



Open Government?

The proposed development of a Waitrose supermarket and library has certainly kept us all busy. Radical changes to a neighbourhood, that a development like this brings, are bound to produce a wide range of opinions and reactions.

THE ARCHER, having finally gained sight of some definite plans after months of speculation, is determined to report all aspects, opinions and reactions, rather than voice an opinion of its own. One would expect local businessmen, residents and special interest groups to form definite opinions, based upon the facts available, and then to make them known. One notable group, however, seems to be unable to give an opinion, even if they wanted to. That group is our local Councillors. I find this an amazing situation. We elect our local representatives based upon what they believe, what they plan and what their stance is on issues that are important to us individually. We may get an opinion on the Euro, fox hunting or global warming, for example, but not on a massive change to our beloved East Finchley.

What is the reason for this astounding situation? Our councillors are either on, or connected to, committees dealing with local planning, presumably, so that they can be fully aware of proposed developments, and to represent the views of East Finchley. Unfortunately, as a result of these offices, our councillors cannot, apparently, voice any opinion; otherwise they could be excluded from the various planning application processes. This is not to say that our Councillors are not concerned or interested. They are. A public meeting is promised, and Councillors have assured THE ARCHER that they are trying to arrange this soon. But there is surely something wrong with the planning rules, or the way



How the proposed store might look

the local political organisations are organised, when all the locally elected representatives of our community cannot tell us what they think about an important local issue. Is this what is meant by 'open Government'?

Friends of Wood vote against Waitrose

The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood voted overwhelmingly against the proposal to build a Waitrose anchor store on the site adjacent to the wood, close to the park entrance. This was one of the results of a questionnaire members were recently invited to complete on three important issues.

They also voted overwhelmingly in favour of locking the park gates at night to deter vandalism. On the third question, that of renovating the derelict pavilion, the majority did not think it would be a suitable place for a restaurant. Many thought that the former kiosk site opposite the tennis courts eminently more suitable.

The Wood in Winter

By Pam Smith of Cherry Tree Road

In Spring the wood is bright and new,
The fresh green leaves are far and few.
In Summer they are packed so tight,
In many parts they block the light.
In Autumn when the leaves are yellow
All the trees just start to mellow.
In Winter when the trees are bare
And all the lovely leaves are rare
'Tis then we see a different view,
The wood takes on a magic hue.
The hoar frost clings to every bough,
The wood is very wintry now.
We walk in snow without a sound,
An eerie silence wraps around.
How beautiful the winter snow,
But we can't wait to see it go.
Stand awhile and see its grace.
Look upon its wintry face.
Thank God for all the beauty there
For Winter has its purpose here
Without it we would have no Spring
So think it as a joyful thing.

Waiting to be Told

By Diana Cormack

Last January THE ARCHER revealed plans for a Waitrose store, which would affect the whole of East Finchley. Recently Councillor Colin Rogers told a meeting of local pressure group *Warning on Waitrose* that Waitrose maintains the High Road could not survive without a superstore, claiming it would bring in customers who would also shop elsewhere in East Finchley. Presumably they would leave their cars in Waitrose's car park while they explore their new environment?

For this venture is also for customers from a wide catchment area to drive in, drive out and maybe drive locals mad with congestion, pollution and possible parking problems. An unconfirmed rumour that all of Brompton Grove is now a public road is worrying residents nearby. They are concerned that vehicles could use it to access Waitrose car park.

A transport business might provide the stumbling block to any plans. John Scott of Greater London Hire, whose car service occupies much of the site, has emphasised that they have no intention of moving or selling out for the foreseeable future.

However, including a public amenity in the plans could be to facilitate the way for a com-

pulsory purchase order. This is the proposed new library, which would be far removed from where there is arguably most need - amongst the residents of Strawberry Vale and the Grange Estate, and both our local primary schools. Tricia Little, Deputy Head of Barnet Cultural Services stated that it is 'only ten minutes walk away' from Martin Schools. How many roads would the children have to cross, necessitating extra supervision, and how much more time would be spent out of the classroom? She also said, "We might develop links with other schools too." There are none in that immediate area, but then perhaps Ms Little does not live around here.

Those who do have been waiting for over a year to be told what is going on. Barnet Council's stock reply continues to be that no application for planning permission has yet been made.

Even so, some businesses have been approached; the site is being inspected; plans are in circulation which surely would not have been drawn up without the borough being consulted? For instance, they must have agreed on a new library. So what do they plan to do with the site of the present one, which just happens to adjoin a very large school field, also owned by Barnet Council.

Unless they tell us exactly where things stand at present, the future of East Finchley High Road appears to lie between a rock and a hard place.

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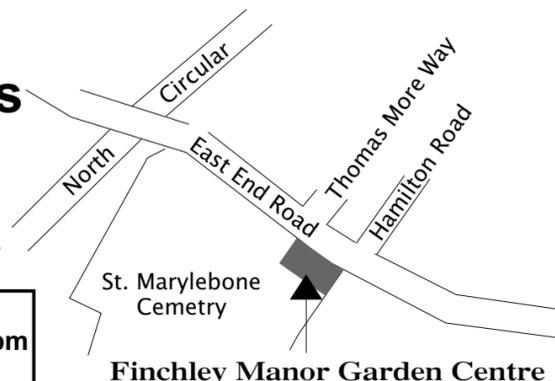
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