



# Fury Over Plans

By Daphne Chamberlain

Local residents at February's Finchley Forum protested vehemently about the latest plans for large residential blocks, housing 600 people, plus accommodation for the HGS Institute on the former Neurological Hospital site. Their representative, Mr Stein, claimed he was speaking on behalf of a very large proportion of his neighbours.

They wanted to know why the Barnet Planning Officer's report now accepted key factors which had been rejected in four previous and very similar plans. These included access from The Bishop's Avenue and the height of the proposed buildings – over half as much again as neighbouring houses.

Although the Victorian Society, English Heritage, the HGS Trust and Barnet's own Conservation Department considered the plans unsuitable, the Officer's Report made no objection. The residents have commissioned their own expert reports, and were prepared – albeit reluctantly – to engage in litigation.

## Reticence

Cllr John Marshall replied that the Planning Committee was actually not recommending acceptance, and agreed that height measurements needed to be re-checked. Residents, however, were concerned that the Committee was not recommending the plans on only one point. This, they said, implied acceptance of the others. They also resented having to keep informing the Council of their objections to almost identical plans.

Another spokesman said that the silence in which this is being put through is unacceptable, and the consultation period was too short. He objected to

loss of light and privacy, and to noise from a plant-room which would be sited 22 metres from his home.

Cllr Marshall said that comments from the HGS Trust received after 19 February would be considered, and that he would recommend that other comments should be too.

Chair, Councillor Leslie Sussman, agreed with residents that the consultation should be widened, saying that increased traffic was an important issue in this area. He also directed the Planning Department to respond "properly" to residents' objections.

See the rest of the Forum Report on page 4.



The Thomas More Centre. Photo by Tony Roberts

## Parking Fears at Thomas More

By Sophie Leighton

Residents of the area around Thomas More Way were informed at the end of January by the Planning department at Barnet Council that a new prefabricated building is proposed to go on the site of the Thomas More Centre car park, putting nearly three quarters of the existing parking provision out of use.

This is intended to provide temporary office and teaching space for Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute, ostensibly for an initial three-to-five year period. However welcome the extra teaching provision may be in theory, this proposal is causing great concern to local residents because of the practical implications for access to the site. Residents believe this proposed development will add substantially to what is perceived to be an already a severe problem with parking in the surrounding area.

Thomas More Way is the only access route to six

closes, which include sheltered housing for the elderly and disabled and a day care centre for those with special needs – for all of which fast access for the emergency services could be critical. There is also concern that restricted visibility at the junction of Thomas More Way and East End Road is a traffic hazard.

A petition against this building proposal has been organised and submitted by Janice Wagner of Helen Close. Anyone wishing to add further support to the local campaign against this can contact Janice Wagner on 020 8343 0704.

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