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## CHAPTER 11 LOCAL AREA: BARNES

**Proposal** B02 Barnes Station: former goods yard  
**Modification refs:** X/B2/01  
X/B2/03  
**Further Modification Ref:** D/B2/4

### Inspector's note

Modifications X/B2/01 and X/B2/03 of this Proposal were proposed in response to the first Inspector's Report on objections to the UDP Review where the site is considered in paragraphs 12.1 to 12.17. The issues considered below relate to the further proposed modification D/B2/4 that adds 'possible enabling development' to the Proposal and concomitant explanatory text to the justification.

### Issues

- (i) The site should revert to Barnes Common.
- (ii) MOL would be lost.
- (iii) Whether it is appropriate to provide car parking and related arrangements for access and dealing with traffic.
- (iv) Enabling development should not take place or should be specified.

### Inspector's appraisal and conclusion

The site should revert to Barnes Common.

11.1. The former station yard was part of Barnes Common before the building of the Windsor line railway in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The yard was closed in 1969 and was thereafter subject to a range of temporary uses, including a storage depôt for materials used in the Channel Tunnel construction. A substantial berm alongside the Queen's Ride boundary has been constructed to deter incursion by travellers. Although much of the surface remains concreted, recolonising scrub vegetation and trees are increasing in extent.

11.2. The site is in private ownership and in adopted Plans since 1985 has been the subject of proposals to return land to the Common. A brief for a project to provide public open space and leisure facilities was agreed in 1983. However, a planning application for residential development, commuter parking and public open space was refused and dismissed on appeal in 1987, when the affinity of the site with the open undeveloped land of the Common was specifically recognised. In his report on the initial First UDP Review Inquiry the Inspector commented that, given that neither the Council nor any other body were in a position to acquire the site, the proposal B2 probably represented the most practicable means of returning a substantial part of it to the Common. In the meantime planning applications for a health and swimming club, car park, and public transport interchange were refused and dismissed on appeal in 1999 and 2001. A purchase notice served on the Borough Council in 2001 was not confirmed on the grounds that it had not been demonstrated that the site had become incapable of reasonably beneficial use, there were insufficient special circumstances to set aside MOL policy, and that planning permission should not be given for any other proposal.

11.3. I consider it is clear from the planning history of the site that a consistent policy to return at least some of its area to the Common has been pursued. Ideally, the return of the entire site to the Common, as advocated by some objectors, is desirable. However, for want of resources that cannot be achieved by the Council and depends on the release of a minor part

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of the land to an acceptable form of development implemented privately.

MOL would be lost.

11.4. PPG2 makes clear that the defining characteristic of MOL is its openness. The persistent and consistent failure of earlier proposals involving development was on the ground that the uses proposed were inappropriate in MOL. In my view that is particularly justifiable in the case of new buildings which, in addition to safeguarding the openness of the MOL, would have to satisfy the exigent constraints of the design policies of the UDP as well as preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area. However, I consider that if the site is not left to become derelict and a permanent eyesore it is necessary for any proposals coming forward to strike an acceptable balance between the degree of development and the retention of open space. While the Barnes Community Association refers to the site as public open space it is not, nor ever has been, so defined.

Whether it is appropriate to provide car parking and related arrangements for access and dealing with traffic.

11.5. The LPA states that it was always the case that parking on the site would replace on-street parking at Station Road with the balance of the site being returned to the Common. This would have environmental benefits and improve safety and security irrespective of transport policy considerations. Although the LPA considers use of the parking could be restricted to local railway season ticket holders that is challenged on the ground that such travellers are not necessarily local residents and their use of the facility would infringe the LPA policy of deterring 'railhead' parking. However, I am satisfied that adequate means to control the use could be devised.

11.6. A sum of £410,000 is available from Transport for London over the 2003/2205 period to effect improvements to the station including environmental improvements, a bus interchange, improved pedestrian access, cycle access and cycle parking facilities, improved parking at the station, CCTV cameras and improved lighting. Proposals for that programme are to be drawn up in conjunction with a planning brief for the goods yard site. I note that traffic generation was dealt with in the 1993 UDP inquiry when a 100 vehicle car park was estimated to produce a peak hour flow of 70 to 80 vehicles. Provided that the proportion of that traffic using the Rocks Lane/Upper Richmond Road junction can be absorbed that volume appears manageable. Bearing in mind the dangerous siting of the northbound bus stop at the station I am not clear how bus/rail interchange traffic would be handled. I consider that would be an important matter to clarify in the brief. Subject to that reservation I concur with the previous Inspector's conclusions on traffic.

Enabling development should not take place or should be specified.

