

Objections to proposals in the second stage of the Barnet Local Plan insofar as it relates to development in Finchley Central

We were unable to navigate Part B of the form for responding to the Barnet Draft Local Plan as it is almost impossible for a lay person to understand so we are responding as individuals who are resident in the area

We are of the opinion that the proposals for Finchley Central are totally unsuitable for the area.

This submission is on behalf of Tamara and Michael Rabin [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Our reasons

1. The proposal to build 556 residential units including four 20 storey buildings is not suited to a small area as proposed where all the surrounding development is low rise. Finchley Central has a character that will be completely lost by such a large and insensitive development.
2. Barnet policy only permits the construction of buildings over 15 storeys high when there are exceptional circumstances (Policy CDHO4). There is no evidence of any such circumstances here and such blocks would be completely out of keeping in the area. Looking at the Local Plan it appears that the plan for homes in Finchley Central far exceeds the number of homes planned in other Finchley and Golders Green sites.
3. The proposed buildings are totally inappropriate for this area and, rather than create a cleaner environment with open spaces, will create overcrowding, pressure on services and pollution.
4. The construction of four 20 storey blocks will not only be out of keeping but will overlook some properties and overshadow some restricting access to light and air.
5. There is a safety concern by putting so many people in a restricted space as demonstrated by Grenfell Tower. Escape in the case of a fire could be difficult, especially in the case of elderly or disabled residents making a quick escape very difficult if not impossible
6. Whilst we accept there is a need to improve the area of Finchley Central and provide more homes, the addition of 556 homes with four 20 storey blocks is totally inappropriate and has been proposed without any thought of the impact on the area
7. The proposal does not include any realistic parking provision and includes only a "micro park" to provide open space for 556 families. It is important that outside space and greenery are maintained for the benefit of the population and to assist in climate control
8. The proposal will result in complete paralysis of traffic in the area. The blocks are proposed in a location where their construction will affect Regents Park Road, Ballards Lane, Station Road and Nether Street. This will require re-routing of traffic through already crowded streets. This will adversely affect both businesses and residents in the area for a very long time as well as causing considerable pollution. A development of the size that is proposed will take a very long time to complete causing total disruption to the area for an extended period of time and irreparable damage to local businesses

9. It is already very difficult to find a GP, dentist or a school with places in the area. The addition of 556 families will place an unbearable burden on the existing services as well as local hospitals. The population is already struggling to access these services
10. The Northern Line is already very crowded, even now when passengers are limited due to the pandemic. There are very large developments in Mill Hill already putting a strain on the services. Most of the new properties using Mill Hill East where the trains come very infrequently would place increased pressure on the Northern Line at Finchley Central Station. There is a lot of development near Colindale station. The increased passenger load would put extreme pressure on the Northern Line which is already struggling. There are limited bus services in Finchley Central with only one bus going into the centre of London.
11. The lack of parking ignores the reality of the needs of the population. Whilst we all know that it is the aim of Barnet (and other local authorities) to reduce the use of cars and require people to cycle or walk where possible. It is not always possible as people have to care for elderly relatives, undertake family shopping, or take children to different schools. There are many situations in which use of a car is necessary and this plan has no regard for this.
12. It is documented that the population of Barnet has a higher proportion of elderly residents than all other London boroughs. The lack of parking will impact on these residents and their families unable to assist them

For the reasons stated above, we consider that if this development goes ahead it will be a disaster for the residents of Finchley and will create a stain on the good name of L B Barnet. We are not "Nimbys" - our backyard is already overcrowded and the services of medical, transport and health are already overstretched. We urge you to reconsider and reject this misconceived proposal."

Tamara and Michael Rabin