

FINCHLEY CHURCH END TOWN CENTRE PLANNING STRATEGY

Issues and Opportunities Consultation

The London Borough of Barnet is preparing a Strategy for Finchley Church End Town Centre. The document is being prepared in the context of the Council's wider suburban town centres strategy, which aims to ensure that all town centres in Barnet are vibrant and viable. The Finchley Church End Town Centre Strategy will seek to build on the area's existing assets and strengths and identify opportunities to ensure it is a thriving, vibrant and sustainable town centre. The Strategy will identify ways in which the town centre can be improved and help guide decisions about new development.

A number of opportunities and issues have been identified and these are being tested through this consultation to ensure that all the relevant points have been recognised. Comments will be fed into the draft Strategy for the town centre which will be consulted on later this year.



The emerging vision is:

To build on Finchley Church End's existing assets and strengths and develop as a thriving, vibrant and sustainable district centre with good links to the London underground network, which caters for the local and wider population of the Borough. The existing range of independent and niche retailers, convenience retail outlets, and local employment provision will be supported and enhanced. The centre will be easy to access and move around. The historic fabric will be protected, and the quality of the town centre environment improved for all. Through the formation of a public-private sector partnership it will be ensured that change is coordinated and benefits are maximised.



FINCHLEY CHURCH END TODAY

Finchley Church End is a vibrant town centre with a wide variety of small independent shops, restaurants and cafés, offices and some national high street retailers. It is the fourth most visited centre in the Borough. The surrounding area is ethnically diverse, benefits from low unemployment rates and has a low level of deprivation.

Finchley Church End has a strong office market and there could be potential to strengthen this sector of the local economy.

Finchley Church End has good connections via Finchley Central Northern Line station to the West End and City of London and to national rail stations. There is also a good network of buses and excellent road connections. However, traffic congestion is a problem on Ballards Lane and the environment around the tube station is poor for pedestrians. Some of the main junctions prioritise vehicles over pedestrians making crossing difficult. The bridge over the railway divides the centre and is particularly unwelcoming for pedestrians because the pavement is so narrow.

Character areas

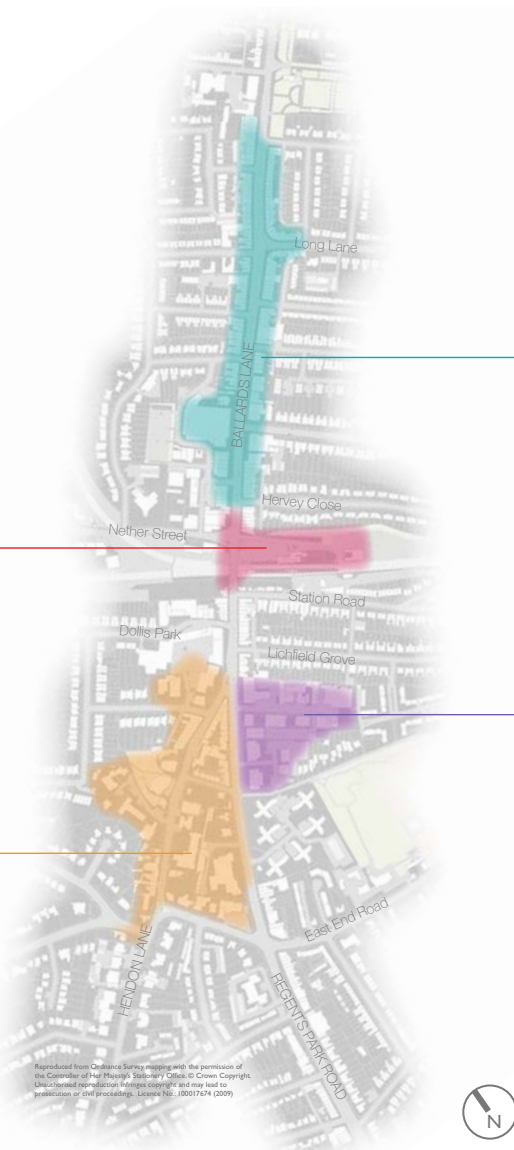
Finchley Church End can be divided into four character areas as shown on the adjacent plan. However, some mixing of character areas occurs and the boundaries are not always distinct.

TRANSPORT HUB
The area around Finchley Central Northern Line station is not pedestrian friendly. The approach to the station has narrow pavements and is unattractive. Connections between local buses and the station are difficult. The railway bridge separates the station from shops to the south and creates a very poor pedestrian environment.

HISTORIC VILLAGE CORE
Much of this area is within the Finchley Church End Conservation Area and includes the original Church End village centre and historic core of the town centre. Landmarks include St Mary's Church, Pardes House Grammar School, Church End library and King Edward Hall.