11.7. While clearly a component in previous proposals for the site the LPA's introduction in D/B2/4 of the concept of enabling development in the Proposal is novel. However, it is unacceptable to objectors on the ground of uncertainty, namely that the amount of land to be returned to the Common is dependent on the amount of enabling development proposed in any particular case. I sympathise with that view and consider it is a matter meriting very careful attention in any planning brief. While it is possible to prescribe the minimum open area to be retained and returned to the Common there is clearly the risk that no proposal retaining more of the open area would ever be submitted for planning permission. To my mind the brief requires indications of the acceptable siting and massing of any building development as well as considerations about such matters as access and landscaping.

11.8. The Council likens the situation at this site to that at Hampton Waterworks where there is a substantial amount of existing building within a Green Belt site. In my view that is not a useful comparator. At Hampton the question of the permissible degree of further

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development can be related to the extensive footprint of existing buildings. At Barnes there is only one minor structure; in my view it has no bearing on any formula based on Hampton.

11.9. Overall, I have no doubt that a degree of enabling development is needed if continuing dereliction is to be halted and land is to be returned to the Common. Subject to a rider that I shall recommend regarding the brief I consider that the Proposal as modified by D/B2/4 and the unchallenged modifications is as reasonably practicable a response as possible

to the problems the site poses.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**11.10. I recommend that the Proposal be modified by D/B2/4 subject to the addition to the justification of reference to a planning brief dealing with matters in paragraph 11.8 above.**

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**Proposal B05**  
**Modification X/B5/01**

**Barn Elms Sports Ground**

### **Issue**

Whether, having regard to events since the immediately previous inquiry, floodlights should not be permitted at Barn Elms sports grounds.

### **Inspector's appraisal and conclusions**

11.11. The proposed modification in the reasoned justification for Policy B5 explains the upgrading of the sports facilities as '...to enable improvements in existing facilities and the provision of specialist new facilities to allow increased sports use.' No change is proposed in the precautionary reference to floodlighting, which is to be designed to have regard to avoiding disturbance to the wildlife on the site and the immediately adjoining Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust Centre.

11.12. The Barn Elms sports grounds are already partially floodlit in accordance with a 1995 permission for floodlighting of the athletics track. Some of the provisions of that permission remain unimplemented. A more recent but unimplemented planning permission allows the replacement and refurbishment of existing buildings, including the provision of new floodlighting. An Environmental Statement preceded the granting of that permission. In response to its findings the floodlighting is proposed to be amended to reduce its adverse effects and mitigation measures are intended to reduce the impact on the wider environment.

11.13. So far as concerns changes since the previous inquiry the neighbouring Wetland Centre was designated as a SSSI in January 2002. The objector reports that the number of bird species recorded at the Centre rose from 130 in 2000 to 166 in 2002. It is claimed that dark skies are of particular importance to foraging owls, migrating wildfowl, nesting herons and bats. Among the birds, small mammals, invertebrates and other wild life identified at the Centre there have been significant new arrivals since 2000, making the natural environment even more worthy of protection than then. Particular concern is expressed about noise from sports pitches, especially in the dark hours of winter, and lighting which could be confusing to migrant birds. Of equal concern is the claimed effect of the level and duration of artificial

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light on the flight patterns and feeding behaviour of various bat species.

11.14. I heard no evidence to challenge the importance of the objection site in the provision of sports facilities in this part of London. The objector relates the proposal to provide floodlighting at the site to its increased use for adult sports compared with previous use by children. The objector claims that any floodlighting at all would be harmful. However, its blanket prohibition would prevent the use of outdoor sports facilities in winter. The question is whether it would cause such material harm to wildlife that it should not be employed. In that context I am satisfied that the LPA's statutory consultee, the ecology services of the Greater London Authority, would, under the cautious terms employed in the written justification for Local Proposal B5 of the revised Plan, provide authoritative advice on planning applications which included any detailed proposals for specified designs of floodlighting. In my view the Plan's policies on lighting (including floodlighting), SSSIs and OSNIs, and nature conservation and development proposals (Policies ENV13, 18, and 19) respectively provide sufficient support for the consideration of the wildlife interest to be taken into account when specific proposals for development arise.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**11.15. I recommend that the Plan be modified by X/B05/01.**

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|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Policy/Para</b>       | <b>General or Omission</b> |
| <b>Modification ref:</b> | <b>n/a</b>                 |

**Issue**

'Sustainable development' should be reinstated.

**Inspector's appraisal and conclusion**

11.16. I do not consider specific reference necessary in relation to the Barnes Proposals. Such concerns are clearly inherent in the justification texts for Barnes station former goods yard and Barn Elms Sports Grounds.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**11.17. I recommend that the UDP be not modified.**

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