

THE ARCHER



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The former site of the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery. Photo by Erini Rodis

Lawrie's last stand

By Daphne Chamberlain

If East Finchley is to have its Christmas lights on the High Road again, we need to turn on the energy - and quickly.

Hospital site re-think

By Daphne Chamberlain

The Rehabilitation Unit of the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery has left its East Finchley premises.

On 8 September the Unit moved to Queen's Square, Bloomsbury, but the future of its old home, next to East Finchley station, remains uncertain.

Last year, St. George PLC drew up plans for a "green" development of houses in the million pound plus range. However, St. George told a private enquirer some weeks ago that the company was "no longer following up" its interest in the site, which remains up for sale.

Hospital spokesperson Sam Ryall told The Archer that "new sale specifications" will be ready in about two months.

Barnet Council has prepared a planning brief to provide guidelines for future re-developers. This stipulates that any proposal should "preserve and enhance the special character" of the locality.

Many of the trees on the site are subject to Tree Preservation Orders, the existing building may not be demolished without Conservation Area Consent, and the height of new buildings would be restricted to fit in with their surroundings.

Developers may be obliged to negotiate accommodation for Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute. (At present, the Institute shares a building with Henrietta Barnett School, which needs to expand.)

Another obligation could be to provide religious, voluntary or community facilities.

If the development is residential, Barnet may require either "affordable" housing as part of the development, or a contribution towards affordable housing elsewhere. Special needs or sheltered accommodation would be encouraged.

Some, but not all, local residents were consulted about the future of the site. A Barnet spokesperson said that the Council obviously didn't want the site to become derelict, but that these guidelines "should warn off entirely unsuitable applicants."

Medical blunder led to killing

At the sentencing hearing of Michael Parsonage, the senior treasury official of Durham Road who bludgeoned his wife to death, the Old Bailey heard that a medical blunder led to him being allowed home despite having sought help from Barnet General Hospital's psychiatric unit.

A few hours before the attack Mr Parsonage had sought help from the psychiatric crisis unit at the hospital, but despite pleas from his wife and her daughter to commit him to hospital, the trainee psychiatric doctor and psychiatric nurse who saw him sent him home with tranquillisers.

The first psychiatrist to see Mr Parsonage after the killing confirmed that an incorrect diagnosis had been made and that Mr Parsonage should have been admitted to hospital immediately. The court also heard that Mr Parsonage had a personality disorder which would lead to depression in middle age. Close friends and members of his family had noticed a change in him over the previous two or three years and that he had become withdrawn and rigid in his atti-

tudes. Nadji Kahtan, a forensic psychiatrist, told the court that Mr Parsonage still presented a danger to the public.

Passing two orders under the Mental Health Act to keep Mr Parsonage in a secure hospital without time limit, Judge Geoffrey Grigson told him, "What you did to your wife was truly terrible", but added "you were suffering from depressive illness at the time. Your act arose from your illness".

Bernard

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