

Guidance

How to comment on planning applications

2014

Introduction

Barnet Council is committed to consulting with neighbours and other parties who could be directly affected by planning applications.

We want to hear your views so that we can take them into account when considering planning applications. This guide explains how to find out more about a planning application, how to make your views known, what matters the council can take into account and what happens to your comments.

How to view a planning application

- Online: www.barnet.gov.uk/planning-applications

You can search for new applications via the above link. Please allow one week from the date of a consultation letter, site notice or press notice for the associated documents to appear online. To view documents, click on Related Documents then View associated documents.

- Planning Reception, 2nd Floor, Barnet House, 1255 High Road, Whetstone, London N20 0EJ (tel: 020 8359 3000)

Opening Times: 9.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00pm to 5.00pm on Monday to Friday, except Bank Holidays and Christmas / New Year period. No appointments are required.

A duty planning officer will be available to help you from 9.00am to 1.00pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays to give general advice. The officer will explain plans and provide general guidance on planning issues. However, to ensure the application is dealt with fairly, the officer has to remain impartial.

If you are registered disabled and cannot attend the office, please contact the planning officer handling the application who will be pleased to explain the plans to you at your home.

What matters can be taken into account

Planning applications can only be decided on those matters relevant to planning (material considerations). The most common of these include:

1. Effect on traffic, access and parking
2. Scale, appearance and impact on surrounding area and adjoining neighbours
3. Loss of light
4. Overlooking and loss of privacy
5. Effect on nature conservation and loss of trees
6. Effect on a Conservation Area
7. Effect on a Listed Building
8. Noise and disturbance resulting from a use
9. Whether the use would be appropriate for the area

The council also refers to several strategic planning policies including the London Plan and the Barnet Local Plan 2012.

What matters cannot be taken into account

Often people wish to comment on matters that cannot be taken into account because they are not controlled by planning legislation. Common objections include:

1. Loss of property value
2. Loss of a view
3. Private issues between neighbours such as land covenants, land and boundary disputes, damage to property

4. Problems associated with construction work such as noise, dust and disturbance by construction vehicles (if you are experiencing these problems the Environmental Health team may be able to help)
5. Competition between firms
6. Structural and fire precaution matters (controlled by building control legislation)

How to put your views forward

We want to hear from you whether you are supporting or opposing a development. To make sure your views are not misinterpreted we can only accept comments in writing and preferably online (www.barnet.gov.uk/planning-applications). Before writing to us you are strongly advised to view the application details online or at Planning Reception.

You may wish to write to your Local Councillor, MP or London Assembly Member, whose name and address can be provided by the planning officer handling the application. If a number of people share your views you may wish to organise a petition or a joint letter or email.

What happens to your comments?

Comments will be acknowledged when an email address or a stamped self-addressed envelope is supplied. All those making written comments will be informed of the decision within ten days of it being made.

Any written comment you make about an application will be placed on the public file. This means that:

- Your comment, name and address will form part of the application documents and will be available for inspection
- Anonymous comments will not be considered
- Letters marked in confidence will be considered and will not be routinely

disclosed. We will undertake necessary redactions, including the name of the occupant, before considering disclosure. We will, however, leave postal addresses on the letters.

- Your comment, name and address will be stored electronically and may be published online. Any signature, email address and telephone number will be removed before publication. It may be possible for your name and address to be browsed through internet browsers and search functions such as Google, Yahoo and Ask Jeeves.

We advise that you refrain from including details of a personal nature in your correspondence.

Planning managers have powers to decide some applications and they will take your written comments into account. When an application has to be considered by a Committee, planning officers will write a report which includes a recommendation and a summary of comments received. The report will be presented to the appropriate Committee, which is made up of elected ward Councillors.

In some circumstances you may also be given the opportunity to speak at the committee meeting. For more information on speaking at these meetings please contact the planning officer handling the application as soon as possible. The Committee will consider your comments along with the other planning issues relating to the case. The Committee are not bound by the planning officer's recommendation. It may grant or refuse planning permission.

Please note:

in relation to applications for extensions or alterations to a house, flat or other dwelling, in the event of an appeal by the applicant to the Planning Inspectorate, there will be no opportunity for further comments to be made. However, any written comments submitted at the application stage will be forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate for the inspector's consideration.

For more information:

**tel: 020 8359 3000 email: planning.enquiry@barnet.gov.uk
or visit www.barnet.gov.uk/planning-applications**