



A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Grange plans to be fast-tracked

By Janet Maitland

A Barnet Homes application to build two blocks of flats on the Grange estate in East Finchley will be fast-tracked by Barnet Council, with a decision expected in the autumn. The flats are all that remain of a plan unveiled in 2020 to build up to 100 new homes on the estate and nearby streets, to tackle a shortage of council housing.

We reported last month that, following the recent change of administration at the council, the controversial proposals to demolish three existing houses and build some of the new homes on green spaces on Brownswell Road and Tarling Road were immediately scrapped.

More flats, less parking

Under the revised plans, officially submitted at the end of June, there will be two new blocks, one by the High Road and the other close to Central Avenue, each with just eight flats of varying sizes. They will be built on some of the estate's parking spaces, reducing the number of these spaces from 64 to 33. Cycle spaces will increase from zero to 44.

Residents from nearby streets fear the consequences. "We already suffer from heavy congestion, frequent road rage incidents, dangerous parking on pavements and the lack of an updated local traffic management plan," said a representative from Elmfield Road Residents Association. "We raised these concerns with Barnet Homes in October 2021 and again three months ago."

In a document outlining the amended plans Barnet Homes tells residents: "Based on feedback and concerns around parking on the estate,

the Willow Walk is proposed to be re-landscaped. This will provide rationalised, safer parking, along with landscaping improvements and more biodiverse planting."

up their larger flats for families to move into.

Barnet Homes confirmed that any tenants choosing to move into the new flats would have to pay the higher London



Tenancy and rent concerns

Another uncertainty facing existing estate residents is what would happen to their tenancies if they chose to downsize into one of the seven one-bedded flats in the new block close to Central Avenue, in order to free

Affordable Rent, not the social housing rent they currently pay. Whether or not their secure tenancies could be retained would "depend on individual circumstances and the date their tenancy began".

"If there are any who want



New blocks: Top and above, how the two extra sets of Grange flats are expected to look



Prime Minister's questions: Harriet Connides buttonholes Boris Johnson as he comes out of a Greggs store. Photo Vicky Connides.

The day I met the PM

By Harriet Connides

I'm an East Finchley-ite, but recently ventured to wild West London to have lunch with my sister Vicky. As we left the café she hissed: "Oh my God, there's Boris Johnson going into Greggs!"

"Right," I thought, wheeling myself into the doorway to try to block his exit so he would have to speak to me. To make doubly sure he didn't try to get past, I stuck my hand out and said: "Hello. I'm Harriet, I have Multiple Sclerosis, an incurable, degenerative condition, as well as arthritis and have had a brain hemorrhage. Please can you explain to me why I have to be medically assessed every three years to claim disability benefits?"

Reply to my question came there none, except that next winter I would get an extra £150 towards fuel bills and that I should come to see him in his surgery.

Well, of course, I can't do that, I'm not a constituent, so I was told to contact my MP; which I have done (again). I've had a ministerial answer via Mike Freer's office but, without going into details, I'm afraid it raises more questions than it answers.

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to downsize, we will work with them to find the best solution," said a Barnet Homes spokesperson. "We are not transferring or forcing any residents to move from their current homes."

To view and comment on the proposals, go to <https://publicaccess.barnet.gov.uk/online-applications> and enter 22/3544/FUL (High Road) or 22/3539/FUL (Central Avenue).

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