# Barking’s new flats plan sparks debate over community impact and sustainability



Plans to demolish the Wickes Extra store on Hertford Road in Barking to make way for 850 flats have been approved by local councillors, yet this move further exemplifies the ongoing push for unchecked densification at the expense of community interests. The proposed development involves constructing six towers soaring between 18 and 31 storeys—monolithic structures that will forever alter the character of Barking—featuring commercial units on the ground floor but offering only 27 accessible parking spaces, with no provision for general car parking elsewhere. This decision underscores the authorities’ prioritization of housing numbers over practical infrastructure, and critics argue it exacerbates congestion and strains local transport networks.

Supporters, including Labour committee member Cameron Geddes, claim that 131 of the 850 flats—designated as socially rented—will help reduce the housing waiting list. But the reality is that these “affordable” homes often come with strings attached, and their development is used as a guise to justify overdevelopment and densification without addressing the core issues of infrastructure capacity. Councillors have insisted on a condition to prevent new residents from obtaining permits for on-street or council parking, a half-hearted measure that merely shifts the problem rather than solving it. Local residents are right to be sceptical about the long-term sustainability of such schemes, which threaten to intensify local congestion while failing to address the fundamental transportation issues.

The proposed development is billed as delivering community benefits—new bus stops, a public park, and an education centre at a nominal rent—yet these are small concessions compared to the scale of disruption incoming. Developers also pledge to contribute “substantial” sums to local health and education services, a typical tactic to gloss over the reality that infrastructure upgrades lag behind relentless housing expansion, creating a cycle of overburdened services and declining quality of life.

Critical concerns remain over flood safety, with the site falling within a high-risk flood zone. The Environment Agency has objected, citing insufficient evidence that flood defenses will remain effective throughout the development’s lifetime. Until assurances are provided, formal planning permission must remain withheld, delaying a scheme that primarily benefits developers and potential property speculators rather than local communities.

Meanwhile, Wickes' current operators have voiced opposition, vowing to fight the demolition. Their stance highlights a broader issue—how urban regeneration often neglects existing local businesses and comprehensive community planning in favor of short-term development goals.

This wave of redevelopment—covering areas like Gascoigne Estate, Crown House, and the old tower blocks in Dagenham—continues to push a narrative of growth that often overlooks the insidious impacts on transport, green spaces, and community cohesion. Despite promises of affordable housing, the reality remains that many of these projects are driven by a relentless cycle of housing targets and urban intensification, rather than genuine community needs.

It’s clear that the latest plans, like many before, serve the interests of developers and a system fixated on short-term gains. True community-led regeneration would prioritize sustainable infrastructure, environmental resilience, and preserving the character of local neighborhoods—rather than sacrificing them on the altar of relentless housing expansion. The question remains: how long will Barking and Dagenham’s residents be expected to accept this imbalance before their concerns are finally heard?

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.yellowad.co.uk/plans-approved-to-demolish-wickes-for-880-car-free-homes-in-barking/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.barkinganddagenhampost.co.uk/news/24475758.wickes-opposes-880-home-development-barking-store-site/> - The Wickes store in Hertford Road, Barking, is opposing a proposal to demolish its premises for a near 900-home development. The application, submitted by Baymoore Investing Ltd., seeks to replace the existing buildings with a mixed-use development comprising 880 new homes and commercial spaces. Wickes has confirmed it will submit objections to the proposal, expressing a determination to continue serving its customers in Barking and Dagenham. ([barkinganddagenhampost.co.uk](https://www.barkinganddagenhampost.co.uk/news/24475758.wickes-opposes-880-home-development-barking-store-site/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://constructing-london.com/roding-park-barking/> - Baymoore Investing Limited has submitted a masterplan proposal to the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham for the redevelopment of the Wickes Store and Bridge House site. The plan involves demolishing the existing retail premises to facilitate a residential-led development with commercial and community floorspace at the ground level. The development aims to deliver 880 new residential units across six buildings, ranging from 18 to 32 floors, with a mix of affordable housing and amenities. ([constructing-london.com](https://constructing-london.com/roding-park-barking/?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.buildington.co.uk/buildings/news/view/14567> - Demolition is underway on the west side of the Gascoigne Estate in Barking, making way for the delivery of more than 200 new homes over the next two years. The £55 million project will redevelop part of the 1960s estate into a modern, environmentally friendly community, including 201 new homes, of which 60 percent will be affordable. The plans also include a new children's play area and aim to reduce carbon emissions by connecting to the forthcoming Barking Town Centre District Heating Network and installing solar panels. ([buildington.co.uk](https://www.buildington.co.uk/buildings/news/view/14567?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.housingtoday.co.uk/news/barking-and-dagenham-approves-crown-house-redevelopment-scheme/5098518.article> - Barking and Dagenham Council has approved plans to demolish Crown House in the centre of Barking, paving the way for nearly 400 new homes to be built in two tower blocks on the site of the 1960s office building and an adjacent car park. BeFirst, the council’s housing operation, will build 169 affordable homes on the site, comprising 80 one-bedroom, 71 two-bedroom, and 18 three-bedroom flats. ([housingtoday.co.uk](https://www.housingtoday.co.uk/news/barking-and-dagenham-approves-crown-house-redevelopment-scheme/5098518.article?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayors-80m-grant-for-1500-new-dagenham-homes> - The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, announced an £80 million grant from the Mayor’s Affordable Housing Programme to secure more than 1,550 genuinely affordable homes on the former Dagenham Stamping Plant car works site in East London. The deal enables Peabody housing association to acquire the 45-acre site, with plans to transform it into a vibrant, sustainable neighbourhood that complements the wider regeneration in the borough. The development will include a new public park, greenways, and opportunities for learning, leisure, play, and work locally. ([london.gov.uk](https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayors-80m-grant-for-1500-new-dagenham-homes?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.barkinganddagenhampost.co.uk/news/local-council/20933061.tower-blocks-demolition-new-homes-agreed-dagenham/> - Barking and Dagenham Council has granted planning permission for the demolition of three 16-storey tower blocks and the construction of 149 new homes in Dagenham. The redevelopment is part of the council’s estate renewal plans, with construction work set to begin in the summer, and the first homes expected to be ready around March 2015. ([barkinganddagenhampost.co.uk](https://www.barkinganddagenhampost.co.uk/news/local-council/20933061.tower-blocks-demolition-new-homes-agreed-dagenham/?utm_source=openai))