



HOUSING NEWS

Lower Oldpark

March 2022 Lower Oldpark Community Association, 9-23 Avoca Street, Belfast BT14 6EN. Tel: 028 96928293. Email: loweroldparkhousing@gmail.com

Lower Oldpark Social Housing Scheme Gets Planning Approval

Planning approval for a Lower Oldpark social housing scheme was given by Belfast City Council Planning Committee on 18th January 2022.

The scheme involves the development of 10 houses and two bungalows on the green space site running along Manor Street, down Alloa Street and along the former Annalee Court. The developer is Clanmil Housing.

There are a couple of issues still be dealt with but Clanmil Housing has

advised Lower Oldpark Community Association (LOCA) that Clanmil hopes that an appointed contractor will be on site by spring 2022.

LOCA welcomes this news and views the new housing development as a very important part of the long-delayed regeneration of Lower Oldpark.

The scheme was significantly delayed by a number of factors, not least sewer infrastructure issues raised by Northern Ireland Water

(NIW). LOCA worked closely with NIW and Clanmil in addressing the sewer infrastructure issues.



Petrol Station/ Spar Store Opens

The new petrol station/ Spar retail unit at the junction of Cliftonpark Avenue and Crumlin Road opened its doors to the public on 13th January 2022.

The scheme involved a £3.5 million investment by Landscape Enterprises, headed by Gavin Walls.

Thirty new, permanent, jobs have been generated by the new facility which includes a deli, Nugelato ice cream parlour and other services. Jobs created cover retail management and assistant roles

Lower Oldpark Community Association (LOCA) has supported this major commercial development on the front of the Crumlin Road since the plans were first made available by Landscape Enterprises in 2015. It has been a long and difficult road to get to this stage and LOCA retains substantial concerns about how the whole process was managed by public



bodies. However, LOCA also sees the new development as a very important part of the physical and economic regeneration of Lower Oldpark neighbourhood and the Crumlin Road. Hopefully, it will encourage more local investment.

After completion of the new houses currently being built behind the petrol station, the former shop/ petrol station at Landscape Terrace will be demolished and four new private homes built by the same developer on the site.

New Private Homes Progress

Work on six new private homes in Cliftonpark Avenue is progressing.

The three-bedroom homes are under construction on the small site behind the new petrol station/ retail unit on the Crumlin Road.

The developer is Landscape Enterprises (LE), the same company that built the new petrol station/ retail unit. LE has advised Lower Oldpark Community Association (LOCA) that it hopes the six new homes will be completed by August 2022.

LE also hopes that decontamination of the old petrol station site will be achieved by the summer of 2022. This will allow the start of building work on the four new houses to be provided on the site.

The developer has also said that it will work with LOCA on its request that the new homes are sold only for owner-occupation.

LOCA Disappointed At Crumlin Road Housing Planning Decision

Lower Oldpark Community Association (LOCA) is disappointed at the decision of Belfast City Council (BCC) Planning Committee to approve a social housing planning application by NB Housing on the vacant site at 197-203 Crumlin Road.

In March 2020, BCC Planning Department received an application from NB Housing for the development of 9 two-bedroom houses, 3 three-bedroom houses and 2 one-bedroom apartments.

Before this, LOCA had asked NB Housing to change the number of three-bedroom houses to eight, but it did not agree on the grounds of a lack of support from the NIHE.

When it looked at the application, LOCA felt that the proposed parking spaces (14) wouldn't be enough for the new residents and their visitors.

LOCA also believed that the low number of parking spaces would increase parking pressure in Century Street, Albertville Drive and Rosewood Street. A number of residents told LOCA about existing parking issues in these streets.

LOCA submitted three documents to the BCC in response to the planning application. These set out expected parking problems. The most recent included photos showing the high level of parking in the area even before the new development happens and during the Covid pandemic.

LOCA also highlighted that the part of the development site fronting onto the Crumlin Road was designated in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan as 'Shopping/ Commercial Area On Arterial Routes'. NB Housing's

plans for the site don't include any shops or commercial units. The planning application went before BCC Planning Committee on Tuesday 10th August 2021. A LOCA representative made a presentation to the Committee to highlight the parking issues. Despite LOCA's efforts, the Committee approved the application.

BCC had consulted on the planning application with a number of public bodies including the Department for Infrastructure (Roads).

The development will now be going ahead. LOCA regrets that its efforts didn't result in a better development but hopes that the parking problems it has predicted won't occur.

LOCA also regrets that the low number of three-bedroom houses being provided will weaken the long-term future of this part of the Crumlin Road.

NIHE To Make Payments

Housing Executive tenants who meet the rules of entitlement for Redecoration Allowance and/or Insitu Payment following bathroom/ kitchen replacement work by the NIHE in their homes during 2019 and 2020 will soon receive their payments.

Payments to tenants have been significantly delayed by the NIHE but work on processing them is underway and it is hoped that all payments will have been made by mid-April 2022.

Approximately 110 NIHE properties were included in the two phases of the most recent Lower Oldpark Bathroom/ Kitchen scheme.

Lower Oldpark Community Association remains unclear about the reasons for the very long delay in making payments to tenants.

NIHE Site Decision Still Awaited

Lower Oldpark Community Association (LOCA) continues to await a decision by the NIHE that will affect the nature of any future housing development on the 'Bonfire Site' at Mountview Street.

In 2019, the NIHE began working on an economic appraisal. This involves looking at possible future uses of the site and deciding on the best. It said that it could not support social housing on the site. LOCA proposed putting the site on the market for sale and development with family, owner-occupier homes. The NIHE has raised issues with this approach and LOCA addressed these at the highest level within the NIHE almost a year ago. LOCA still awaits a response from the NIHE.

Between 25 and 30 family homes

could be built on the site. These would help to replace the 37 empty houses demolished by the NIHE about 15 years ago.

Find Out More At

Website

<https://loweroldparkhousing.co.uk>

Facebook: @loweroldparkhousing

Housing Advice Service

Help with housing problems is available from the Lower Oldpark Housing Project Worker, Gary Hughes.

Days: Monday to Friday.

Times: 8.30am – 11.30am and 1.0pm - 3.30pm.

Phone: 028 96928293 or 028 90351334 or 0771 3990976.