



Ingram Avenue house threatened with demolition

Planning Inspector dismisses Brunner Close appeal

A Planning Inspector has thrown out an application for the demolition of a house in Brunner Close. The developer, Hanover Securities Limited, had applied to Barnet to replace the house with a standard pair of semis. Barnet refused the application and the developer appealed.

The Trust sent detailed objections to the application to the local authority and to the Planning Inspector, pointing out that the house was an essential part of the original character of the Close and that allowing its demolition would set a precedent. The proposed new houses and large car parking area were also felt to be totally out of keeping with the appearance of the Close.

The Inspector dismissed the developer's case and repeated the Trust's comments in his report.

This is a very useful decision for the Trust and the local authority as it helps to balance those Inspector's decisions where demolition has been allowed.

The application and appeal illustrates the threat to the Suburb from inappropriate development.

- The Inspectorate approved a huge, flat-roofed extension at the rear of a Grade II listed house in the heart of the Suburb. The extension would have disfigured the house and been visible from neighbouring properties.
- A Planning Inspector approved the construction of a very large detached garage and inappropriate alterations to a modest cottage off Brookland Rise.
- An Inspector's decision forced Barnet to approve the demolition of a good 1930s house in Ingram Avenue and its replacement with two poorly designed, larger houses. The original house is a Georgian Revival design of 1936 by the Suburb Architect, J.C.S. Soutar.

In all of the above cases, only the Trust was able to stop the development going ahead.

Defending the Suburb is costly in legal bills alone. Add to this the staff time tied up in negotiations, submitting detailed evidence to the Inspectorate and to Barnet and briefing lawyers and you get some idea of the scale of the problem.

In addition, the Trust is increasingly being asked to consider the demolition of important Suburb properties.

In the last six months, requests have been made to the Trust to approve the demolition of both an attractive Parker and Unwin house overlooking the Heath Extension and a Grade II listed house in Heathgate.

The loss of houses such as this would create a precedent for more demolitions that would eventually destroy the cohesiveness of the original vision.

There are suburban areas which can accommodate limited amounts of intensification and infill development. But the Suburb is not such an area. It is a planned environment: each element – the positioning of buildings, gardens, views and open spaces – is essential to the special nature of the Suburb. It must not be destroyed.

The qualities of our historic suburb, once lost, will not be recovered. The grain of the place would be changed forever.