

Montreaux Cricklewood Developments Ltd - Cricklewood Town Team Response

1. This objection is entered by the Cricklewood Town Team (“CTT”) in response to Outline Planning Application reference 20/3564/OUT made by Montreaux Cricklewood Developments Ltd on the 03 August 2020 to redevelop the Broadway Retail Park currently occupied by B&Q and others (“the proposed development”).

Background to CTT

2. CTT works to improve the environment and build a stronger community, alongside residents’ associations, community creatives, faith groups, local businesses, statutory partners including the police and Barnet, Brent and Camden councils as well as the voluntary sector. Straddling the junction of three boroughs and three wards CTT works in response to feedback from and surveys of residents, businesses and traders around Cricklewood to create a thriving local economy, increase visitor enjoyment and make a greener cleaner environment and a safe place for all of us – a community where all voices are heard and valued.
3. CTT was responsible for putting forward a bid to the Mayor’s Outer London Fund (OLF) in 2012; drawing together a partnership of the 3 boroughs it straddles and Hammerson to support bidding efforts. £2.6m in total was secured from the Mayor’s fund and from Barnet and Brent Councils. CTT served as the glue that held the partnership together as an integral part of the stellar project team assembled to deliver the project, leading the Project Board and the key community engagement. It has continued to both manage and maintain OLF projects and assets, as well as execute the exit strategy and legacy projects. Outcomes included:
 - a. humanising the Broadway by removing railings from the median strip and replacing them with trees and a town clock

- b. widening the Cricklewood Lane pavement by the Green and planting it with trees, turning it into a welcoming space for markets and events and a relief from congestion
 - c. revamping shopfronts
 - d. decluttering and relaying pavements
 - e. the Hollywood-style Cricklewood sign on the Broadway
 - f. retiling under the Railway bridge with Cricklewood signs on both sides, still regularly and often cleaned voluntarily by residents
4. Since 2010 CTT has staged a wide range of events, from the innovative mobile Town Square festival around Cricklewood to concerts and annual festivals on the Green (which in turn contributed to the recognition and registration of the Green as an Asset of Community Value), plus artistic installations, community-made murals, music, Maypole dancing and Christmas lights switch-ons, against a background of year-round street greening and cleaning. It has also been involved in local developments including:
- a. The spectacular enhancement of Cricklewood station, transforming a drab entrance and the station tunnel and platforms into a colourful and welcoming experience with a community garden, dramatic signage, artworks inside and outside the station and lately repainting the bridge itself, in a series of projects and ongoing efforts variously led by CTT, residents associations and schools, in partnership with Govia Thameslink, Argent Related, Barnet Council and Network Rail;
 - b. the transformation of the Swan Hill – beside the Cricklewood rail bridge – with the efforts of the Community Gardeners and the local artist installing the Swans;

- c. and the work done with LB Barnet and TfL to plan the installation of Legible London signposts from the station in 2019.

The Application

5. The application seeks permission for the demolition of existing buildings and the comprehensive phased redevelopment of the site for a mix of uses including up to 1100 residential units, and up to 1200 sqm of flexible commercial and community floorspace in buildings ranging from 3 to 25 storeys along with car and cycle parking landscaping and associated works.

Grounds for Objection

6. CTT welcome improvement of the Cricklewood area but are concerned that the proposed development has fundamental problems and should not be accepted without considerable amendments being made to the proposal.

Ground 1 - Community Character

7. Cricklewood's community character is characterised by housing which is predominantly Victorian and no more than 3 storeys high. If one considers recent developments in the locality one finds only:
 - a. the 5-storey Travelodge built at 214-218 Cricklewood Broadway
 - b. A 6- and 8-storey building at 112-132 Cricklewood Lane
 - c. an approved application for a 6-storey development on the Galtymore site, 194-196 Cricklewood Broadway

- d. an application that has been passed by the planning committee but not yet approved that includes a 9-storey block at 1-13 Cricklewood Lane, described by Barnet planning as “an appropriate height barometer for future development of the neighbouring site”
 - e. an outstanding application for a 7-storey block with 8th-storey protrusions and services, further up the Broadway on the Matalan site.
8. These developments are however outliers and Cricklewood remains a predominantly low-rise locality.
9. CTT considers it important that any developments respect, retain and contribute to the character of the community rather than fundamentally changing it by overdevelopment of Barnet’s small part of it.
10. CTT is concerned that the proposed development will undermine the work of the last few years by producing a building which will dominate rather than compliment the locality, explicitly creating “maximum impact on people coming through the bridge” and superfluously “help[ing] people find their way around Cricklewood” by overlooking and dominating the entire neighbourhood. The development would be overbearing and diminish the appearance and experience of the streetscene and the wider locality.
11. CTT considers the proposal for very tall buildings, whether 14-, 16- or 25-storey, to be disproportionate and an overwhelming overdevelopment of the proposed site. If approved, such buildings would dominate Cricklewood’s social space and locality in a way which would change the identity of Cricklewood in a negative manner.

Ground 2 - public transport

12. CTT notes that trains leaving Cricklewood Station during peak times are crowded to such an extent that it is often impossible to board the scheduled services. Similar issues apply to local bus and tube services.

13. CTT is concerned that the proposed redevelopment will result in a situation where public transport services are overburdened and the quality of service for Cricklewood residents will be reduced.

Ground 3 - overcrowding

14. CTT is concerned that the proposed redevelopment will put a strain on already stretched public services. Accessing local medical centres already requires a long wait.

15. Further, Cricklewood Broadway has standing traffic for significant periods of the day. CTT is concerned that the local roads lack the capacity to cater for an increase in vehicles that would come with the proposed development. CTT is concerned about the associated air pollution that would ensue.

Ground 4 - policy

16. CTT notes that Barnet has housing targets but is concerned that the proposed development fails to have due regard to the need to develop the necessary public services.

17. Cricklewood does not have a dedicated community space. There is no publicly run leisure centre within Cricklewood. It is unfortunate but related that local library provision is poor, with the Childs Hill Library open for very limited hours and staffed by volunteers. There is also a concern that there is insufficient outdoor play space and green community space in the locality. CTT is concerned that the proposed development is not consistent with Barnet's policy of providing sufficient inclusive and integrated community facilities (policy CS10).

18. The police in the local area are overstretched and Cricklewood has had problems with antisocial behaviour in the recent past. CTT is concerned that the creation of excessive

housing would worsen this situation by placing a greater strain on local policing (contrary to policy CS12).

Conclusion

19. The Cricklewood Town Team is opposed to an application which has very tall buildings in the town centre. Such a development would:

- a. Radically alter the character of the locality by creating an overbearing tower block in the heart of Cricklewood and thereby undermine the community feel that has been nurtured over the last decade;
- b. Risk overwhelming public transport services;
- c. Stretch already limited community services and facilities and potentially damage social cohesion by forcing local residents to travel elsewhere to access the services that they need.

20. CTT remains committed to making Cricklewood a vibrant and pleasant place to live but consider that the proposed development will not achieve this goal. CTT considers that:

- a any plans that are approved must ensure that there is provision for the creation of public spaces which will be usable by the community or improvement of existing public spaces;
- b there is sustained funding for community events and spaces;
- c and the quality of life in Cricklewood, in existing properties and in new developments including any development of this site, is not sacrificed in order to achieve quantitative targets.

21. In summary, we object to this proposed development plan because it would make Cricklewood into a high-rise annex of the Brent Cross Regeneration and deprive Cricklewood of its identity as a historic town centre location.

Cricklewood Town Team

9th September 2020