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## Secret garden under threat

By **Victoria Birch**

A SECRET garden hidden just yards from High Wycombe's town centre has been earmarked for homes, despite angry protests from neighbours who say the land is a haven for wildlife.

The 0.48 hectares of land, off Priory Avenue, was once home to Joan Perkins before her death ten years ago. The 87-year-old owned a number of businesses in the area including the old petrol station at Temple End and a furniture factory by her home.

But plans by developers Henry Homes have now been revealed. They involve building eight three-bedroom houses, five two-bedroom apartments and 23 parking spaces. There is also a land swap agreement with nearby Hamilton School by taking a piece of their playground to build a road. In return the school gets an area of land from the site and money for new projects.

The bungalow at Fairacre has been left derelict, and residents say the house should be pulled down and the land turned into a nature reserve as it is home to badgers and a number of plant species.

Lorna Cassidy, 72, an artist who lives in nearby Hampden Road and makes etchings of the site, called it a secret garden which she remembers as being spectacular in its former glory.

However she said there were not many places left like it in Wycombe and called for the council to protect it from development.

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The secret garden facing development

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The grandmother, and mum of three, said: "The garden is so magnificent now."

Another neighbour, who didn't want to be named, added: "There are about five or six badger setts. There are so many animals living there at the moment. There is a World War Two air raid shelter there. It's a piece of history.

"Next month it is the tenth anniversary of her death. She would be turning in her grave."

"Next month it is the tenth

### Neighbour

anniversary of her death. She would be turning in her grave."

He added: "It used to be a real middle class leafy avenue but it has been eroded by flat developments."

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Wycombe District Council received the application and it is currently under consultation.

Phil Perkins, Joan's son, did not want to comment on the application.

Stephen Britnell, managing director at Henry Homes, said: "The proposals put forward by Henry Homes for the Fairacre site seek to respond to local housing needs in the area and the scheme's design has been produced to respect and respond to the surrounding area.

"Henry Homes has approached the proposed redevelopment of this site with sensitivity and recognises its constraints and opportunities.

"In respect of ecological matters relating to the site, an independent and specialist consultant has been appointed and Henry Homes recognises the need to manage such issues appropriately and with due care and consideration. In light of such matters, appropriate mitigation measures will be produced and discussed with council officers.

"We will continue to work with council officers in respect of the scheme and look forward to holding further discussions."

8:00am Saturday 21st April 2007

 **Print**  **Email this**  **Comment**

Posted by: Hungry Badger, high wycombe on  
9:37am Sat 21 Apr 07

There are laws protecting badger sets so they may find a lot of problems trying to get this done.

**Quote | Report this post**

Posted by: JD, High Wycombe on  
9:52am Sat 21 Apr 07

**Sally** wrote:  
well who agreed planning permission on this land? its the sodding council again isnt it? people should camp out in the garden and stop the bulldozers coming in we have to make a stand against this kind of bullying!

gon on then - who is stopping you? Like most BFP readers - whinge whinge whinge - but do nothing about it. Pathetic.

**Quote | Report this post**

Posted by: John Prescott, Westminster, SW1 on  
10:47am Sat 21 Apr 07

This WILL go through, or I'll make it subject to a Compulsory Purchase Order. I want 280,000 Homes built across the Thames Valley before 2010 to accomodate all my Immigrant friends...so b0ll0x to the lot of you!!

**Quote | Report this post**

Posted by: Ivor Bigun on 12:05pm Sat 21 Apr 07

Of course this garden should be saved from developers, it is just the type of development proposed here that has ruined this town, sadly the council have let most of them go through.

Let's hope the protected status of the badger sets will help to stop this unnecessary and unwanted development.

**Have you seen Ivor's blog? Click on the "Opinion" link on the menu on the left then click on "Bucks Blog".**

**Quote | Report this post**

Posted by: WattT, Wycombe on  
[12:39pm Sat 21 Apr 07](#)

The usual conspiracy of freemasons, architects, surveyors and other assorted tories will push it through. Jobs for the boys, payoff for the school and more concrete over our open spaces.

