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SAVE OUR HOMES!

Residents' group unveils plan to buy council properties **See page 5**

Company takes on Town Hall in bid to open street's 9th bookies



The eight existing betting shops in Kilburn High Road – and now Paddy Power wants to open another one



WHAT'S THE BETTING?

ONE of Britain's biggest gambling operators is set for a showdown with the Town Hall in a battle to open the NINTH betting shop on a street already nicknamed the "Bookmakers' Mile".

Paddy Power has asked a planning inspector to overturn the council's refusal to let it open a second branch on the Kilburn High Road in what could become a test of how strongly Camden is able to enforce saturation

by RICHARD OSLEY

policies across the borough.

The outcome of the case will be closely monitored by other areas of Camden where bookmakers are looking to expand their operations, and reveal how much control the council really has to stop them.

Residents in Kilburn fear more betting shops will stall attempts to rejuvenate the high road and change its

image, while fairer gambling campaigners warn that extra outlets will lead to the greater availability of fixed odds terminals at which, in the worst cases, addicts have lost thousands of pounds in a matter of hours.

Paddy Power, which recently merged with online betting exchange Betfair, insists its branches can add "much needed vitality and footfall to localities around the country".

■ Full story, pages 12/13

CHAIN REACTION

Coffee shops stirred into action as Starbucks threat looms



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A change of tune at Jazz Cafe

– See page 7

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Non-profit residents group's proposal to create council homes is rejected by Town Hall chiefs

'Flats sell-off will turn us into ghetto'

A GROUP of residents whose bid to develop a block of council flats in the heart of Hampstead village was turned down by the Town Hall in favour of a private buyer fear the sell-off will fuel the area's "ghettoisation".

Contracts have now been exchanged with a mystery buyer for the sale of Victorian Wells Court in Oriel Place, formerly used as sheltered accommodation for the elderly.

The 23-flat block was decommissioned by the council last year after being declared not "fit for purpose", with its residents transferred elsewhere and the property put up for sale on the open market.

Fearing the building would be turned into luxury flats, a group of local residents clubbed together and formed a Community Land Trust (CLT), devising their own scheme to develop the building.

The group, called NW3 CLT, a non-profit corporation that develops buildings on behalf of communities, hoped the council would transfer the building to the trust for its own scheme.

by ELLA JESSEL

Under its plans the council would have recouped the cost of the freehold through the sale of six flats, including two penthouses, for private sale.

The proposals would offer 70 per cent of the flats for local people at affordable rents to be held by NW3 CLT "in perpetuity" with the rental income generated through the affordable units split 50/50 between the CLT and the council.

But the council has decided to go with another mystery bidder and said it will invest the proceeds from the sale of the building into its Community Investment Programme (CIP), where it will be earmarked for older residents.

Hampstead architect and CLT member Sanya Polescuk said the group was "disappointed and frustrated" their proposals were not chosen.

"We don't know who got it and what they are planning to do with it, and the council has been singularly uninterested in meeting us or hearing about our proposal," she said.

Ms Polescuk said that because the council plans to use funds from the sale for affordable housing elsewhere in the borough, it would fuel the "ghettoisation" of Hampstead.

"We may be Hampstead, but we're Camden too," she added. "The CIP is the mantra for Camden and they are rolling it out as they see fit. In the process of doing that they are running a risk of ghettoising the borough and creating unhealthy pockets with a lack of social diversity."

But the Town Hall's finance chief, Theo Blackwell, said the funds from the building's sale would go towards paying for schemes that will benefit older residents such as the Greenwood Centre in Kentish Town, due to be built in mid-2018, that will offer flats for independent living.

"Wells Court is now vacant and we have rehoused people elsewhere. It was designed for another era," he said.

"We're under extreme pressure - remember we've also got to pay £150million at least every year to the government for the Camden homes

tax. So it's good we have been able to take this money to invest in older people's homes."

Cllr Blackwell added that the council would

"always consider" proposals from community land trusts "if the numbers stack up", adding: "We're open to ideas but what appears a

good idea on paper doesn't always work, because we have all these other pressures."

A council spokesman said it could not say who

the building has been sold to or the price it reached as the details of the sale are "currently commercially confidential".



The Victorian Wells Court building (on the left) and, pictured left, the Town Hall's finance chief, Cllr Theo Blackwell