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Local News Is Our Aim

THE ARCHER



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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

No to Esso, no to Tesco

The Planning Inspectorate has again dismissed an appeal regarding the site occupied by the Leopold Road Service Station at 217 High Road.

The decision on the redevelopment, proposed by the Esso Petroleum Company Ltd, was judged mainly on "whether the proposal would satisfy the aims of national and local retail planning policies having regard to the need for the retail development, the sequential approach to the site selection and the vitality and viability of East Finchley town centre."

Readers may remember that a previous appeal made by Tesco/Esso Alliance for the same site for redesign of

their forecourt and an expanded retail facility, was turned down in June 2003.

Meanwhile nearby...

The Finchley Society has objected to Tesco's proposals to expand their store in Colney Hatch Lane because it would increase traffic problems in the locality and take away business over a considerable area. The society is particularly concerned at the effect of new and expanding supermarkets on local shops and the way this reduces the amenities of town centres.



The filling station this time last year Photo by Tony Roberts

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Not all child's play

By Diana Cormack

After months of hard work, the committee of the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood has succeeded in acquiring funding for improvements to the children's playground. As well as replacing broken and old equipment, the Friends wanted more facilities for older children, plus a high quality safe surface.

They are one of the lucky community groups to benefit from a £30 million Government grant scheme to help local people improve their environment. Funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Living Spaces provides funds and support to help people make the most of open spaces in their neighbourhood. The scheme allows community groups to improve and create a range of spaces from play areas, community gardens, local parks and city farms to ponds, kick-about areas, squares and village greens.

Living Spaces awards grants from £1000 to £100,000 - but money isn't the only support available. A network of trained 'enablers' is on hand to turn the ideas of local groups into a reality. These Living Space enablers help draw up detailed

action plans and budgets and put groups in touch with other organisations who can help ensure projects are successful. Grants are available to neighbourhood groups anywhere in England. Call 0845 600 3190 or visit www.living-spaces.org.uk for application details.

Bigger and better

The success of the Friends' application means that there will be safety surfaces in line with current regulations for both old and new apparatus in the popular play area. Barnet, who offered to match the money allocated by Living Spaces, is paying for this. There are to be exciting new playthings for older users, including a Skyway cable ride, a bicycle roundabout and bigger swings. In addition to improvements to the present equipment, there will be a new Moses Spring along with a

Moby Spring and a Sharky Spring. It is hoped that the work will be carried out in April.

David Attfield, who spearheaded the Friends' action said, "The playground is very well used and our plans to improve it enjoyed strong support. This funding helps secure the long term future of the playground."

To avoid the danger of further falling branches (a huge bough broke off and fell over the play area last autumn) Barnet Council is proposing to cut down four of the oak trees that overhang the playground.

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