**Quote | Report this post**

Posted by: Sally, camping out on  
[7:17am Sun 22 Apr 07](#)

why have the comments been deleted are we not allowed to slag off the Council? JD is a very sad individual by the way

**Quote | Report this post**

Posted by: Ex Wycomber, Far Away on  
[9:44am Sun 22 Apr 07](#)

Yeah, especially as one of the comments was exposing one of the school govenors being the architect of this whole project. Sickens me how our schools are run by such greedy fat cats, what does example does this set to the children? I call for his head!

**Quote | Report this post**

Posted by: HenryH, Wycombe on  
[12:26pm Sun 22 Apr 07](#)

Developer is Henry Homes plc. whose architects are HAP Partners. HAP senior partner Chris Harvey of Amersham Hill also geovernor of school. See for yourself at WDC Planning portal.

**Quote | Report this post**

Posted by: Macca, Western Australia on  
[3:27pm Sun 22 Apr 07](#)

Shame on you shame shame shame  
 you have something unique there something beautiful  
 it's such a terrible shame about the councils plans  
 think again  
 Macca  
 Western Australia

**Quote | Report this post**

Posted by: Senator Muskie, High Wycombe on  
[9:31pm Sun 22 Apr 07](#)

If the vested interests wrt governors is a true fact then it should not be deleted. The school have a moral obligation (key stage 1/2 QCA science curriculum yrs 3 and 4)to teach the kids about preservation of habitat and effects of change to habitat. Yet they are destroying a beautiful conservation area. They are not practising what they are teaching and hence there are clearly other motives behind this project along with their selfish, greed-based. incompetency.

**Quote | Report this post**

Posted by: Fair acre, Fair acre on  
[9:54pm Sun 22 Apr 07](#)

[www.philperkins.com/Fair-Acre/index.html](http://www.philperkins.com/Fair-Acre/index.html)

Looks like HH and Hamilton are going to do a real XXX butchers job on the site. When will the council

stand up against this unadulterated violence against the beautiful garden.

**Quote | Report this post**

Posted by: Apples, Wycombe on [9:15am today](#)

This is the perfect opportunity for all Labour and Conservative councillors to follow party directives and show sympathy towards ecological and environmental issues. If this development goes ahead it will show that pre-election promises are all lies. The lessons from the Gerrards Cross debacle should be learnt.

**Quote | Report this post**

Posted by: Ex Wycomber, Far Away on [10:13am today](#)

Isn't there enough traffic in Wycombe town centre already? I've been reading about the Eden project surely this is all going to add it it? How will residents of Priory Rd/ Avenue cope with this including the school run drop off?

**Quote | Report this post**

Posted by: Concerned Resident, High Wycombe on [10:44am today](#)

We already suffer from heavy traffic levels. Not only do the school runs cause havoc and chaos, but we have HGVs and other assorted traffic, which cannot enter the town centre, being diverted into our area. When the automatic bus entry system fails we also have buses and coaches using our roads as a byway. The school has not had the courtesy to inform local residents of the impending chaos and damage they are about to cause. This is most worrying and very self centred. They hold the most influential position in the development as they are allowing the access road to be built through the playground. In this case they should be held more accountable to the forthcoming disaster than the developers.

**Quote | Report this post**

Posted by: Senator Muskie, Wycombe on [12:18pm today](#)

The science curriculum taught at Hamilton ( Key Stage 1/2, yrs 3 and 4 , Unit 4b section 9) states that a pupil should be capable of "writing a letter opposing a change which would alter a habitat." Will the science teachers ask them to compose such a letter and send it to Henry Homes as well as the school Governors ?

**Quote | Report this post**

Posted by: Star Shine, HW on [1:55pm today](#)

The school sent a letter to parents to agree with the application. They did not mention anything about the "secret garden" or the harmful effects to the plant and animal life that are part of Faireacre.

**Quote | Report this post**

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