

## Closure and Redevelopment of the Waxwell Lane Car Park

In 2018 Harrow Council received planning consent to build a development of 20 three storey town houses on the site of the Waxwell Lane car park, in two mews style terraces:



The Pinner Association Committee had had a variety of views about the advisability of using the Waxwell Lane Car Park (WLCP) for housing. They had had concerns about the loss of all publicly available parking on the site, especially the loss of disabled parking at the top of the Bridge Street hill, and some had considered that only a proportion of the car park should have been considered for development. Others on the Pinner Association Committee had felt that the proposed “ethically managed, affordable rent, family sized accommodation” to be built by a company formed by Harrow Council was much needed in the area and the loss of the car park was, on balance, acceptable. However, once the planning application for 20 houses had been granted, the proposed tenure was changed by Harrow Council and now nearly all the houses are to be sold at full market price. This is felt to have substantially changed the nature of the development, and the loss of the amenity of the car park is now not balanced by the provision of affordable rent family sized housing. In answer to our complaint about this change of status of the development, we were informed that the development would not be viable unless 16 of the houses were to be sold at full market value, and there were still to be two houses to be sold

as “affordable housing” and two units would be designed for disabled occupants and would be a part of the Harrow Council Social Housing stock.

In January representatives from the Pinner Association Committee met the consultant who is the Interim Specialist (Programme Lead), Regeneration Unit, Harrow Council to discuss the closure of the car park and the redevelopment of the site.

The official closure of the WLCP was signed off by the Harrow Council Portfolio Holder in December 2018 and therefore would now definitely take place at the beginning of March 2019.

Test drilling has been undertaken in the WLCP in January to assess what type of foundations would be required for the 20 town houses to be built on the site. The foundations required are expected to be screw type piling, which should not cause too much disturbance to neighbouring residents.

After the closure of the car park the required tree protection and hoardings will be installed and then all the tarmac surface will be removed together with the soil on the site down to a depth of 30cm, which was necessary as a car park might have soil contaminated with oil that had seeped in from leaks from parked vehicles over the years. This would take a couple of months and would involve many grabber lorries loads of soil to be removed from the site. We do not as yet know which route to and from the site these large heavy vehicles will be instructed to use.

The required archaeological examination of the site will be conducted whilst it was being cleared and the archaeologist had been recruited and would be on site as the soil was dug out to examine it for any artefacts or structures.

After the site has been cleared the building work will be put out for tender, with a view of the construction of the new houses starting by September 2019.

The status of the land on the WLCP site after the development would be that those areas not built on and which were landscaped would be “public open space” and the general public would have a right of access to the site. However, the vehicle access would be for residents only (a private driveway) and it would not be a public road. The site would not be a “gated community”. The owners of the houses would have to pay an annual service charge for the maintenance of the landscaping. The area between the rows of houses would be paved with permeable paving and would have open beds for shrubs / grass. Emergency services would still be able to access the site sufficiently, as they only needed their vehicles to be within 100m of a dwelling.

As the new houses would not have frontages onto a public highway, they should not be eligible for Residents Parking Permits, but residents of the flats behind Bridge Street had obtained Permits and this had caused problems in Waxwell Lane. The Pinner Association would pressure Harrow Council to ensure that the new development was “Residents’ Permit Restricted”. There was to be only one allocated parking space on the site for each house, and the Pinner Association consider that this will probably not be sufficient for houses of this size.

Oak Lee Montessori School had used the WLCP as the parking for parents and carers delivering and collecting children and the entrance to the school grounds had been via WLCP. The school has already been assisted by Harrow Council to make the necessary modifications to their

buildings so that the pedestrian access will be from their Love Lane frontage. There is to be an allowance of 20 minutes of free parking time for parents / carers from the school to park in the Love Lane car park, in order to avoid the problem of excessive on-street parking on Love Lane. The possibility of installing a pedestrian crossing in Love Lane opposite the car park to allow a safe walking route to the school is being investigated by Harrow Council.

An agreement had been made with St Luke's Catholic Church to allow the drains from the new development to be run over their site down to Love Lane. The sewer works already done in Love Lane last year by Thames Water would mean only a short disruption to traffic in Love lane should occur when the new drains are connected to the main sewer.

The pedestrian access from the WLCP to the service road behind Bridge Street will be closed off when the car park is shut and remain closed off after it is developed. This, and the loss of the car park, will adversely affect the St Luke's Charity Shop in Bridge Street, as people could leave donations at their rear door by parking in the car park, and their volunteers parked in the WLCP. During the pre-planning discussions with local residents, representatives from the Harrow Council Regeneration Team had said that there would be a new on-street loading bay in Bridge Street outside the St Luke's shop to allow people to drop off donations, but the Pinner Association has yet to be informed that this is to be installed.

The Pinner Association.

February 2019.