



Cherry Tree Wood pavilion: the debate

Plans to convert the derelict pavilion in Cherry Tree Wood into a café and well-being centre were first aired in 2008 and will be submitted in a formal planning application later this month. There are many people who support the plans and many others who have concerns.

Here, we give space to both sides of the debate. We hear from the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood Pavilion, the group

behind the redevelopment plans, and from those who are not happy about them and would like more consultation.



Plans take shape

After a year of sounding out park users and local residents, Sally-Anne Wigfield, who runs the park's popular kiosk café, has brought together a group of local residents to help her transform the pavilion building in Cherry Tree Wood.

"Following a lengthy public consultation exercise on 12 July, including a display of the plans in the wood, we have taken the concerns of those living close to the pavilion fully into account in our forthcoming planning application to Barnet Council," said Sally-Anne.

Community facility

Planning permission is being sought to change the derelict pavilion building into a café and educational and holistic well-being centre, which can be used by local community groups on a not-for-profit basis.

Objections to the plans have been acted upon. "As originally envisaged the pavilion will only be open during park opening hours and there will be no access to the building from outside the park," said Sally-Anne.

FCTWP back plans

The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood Pavilion, a group of local residents, has been set up to support the venture and has received strong support from many local people.

Committee member Ryan Glaser, of Cherry Tree Road, said: "We believe that the initial objections from those living close to the pavilion have been met in the planning application, and hope that Barnet Council will support Sally in her plans to transform what is currently an eyesore into a community facility that East Finchley can be proud of."

The planning application will be submitted before the end of November. The support group has set up a website www.foctwpavilion.org.uk to keep local residents up-to-date with the progress of the proposed scheme.

Consultation please

Significant plans are afoot for the redevelopment of the pavilion in Cherry Tree Wood. The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood Pavilion (FOCTWP), responsible for the project, is a new small group entirely independent from the established Friends of Cherry Tree Wood.

Many people view the FOCTWP plans positively. Others, however, have legitimate and considerable concerns (impact on nature, increased traffic, noise, evening activities and security) which they want taken on board before planning permission is sought, and there are plenty of others who will oppose the project outright during formal consultation.

Feedback frustrated

Though the FOCTWP have verbally nodded towards cooperation on elements of their plans, Barnet Council, residents are told, will not consider feedback until after planning has been sought officially. One of the community's elected councillors is a member of FOCTWP, which has caused more unrest.

The official Finchley and Golders Green Residents' Forum, to which people were directed to air their views, was cancelled at the last minute. And the reason? The Council "could not find a venue".

Green space option

At a recent meeting an overwhelming majority of residents voted in favour of demolishing the pavilion and returning the land to green space. What better way for Barnet Council to demonstrate its commitment to green spaces?

Numerous people wonder why we are even debating the unhealthy alternative of a commercial enterprise in our small oasis. Many say that the activities the FOCTWP propose are already on their doorsteps via The Institute, as well as an abundance of cafés, pubs and the appropriately-sized Kiosk in Cherry Tree Wood.

After all, a true project for the community can only be shaped by the community, right, Barnet?



On the ball: Arsene Wenger and Ed Balls celebrate the opening with one of the TreeHouse pupils. Photo by Alex MacNaughton

Gunners support TreeHouse

Arsenal manager Arsène Wenger was guest of honour when Ed Balls, the Secretary Of State for the Department of Children, Schools and Families, officially opened the

Dismay at delayed forum

Cancellation of the Golders Green and Finchley Area Forum due to be held at Pardes House School, Hendon Lane, N3, displeased many East Finchley residents. Two groups were hoping to air matters currently causing local concern, one being Barnet's proposed plans on controlled parking zones in N2, the other being the redevelopment of the pavilion in Cherry Tree Wood.

A council spokesman told *THE ARCHER* that the meeting was cancelled because outstanding planning enforcement requirements relating to the Pardes House School site had still to be complied with. As the cancellation was announced eight days before the scheduled meeting on 14 October, many felt that the council could have found another venue.

The council spokesman said: "Unfortunately, there was not

enough time to make alternative arrangements for the meeting to go ahead at alternative premises on the same date."

The forum was rearranged and took place at Avenue House on Monday 26 October.

new national centre for TreeHouse, the national charity for autism education, in October.

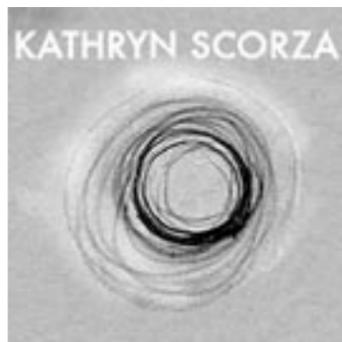
The building in Woodside Avenue, Muswell Hill, took 18 months and £11.5 million to complete. It was officially named The Pears National Centre for Autism Education, after receiving support from The Pears Foundation.

Arsenal FC raised £500,000 towards the building when TreeHouse was their Charity of the Season in 2007-08.

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