boggling gymnastic and acrobatic routine. She was there on the Saturday but then as if by magic, they became

Pirates on Sunday and walked around the park in a boat, some eight feet up, whilst they were perched on two pairs of stilts!

There was a very short, sharp electric storm on Sunday afternoon, but this didn't reduce the heat, although the now wet contents on the stalls dried out fairly quickly!

The show finished late on Sunday evening with music by Dadzone, and the ever spectacular fireworks display. This year, there was a special 'goodbye' message lighting up the night's sky to Adrian and some lovely heart-felt words thanking him, spoken by Councillor Kate Salinger.

It is hoped that there will still be a Summer Show in 2013. Your committee will have its ear to the ground to try and keep abreast of the situation. In the meantime, we can but offer our

own thanks to Adrian, for all the wonderful Shows he's organised and presented over the years. The Friern Barnet and Whetstone Residents' Association and all its members wish him and his family well, and hope he enjoys a happy long and healthy retirement.

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Forthcoming Events

Friern Barnet and District Local History Society: "London Transport 1900-1990" by David Clark Wed 28 Nov
All meetings take place at St John's Church Hall, next to Whetstone Police Station, Friern Barnet Lane. Starts 7:45 p.m.; cost £2 to non-members.

Barnet Walks "The Battle of Barnet": Explore the famous battlefield of 1471 Sunday November 4th 11am. Meet at junction of Great North Rd and Hadley Green Rd. £7:00, accompanied under 12s £3:00.

Incognito Theatre "A Dolls House" by Henrik Ibsen Sunday 25th Nov to Sat 1st Dec (3 pm matinee on Saturday)
all evening performances start at 8:00 except Sunday performances which start at 6 pm
Ticket Prices : £9 non-members, £8 members, £5 students.

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