CORE RETAIL AREA
This is the main shopping area with long terraces of shops along Ballards Lane and a large Tesco supermarket. The southern end of the area is dominated by the busy junction of Nether Street and Ballards Lane and the nine storey Central House office block.

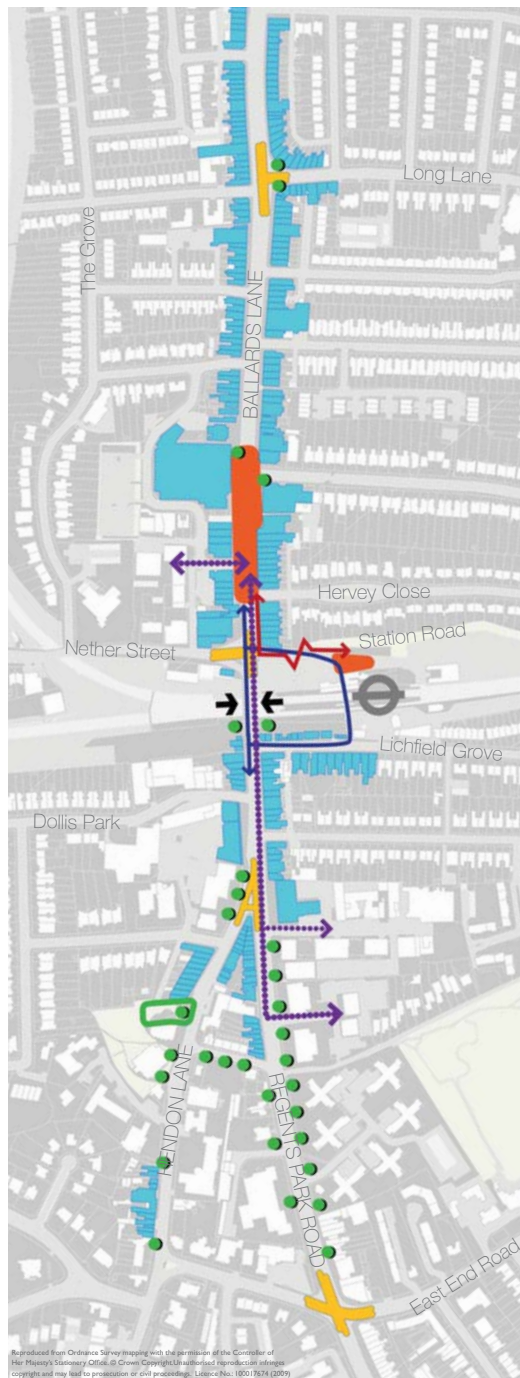
BUSINESS AREA
This area is dominated by offices, which are vital to the continuing success of Finchley Church End. However, these could be better connected to the main shopping area.



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CENTRE WIDE OPPORTUNITIES










A number of opportunities to enhance the town centre are illustrated on the plan below and summarised in the adjacent text.



Opportunities across the town centre

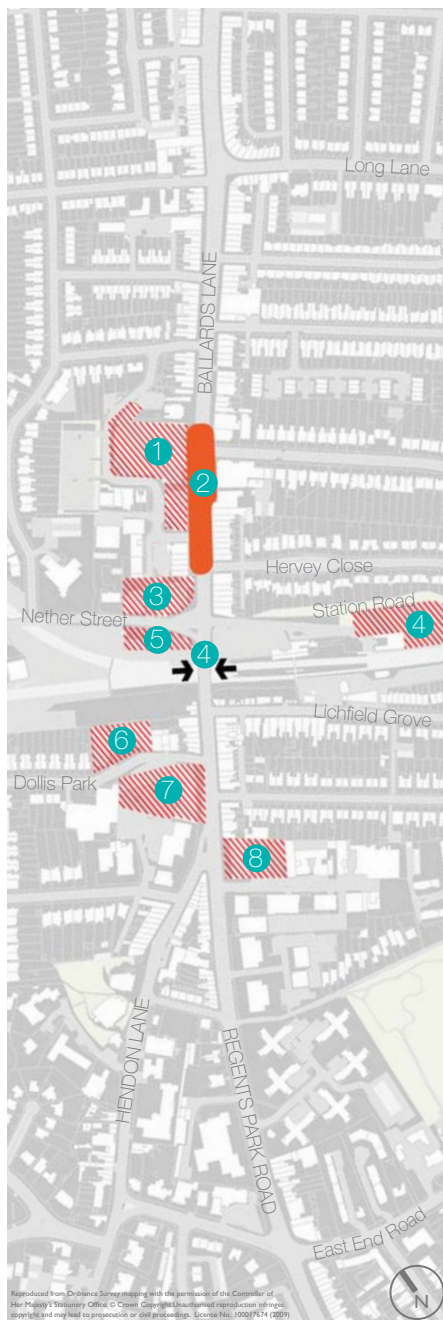
- **Enhance the character of the town centre** by protecting historic buildings and improving shopfronts, reducing street clutter and creating new public spaces.
- **Ensure the centre is easy to access and maximise the potential of the existing transport hub** by improving pedestrian links around the station, particularly across the bridge and between bus stops and the station.
- **Develop Church End's role as an employment centre** by exploring the potential for refurbishment of existing offices and redevelopment of employment sites to create more modern office accommodation.
- **Strengthen the existing range of independent shops** by protecting and enhancing independent, niche shops and restaurants, improving the street environment and the accessibility of the centre and encouraging fuller use of the town centre by office workers and local residents.
- **Green the street environment** by introducing better landscaping, more tree planting and creating new and enhanced public spaces.

