



its modern replacement (above, photo by Toni Morgan)



The bungalow in Park Road. Photo by Sue Holliday

## Development Frenzy in East Finchley

By John Dearing

All over East Finchley, building sites are sprouting beside our homes like snowdrops in spring, and there are many more in the pipeline for the coming months. Every one of them involves high-density housing: the ubiquitous flat block, replacing shops, garages, doctors' surgeries, pubs and car parks. So the numbers of people living in East Finchley increases, seemingly without limit, while the facilities on which they depend are gobbled up by developers, anxious to cash in on the boom in property prices of the last few years.

Barnet Council seems either unwilling or unable to slow down this development feeding frenzy. It has erected signs on the approach roads, proclaiming a Welcome to East Finchley Village, but it is doubtful that it has sufficient commitment to this isolated corner of its empire to make that more than just an empty gesture. Without a real community centre, the concept of the East Finchley Village degenerates to a few, rather twee signs erected on the approach to an otherwise anonymous crossroads.

### Incoming

Behind this is the inexorable drift of the population of the UK, towards its southeast corner. All the career opportunities are perceived to be here, all the investment, most of the activities and attention in culture and fashion, science and the arts, not to mention the best weather! The government's response is not to try to reverse this with investment and encouragement for the north and west, but a proposal to build hundreds of thousands of new homes, mostly on what they call "brownfield sites",

which normally means land in built-up areas, presently used for other, apparently, redundant activities. To achieve this, they will need to ride roughshod over the wishes of existing residents and businesses, and concentrate on high-density housing: the ubiquitous flat block, which is where we came in!

Current or proposed projects include replacing the following:

- *The Manor Cottage* pub, East End Road
- Park Lodge, East End Road
- Houses on Long Lane Gardens
- Garages at the rear of 114 High Road
- *The George* pub, Market Place
- Texaco Garage, High Road
- Currie Motors, High Road
- Lincoln Parade shops, Lincoln Road
- Viceroy Close car park, East End Road
- Bungalow, Park Road
- *Duke of Cambridge* pub, Market Place
- 2c Fortis Green



Now standing empty, the Currie Motors site on the High Road. Photo by Sippy Azizollah

## Sheltered Housing

Barnet Council has undertaken to bring all its sheltered housing units up to modern standards within the next ten years.

All tenants will have their own bathrooms, and access to a lift if they live on upper floors.

The Council has also undertaken to provide up to 140 units of "very" sheltered housing. This will be for older people who need 24 hour care to allow them to lead more independent lives. Very sheltered housing has proved elsewhere to be a successful alternative to residential homes.

These recommendations were approved by the Social Affairs Policy and Development Committee on 25 January.

Chairperson Councillor Beverley Pearce said, "We will explore public/private partnerships to fund the schemes, and will consult widely before making decisions that affect people's lives."

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