



Building a castle from a crumbling ruin

By Luisa Cotardo and Martin Mitchell

The power of community is no better illustrated than in the restoration of a castellated folly in the grounds of Avenue House, known as The Bothy.

Avenue House, set in parkland with rare, magnificent trees and rolling lawns, was bequeathed by 'Inky' Stephens to the people of Finchley. The Bothy, which has the distinction of being one of the earliest reinforced concrete buildings in England, originally served as residential accommodation for workers at the estate in East End Road. Sadly, though in the care of successive councils, The Bothy was allowed to become a crumbling ruin.

Two-phase programme

Now the untiring efforts of local residents armed with goodwill and tenacity are giving The Bothy and its garden a new lease of life by turning it into a centre for local arts.

With the help of a substantial grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund of £418,000 and grants from The Rose Trust and Milly Aphorp Trust, phase one of the redevelopment is practically complete. Three meeting rooms have been created: an art gallery, a story-telling area and a café.

During phase one, open-air entertainment, in the form of plays by Shakespeare and music concerts, has been successfully staged. The second phase of work comprises the formation

of two large community studios for which further finance is being sought.

Kings of the castle

It is impossible to mention all the volunteers involved with administration as well as practical work on site but consultant Michael Holden deserves a special mention, because he oversaw the building of the Shakespeare Globe Theatre in its final stage and is doing the same for this project.

On 23 July more than 100 supporters toured the restored Bothy, exploring its castellations. With a stretch of the

imagination it could have been a feudal fortress. The view from the castellations overlooked the beautifully restored walled garden and beyond, the park enjoying its summer splendour.

The story of The Bothy shows how the cooperation and dedication of ordinary members of the community can build real castles for everybody to enjoy.

More information can be found at www.bothyartsfinchley.org.uk, or by contacting Mike Walsh, Chairman of Finchley Art Centre Trust, email: mike.walsh44@ntlworld.com.



Do more with feeling

East Finchley artist Kit Friend describes a forthcoming project using drama and the arts to help Romanian street children.

As a local boy from East Finchley I'm aware of the vibrant arts and creative scene we have within our village community.

Having attended Holy Trinity and Hendon Schools, then the Central St Martins art-school, I have been given many privileges. Though my work spans fine art, photography, jewellery, and various design disciplines, I am now embarking on ambitious projects within a charitable organisation called With Feeling.

With Feeling exists to bring artists, designers and other creative people together with doctors, students, and other medical practitioners for the benefit of under-privileged communities.

Thus far our work has helped hundreds of children in orphanages, principally in Romania. We have touched the lives of many young people who come from tragic backgrounds both in and outside of institutions and who suffer from HIV, autism and other disorders.

Our next project begins this September. We aim to build a drop-in centre in a regenerated building within Bucharest, the capital of Romania and home to many street children for whom having a normal, healthy life is often impossible.

With solvent addiction in more than 95% of the street child population, HIV rife, and sex work frequently an occupation from the age of 12 or younger, it can seem that a way out is impossible. But there

is hope.

Working with teams of students from St Barts and the Royal London Hospitals, Central St Martins College of Art and Design, and other professional bodies and NGOs, With Feeling will provide design for the drop-in centre and the arts activities and education that our medical wing has shown to be so beneficial, as well as much needed health advice and support.

We also plan to educate and empower members of the street child population to take over the running of the centre from us, so that it may become self-sufficient.

How you can help

We need donations, and fast. Right now we need funding for a photographic and site research trip in September. We need to pay for flights, accommodation, and additional photographic equipment.

The trip will provide materials for our advertising and literature, as well as for an exhibition we hope to hold early next year in a prominent London gallery to raise awareness of our work amongst potential patrons.

If you or your business can sponsor our trip and work or help us with money or equipment please visit www.withfeeling.org.uk or email kit@withfeeling.org.uk. Together we can do more With Feeling.

Developer gets second bite of the cherry

By John Dearing

Lincoln Parade is a row of shops on the corner of Lincoln Road and the High Road. It has been a feature of East Finchley for decades, but in recent years many of the shops have often been unoccupied.

Since 2000, there has been a succession of applications to demolish these shops and redevelop the site. All the previous applications have been rejected or withdrawn, but the latest one, which proposes that four two-storey "town houses" should be built, went to the Finchley and Golders Green Area Planning Sub-Committee meeting on 20 July, with a recommendation from the Planning Officer to accept the application.

THE ARCHER reported this spring how the owners and customers of the Local Café, on the corner of Lincoln Road and the High Road, were objecting to a development plan for Lincoln Parade that would have cut the floor space of the café and forced it to alter its kitchen.

There were a number of objections to the latest application, a petition with 137 signatures on it and some objectors spoke against it at the meeting. The Sub-Committee rejected the application.

Among the reasons (as posted on the London Borough of Barnet web site) were that it would be

an inappropriate form of development, providing limited amenity space; that it would result in the loss of potential retail uses, and detriment to a local café within an area of primary retail frontage which would result in harm to the vitality and viability of East Finchley Town Centre; and that parking availability and pedestrian safety would be affected.

However, the application was then referred to the main Barnet Planning Committee for reconsideration on 30 August. Councillor John Marshall, the Chair of the Sub-Committee, told *THE ARCHER* that the sub-committee rules allowed for such a referral if at least two members of the sub-committee thought it necessary.

He said that shops in the parade were "under-utilised"; that he thought the decision was not the correct one; that the application ought to be considered by a larger, more representative group; and that an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate was likely to succeed and might result in Barnet Council incurring significant legal costs.

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Did you know...?

Having witnessed many local wrangles with traffic wardens, we thought this snippet from a recent news release from the Conservative party in Barnet might be of interest.

The release talks about a report that "calls for charges and Parking Schemes to be constantly monitored ... this is already done by Barnet, as is giving five minutes' grace for Pay and Display users".

So next time you're a couple of minutes over your time, you'll know the official policy.