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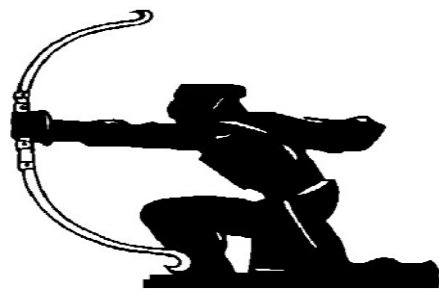
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Armed robbers held up this Securicor van outside Barclays Bank in the High Road. Photo by John Dearing

Armed Robbery in High Road

By John Dearing
On Friday 29 August at around 3 pm, a Securicor van making a delivery to Barclays Bank in the High Road was robbed.

Two men, armed with a gun, arrived on a motorcycle, held up the crew of the van and sped away. Shortly afterwards, armed police arrived to control the situation, but the robbers had escaped.

Not long afterwards, police detectives canvassed local shop workers and passers-by.

Consultation: Cock-up or Conspiracy?

By Tony Roberts

The long awaited and much vaunted library consultation questionnaire finally dropped onto East Finchley residents' doormats last month with a deafening plop— just one per household as anticipated. The slim line questionnaire raised more hidden questions than the formal ones it posed. As expected, not all possible solutions were covered; an extension to the existing library, though feasible, was noticeable by its absence. Nor was any second choice option provided. Given the cost of the survey to council tax payers, one might have thought a thorough job would have been on the cards.

A waste of a mailing?

No supporting information was included in the mailing, so a quick trip to the library to collect a pamphlet is required by anyone wishing to provide a meaningful response to the proposals.

The library plans themselves raise yet a further question. The new first floor library plan looks suspiciously like the controversial proposals for the Waitrose development, extending well beyond Park House; but if that project doesn't go ahead, where does that leave the new library? In the air?

Open minded?

In response to questions, the Leader of Barnet Council, Councillor Victor Lyon told *THE ARCHER*, "Barnet Council has commissioned a reputable independent company who have a great deal of experience in major consultation projects,

and they will continue to assist us through the process for East Finchley Library.

"The future of the library is not pre-determined in any way. We look forward to hearing what local people would like us to provide for them, and remain open-minded about the future of the library. No decision has been made, or will be made until the consultation process has been completed."

Dealing with the questions more directly, local ward councillors Alison Moore, Colin Rogers and Phil Yeoman said "This council consultation falls far short of what we demanded of the Tory Council back in June. We have persistently argued for a full and open consultation on the prospective Waitrose development and library so that all East Finchley residents can have their say on a scheme which will have a major impact on their daily lives. The council aren't interested in those views. The Tories remain determined to impose a scheme on the residents of East Finchley: Move the Library and Open a Superstore."

Cllr Yeoman said "Your Ward Councillors will continue to fight the Waitrose Development and demand that the Library stays where it is and is fully upgraded to meet modern needs."

Ask the right questions

Poorly conducted and badly presented consultation exercises like this one inevitably call into question any mandate that might be claimed from them, and lead to suspicions, if not actual accusations, of manipulation.

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