

Frequently Asked Questions

Why does MHPS object to all planning applications?

It may seem like that, but we don't. In fact we don't comment on all applications, nor do we object to every major scheme. Those that are small or non-contentious may be best dealt with by neighbours or a local Residents Group. We will help if a member asks for the views of the Committee. We do make constructive suggestions where we can, either to Barnet Council's planners or to the applicants and their professional advisers. Some owners ask MHPS to comment prior to their application being made.

Who makes the decisions at MHPS?

Decisions are made in committee. The Committee is elected annually at the AGM, where there is normally an attendance of about a hundred members. Our decisions are taken democratically. We are bound by our objectives, set out as rules agreed by the Charities Commission. These rules are printed in the annual report.

Who advises MHPS?

The Committee includes various members from the construction industry and others with interests in trees, flora, fauna, and environmental issues, some Honorary officers and a Secretary who manages Membership and day to day matters. We are constantly seeking new members with key skills, especially those who are willing to help on the Committee. When necessary MHPS pay for the services of professional advisers.

Does this mean my subs will be swallowed up in paying for planning consultants and expensive barristers of the sort hired by major developers?

In principle, the subscriptions run the Society, and the donations go towards the Mill Hill Defence Fund (a reserve, started in 1949), that is needed to deal with large scale planning issues. Where there are going to be heavy legal expenses we will mount special appeals. Funds are needed to keep the Society going - with newsletters, our annual report, to plant trees, maintain village signs, help towards the upkeep of local ponds, membership of the Civic Trust and bodies like the Open Spaces Society.

Why do you object to houses being built on land that is not being used?

We object when the land is in the Green Belt, where nearly all building is forbidden by Government planning policy so that the green spaces remain open for everyone to experience. When we object, there has to be a good reason - explained logically, clearly, reasonably - otherwise the argument will not be accepted by the authorities.

... but surely a little bit of building on the Green Belt doesn't really matter ...

Not so. Think of it like this - for every new building on Mill Hill's green belt land, two other people will think they can nibble away a bit more, and before you know it that little bit of green is gone. Our open spaces were once described as 'the lungs of London' - we do not want them eaten away by the cancerous growth of buildings. The green belt still has a strategic importance for London - so that they can be enjoyed.

What about "brownfield" sites, knocking down big semis and building flats?

Mill Hill is a green, leafy suburb, where gardens play an important part. There is, however, a demand for new housing, which uses land more economically. It's a dilemma. The committee assesses each proposal on its merits. MHPS are against proposals which cram in more dwellings than seems right, which erode the character of Mill Hill, and which cannot be sustained by current services, utilities and amenities. We are in favour of the best use of "brownfield" sites, like the Favell Building at Mill Hill School. We argue for, and encourage, good design - we think Mill Hill is worth it.

All right then - what's in it for me?

You will be making a contribution to Mill Hill. You will find it enjoyable and you will meet like minded friends. There will be footpath walks, the AGM, Meetings, getting to know your local Councillors and MP, some Newsletters, quiz nights and more. Try it ...