

MHPS news... Autumn 2023

Mill Hill Preservation Society

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More Development Chaos for The Ridgeway

The London Borough of Barnet (LBB) planning portal records that the application for the IBSA House site (19/6551/FUL submitted 6th December 2019) was granted planning permission on 12th September 2023. The Council had originally approved the scheme at their strategic planning committee meeting in April 2021. It has taken since then to sort out the details of the approval.

Ever since the demise of the various substantial establishments on The Ridgeway, we have experienced the construction of numerous housing developments, of varying quality, and it looks like there are more to come. Most have caused traffic chaos. The Society were very pleased when North London Studios took over the IBSA House property, and many of us attended their open night to view the premises and the new film sets. It seems all that might be about to change, as the granting of this planning approval means that work on the residential development should start within three years. Since the application was submitted in 2019 we have had the COVID pandemic, inflation has been running riot with building costs increasing and house prices falling. I guess we could be excused for hoping the scheme is no longer viable and that the film studio operation can remain on site.

To refresh your memory, this scheme is for 197 homes – with 61 flats in the converted IBSA building and a further 136 flats in a variety of blocks that vary in height up to six storeys. The level of affordable homes is hard to tease out from the approved information but the Mayor in his stage one review suggested that it was only 5% and insufficient to meet the London Plan. Having contacted the LBB planning department we have established that the level of affordable housing is set at 20%. Car parking was proposed at one per unit, with suggestions from the Mayor that less than this would be acceptable. We know that at the NIMR site this approach has led to considerable overspill off-site parking with much inconvenience to existing residents. This site has a low accessibility ratio (PTAL 1b - 2) and the hill outside the site is very steep and not conducive to cycling. However, bikes are well catered for as there will be 344 cycle parking spaces.

Barnet Council received nearly 100 objections to the proposals from members of the public, and the Society objected in the strongest terms. There were warnings of overstretched infrastructure, including public transport, traffic management, medical facilities, retail outlets and utilities. The impact on the Green Belt, wildlife, and the adjacent Conservation Area, and other issues such as loss of employment opportunities were all raised. No doubt all the construction traffic will travel through the Conservation Area and cause fumes and vibrations that will affect the plethora of listed buildings. All these objections were ignored, but history has shown that the public in NW7 are well informed and are generally right. It seems that planning consultation has become a tick-box exercise, where if you do it, you can tick the 'consultation' box – but it seems obvious that the Council does not have to listen. We contacted the studio manager of North London Studios who, at the time, had not heard of the outcome of the planning application. He was quite shocked to hear the news and said to us, "*We have no intention of ending the studio to my knowledge at least – and we have long term commitments with tenants including Netflix – I am also glad you like it as a film studio, as it has created a real opportunity for younger people to get employment as well as local mums who now run the reception area.*" Let us just hope that the developer, Ziser, has obtained the planning permission to bolster up their land bank values, rather than actually implement the scheme. MHPS

AUTUMN FOOTPATH WALK

Sunday 8th October.

Meet at 2.00pm at the Ridgeway end of Wills Grove. The walk will take in the footpath changes proposed by Mill Hill School.

SUPPER QUIZ

Saturday 11th November at St. Paul's Church Hall, The Ridgeway. 7.15pm for a prompt start at 7.30pm. Tickets £15.00 paid in advance - strictly tables of eight. There will be a hot supper, raffle and bar - please don't bring your own drinks. Our Quizmaster will be Andrew Dismore.

WINTER MEETING

This meeting will be held on Thursday 23rd November at 7.15pm for a 7.30pm start. Our speaker will be Grant Thornhill, Arboricultural Officer for Barnet's Greenspaces Team. This will be followed by light refreshments and our Q&A session with our elected representatives.

CHRISTMAS IS COMING

MHPS has a 2023 Christmas card!



The Millfield in Winter from a painting by Peter Hume. £6.00 for packs of 10 cards with envelopes. We can deliver - call Wendy on 07740 282 515

Image of gas lamp courtesy of Wikimedia-geograph.org.uk 2786189.jpg