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THE ARCHER



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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Open at last

By Sheila Armstrong

Despite a last minute attempt to sabotage the official opening of the Artsdepot on 26 October, Prince Edward did do the royal thing and opened it as planned. Like it or loathe it, it's now open. On the preceding Saturday all areas were available for us locals to see, including the café, the bar and most importantly the box office, so *THE ARCHER* went along to look.

Low key event

Architects Ruddle Wilkinson have provided an attractive double-height central circulation space

with theatres, bars and other offices leading off it. The theatres are doubtless state of the art and the uncompromising colours (lime green, maroon



The new Artsdepot in North Finchley. Photo by Tony Roberts

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and black) used in some areas are reminiscent of the Lowry Theatre in Salford. In the foyer a continuously playing pianola provided a bit of atmosphere for what one local described as a rather low key event, suggesting that perhaps tours of the building; videos or something (anything) in the gallery; or short performances in the theatres would have livened things up.

Good vibes

As well as the theatres and gallery, Community Focus, the arts organisation for people of

all abilities, is based there. In their suite of rooms the community workers had put on exhibitions, videos and slides showing their work. And there were plenty of staff on hand to answer questions; they said they are pleased with their new headquarters. Wheel chair access around the building seemed to be generally good.

In January 2005 the Performing Arts Department of Barnet College will be transferring there and has its own suite including a dance studio. At the Open Day their students

acted as volunteer stewards throughout the building, all of them enthusiastic about the coming move. Quite a lot of locals turned up to see what was on offer and the café and bar were full. Hopefully the box office did good business and will continue to do so. The Artsdepot now needs all of us to go along to support their wide-ranging first season's programme. For more information go to www.artsdepot.co.uk, or get details from the box office on 020 8449 0048.

Stanley Road Field to be assessed

By Daphne Chamberlain

A Regional Facilities Manager for the Football Association is visiting Stanley Road Playing Field this month (December). He will be assessing whether it is eligible for grassroots development - i.e. pitch, lighting and clubhouse - under the terms of the Sport England Community Club Development Programme.

The visit has been arranged by Philip King, from The Walks Residents' Association. As reported in *THE ARCHER* last month, Mr King asked at the Finchley Forum whether

Barnet had made any move toward securing funding from Sport England for the field. He was told that a Council officer would contact him, but at the time of going to press he has

heard nothing from them.

At present, floodlights and changing facilities for the field are housed in the Herbert Wilmot Centre, which Councillor John Marshall has told us needs £250,000 to be made usable (see Letters Page).

If the field is considered suitable for development, the actual application must be made by Barnet, but meanwhile Mr King is setting the wheels in motion.

He has invited Councillor Alison Moore and *THE ARCHER* to be present at the assessment.

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