Key to plan:

-  Enhance existing open space
-  Priority area to improve the street environment
-  Protect high quality shop fronts and encourage good design in new shop fronts
-  Improve pedestrian accessibility and enhance the street environment at key junctions
-  Enhance accessibility between employment areas and town centre facilities
-  Improve pedestrian links across railway
-  Improvements to pedestrian access across bridge
-  Landmark tree or group of trees to be enhanced and used to guide further tree planting
-  Enhance linkages between the tube station and bus services

OPPORTUNITY SITES

The map below illustrates the main opportunity sites identified to date for Finchley Church End. These sites are areas of under-used land or poor quality buildings which have the potential to be redeveloped or refurbished to make a positive contribution to the future vitality of the centre. Any developments would need to ensure that existing parking is reprovided and that opportunities for additional parking provision are explored.



-  Major opportunity site
-  Improvements to pedestrian access across bridge



1. **TESCO BUILDINGS AND SURROUNDINGS** - potential exists to enhance or redevelop the existing building(s) to provide an improved foodstore and better links between Ballard's Lane and the car park.



2. **BALLARDS LANE STREET ENVIRONMENT** - potential exists to provide a new public space on Ballard's Lane to act as a focal point for the town centre and to generally improve the pedestrian environment.



3. **CENTRAL HOUSE AND 401 - 405 NETHER STREET** - these buildings are outdated and represent a significant development opportunity in a prominent town centre location. It is important that these sites are considered together in order to maximise this opportunity.



4. **STATION AND LAND TO EAST** - the environment around the station should be improved and made easier to walk around. Development could occur on the car park but only subject to all parking spaces being completely reprovided. Additionally, enhancements could be made to the pedestrian bridge over the railway as part of any wider station redevelopment, subject to discussion with Transport for London. Improving pedestrian accessibility across the railway would be positive for the town centre and encourage more people to walk from the offices in the south to the 'core retail area'.



5. **290 - 298 NETHER STREET** - potential exists to redevelop the buildings to the south west of the junction of Nether Street and Ballard's Lane.



6. **ROYAL MAIL SORTING OFFICE** - Should this site come forward for development the potential exists to redevelop the sorting office for a mixture of uses including employment and residential.



7. **WINSTON HOUSE** - potential exists to refurbish Winston House to provide a mix of uses which could include improved offices, residential units and community and hotel uses.



8. **GATEWAY HOUSE** - potential exists to refurbish Gateway House to provide a mix of uses which may include improved offices, residential units and community and hotel uses.

NEXT STEPS

Our work to date has shown that Finchley Church End is a strong district centre, particularly in terms of its role in meeting local food shopping needs, good transport links and its attractive historic shopfronts and buildings.

However, there are a number of opportunities within the town centre to improve Finchley Church End further, in particular through improving the environment around Finchley Central station, making improvements to the

street environment and strengthening the existing range of independent retail provision.

We are preparing the Finchley Church End Town Centre Strategy in two phases. The identification of issues and opportunities and this consultation is the first phase. The second phase will build on the findings of this consultation and a draft strategy will be drawn up for further consultation later this year.



Get involved

We would like to hear your views on the future of Finchley Church End and the main issues and opportunities we have identified in the work undertaken so far. The full Issues and Opportunities Report is available to view at www.barnet.gov.uk/planning-consultations.

Responses to the consultation can be provided by filling in the questionnaire, emailing responses to towncentreplanning@barnet.gov.uk or by sending responses through the post.

Responses sent through the post should go to:

Finchley Church End – Issues and Opportunities Consultation
Major Development Team
London Borough of Barnet
Building 2
North London Business Park
Oakleigh Road South
N11 1NP

The closing date for responses is Monday 8th March 2010.