



Any reader who feels strongly about any matter is invited to use this "Soapbox" column.

Please note that opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.



Our Back Yard

By Debra Carr

Our garden is never going to win prizes because, quite aside from a lack of green fingers in the family, it's really small. But it's also pretty and delightfully secluded. Yes, we're only a stone's throw from East Finchley High Road. But no, somehow we don't notice the traffic unless we really think about it. Eating al fresco on a balmy summer's evening is positively idyllic.

Mind you, that's because we haven't got a massive Waitrose at the bottom of it. Yet.

As yet, planning permission hasn't officially been sought for a store opposite the tube station. But while nothing's been signed or sealed, plans have certainly been delivered, purportedly incorporating a three-storey car park for 200 vehicles.

Off our trolleys?

Now I'd generally be the last person to say anything disparaging about Waitrose. They sell some great foods. But East Finchley suffers quite enough congestion and pollution already. Besides, how are these thousands of cars - let alone through-the-night delivery lorries - going to get in? From the High Road? Or will Brompton Grove be adopted and cleaned up so that the park, too, can be filled with exhaust fumes?

What about supporting local traders? Do we really want to see more small retailers shutting up shop?

They say that Waitrose is considering other sites, although they already have stores at Brent Cross, North Finchley and Holloway Road. Keep looking please. Because a great big wall at the back won't shut me or my neighbours up. Nor will a short-term pay-off for the community, paltry compensation for what we'd all lose. Do they think we're off our trolleys?

Phew. I'm off to relax now. You'll find me in the back garden.

LETTERS

Unfair competition

Dear Editor

The Archer reported in June that Barnet Council had received a planning application for the Leopold Road Express at 217 High Rd. (alias the Esso petrol station). The proposal includes a new single storey building with a retail sales area of 207 square metres, about 4 times the size of the independent shops in the High Rd, plus parking spaces for 10 cars. However, the application makes no mention of the fact that the applicant is Tesco, and its circulation failed to include most of East Finchley's retailers; even the Town Centre Management team claim they were not aware of the application. In fairness to Barnet Council, they have extended the time to receive comments; the final date was 1 August.

The site, with its own parking spaces, is clearly not part of the shopping centre and will detract from it, not enhance it as claimed. East Finchley retailers have fought very hard in the last few years to keep the High Road alive. We all interact with each other and offer the public a pleasant local shopping environment, and help to keep the community together. With fixed overheads, many just about keep their heads above water.

This shop will sell goods that are obtainable in the existing shops in East Finchley and will undoubtedly cause them to lose trade, leading to many of them, fish shops, butchers, delicatessens, and many others in the High Road folding up.

We are not against fair competition, but Tesco already have a massive site just along the North Circular Road.

If you want giant supermarkets to increase their monopoly, if you think that increased traffic opposite Martin School is a good idea, if you want your High Road to die, it will happen. If not - act to prevent it.

If you want East Finchley

Send your correspondence to: "Letters Page", The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA

to survive and want to support independent competition write to Mr. Scott Laban, PLANNING OFFICE, Finchley & Golders Green Area Planning Team, Barnet House, 1255 High Rd. Whetstone N20 0EJ. Just say we don't want another retail site at Leopold Rd. Express.

From Lawrie Chivers, East Finchley Traders Association & Noel Lynch, Green Party

Another planet?

Dear Editor

Sometimes when I read comments about local bus services in the area I wonder whether I am living on the same planet. I can only speak for the 143 of course, and then only during the day, using the same service every week from Church End to East Finchley. My waiting time over the last 2 years has averaged about 7 minutes. Once or twice in the year I have had to wait over half an hour. The buses are always clean and bright, almost always there is a free seat. There are numerous vertical handrails, with a stop button in front of or behind each row of seats.

So, congratulations, Metroline, long may this continue!

Tony Roberts, Sedgemere Ave, N2

Corner Café

Dear Archer,

They say 'better late than never,' so here's my idea for pigeon corner...though I say so myself, it's Brilliant!... Inspired!... Genius!... Sorry, I got a bit carried away there. Right, anyone who's been to France will know that there's a cafe on almost every corner... people meet for a coffee, chat and watch people walk by; it's a great meeting place. So my suggestion is that on that squared-off corner of Budgens, a conservatory-like structure with a glass roof is extended over pigeon corner (with removable or slide-back glass walls/doors) and inside would be a cafe. In winter the walls would be closed and in summer the walls/doors could slide back and we'd have a wonderful community meeting place.

Obviously, the cafe would not be so big as to restrict people walking around the corner. It occurred to me that maybe Budgens would like to be given the opportunity to run it - after all, they've got the ingredients! Of course, this is England, so let's hear why we CAN'T have a French cafe, and that a bench would be much better (A Bench!!) I await reactions but I'm not holding my breath.

Yours sincerely, Rob Arenstein, East End Road, N2

Breakfast in the Park

Great news for visitors to Cherry Tree Wood this summer! The café is offering a greatly extended menu including all day breakfasts, a choice of hot and cold meals and a wide selection of sandwiches. There is a range of teas, as well as coffee and cold drinks and delicious Italian ice creams.

Weather permitting, there is also live musical entertainment on selected evenings and Sunday lunch times to

accompany the traditional Sunday lunch. And all this in the beautiful surroundings of Cherry Tree Wood!

Can you help The Archer with distribution?

THE ARCHER requires volunteer distributors for the following rounds. Delivery takes place once a month and a typical round takes 30-45 minutes. If you think you may be able to help us or would like to find out more, please call us on 020 8883 0433.

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- ◆ Woodside Avenue (part of) & Lanchester Road
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