



Concerns over future of green space

By Janet Maitland

The old East Finchley substation on the Great North Road is being sold by Transport for London (TfL). The site is just south of the bridge, on the opposite side of the road to the tube station. You may not have realised the substation is there because it is concealed by several mature trees. These are growing in an attractive grassed area in front of the boundary to the substation.

There are concerns that the sale of the substation, which is being marketed by Knight Frank for residential or office use, may pose a risk of development on the grassed area as well as the land behind the barrier. "The grassed area is an attractive natural feature, with seating for local residents, within an otherwise urban environment," said Stephen Barry, who lives on the Great North Road. "It shouldn't be built on."

Mr Barry is also worried that additional vehicle use could be a problem, depending on the new usage

Part of the grassed area belongs to Barnet Council and is not for sale. This is the triangular piece of land immediately south of the bridge, which runs as far as the first entrance to the substation. The rest of the grassed area belongs to TfL and is for sale along with the substation.

Status unclear

TfL's report to the estate agent makes it clear that



Does this High Road verge have a green future? Photo by John Lawrence

national and local planning policies, such as its location within the green corridor and its proximity to Hampstead Garden Suburb, would seem to preclude any development on the grassed area. However, TfL also states that the grassed area has not been formally designated as an open space, nor has it been categorised as an incidental open space, nor has it been registered as having Village Green status. If registered

as a Village Green, the verge could not be built on.

Barnet Council has confirmed to THE ARCHER that, although only part of the grassed area belongs to them, they maintain all of it "as parks and open space".

Bishop Douglass Christmas party

Just before Christmas last year, over 100 elderly residents of East Finchley enjoyed a lively evening with the students and teachers at Bishop Douglass School. This year's party is on Thursday 8 December from 5pm and if you are over the age of 65, live in East Finchley and wish to come you should book your place without delay.

The event will consist of a three-course Christmas dinner, entertainment from the students, carol singing, games of bingo and a gift from Santa Claus. Transport can be provided if you are unable to make your own way to the school in Hamilton Road. Just contact Pam Kent on 020 8444 6690 before 20 November to reserve your place.

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Two injured on North Circular

By Janet Maitland

A woman was seriously injured in a crash on the North Circular Road on 3 October when a Range Rover collided with a taxi at about 2.30pm.

The taxi driver, a 56-year-old man, and the passenger, a 66-year-old woman, were taken by ambulance to St Mary's Hospital in central London as priority cases. The passenger had several fractures to her legs which police described as possibly life changing. The driver was less seriously hurt, but had injuries to his head and arms and chest pains.

There was a large diesel spill as a result of the collision and police closed the road until 5.15pm. This caused gridlocked traffic on many local roads until late afternoon.

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St Mary's says farewell to Fr Tony

By Neil McNaughton



Father Tony says farewell. Photo by Neil McNaughton

Hundreds of parishioners turned out on Saturday 1 October to bid farewell to Father Tony Pellegrini, who has retired after six years as parish priest of St Mary's Catholic Church. The size of the gathering and the warmth that was clearly evident bore testimony to his popularity and the high regard in which he has been held.

In an emotional speech, Father Tony outlined his own journey to the parish. Born in Istanbul, he was a much-travelled child before settling in England. He felt a calling to the priesthood as early as the age of 16 but decided instead to enter the teaching profession. After a successful career in education, including 21 years as a head teacher, he rekindled his original vocation and applied to enter the priesthood.

Having been accepted, he trained in Rome for the next four years. He confessed that his only knowledge of East Finchley at this time was that he passed through it regularly on the way to watching his beloved Arsenal! When

he became the parish priest, however, he learned what a friendly, generous and vibrant community it is.

Father Tony was reluctant to single out individuals for special mention as he had received so much support and friendship, but he did select three people whom he wished to thank especially: Marie Bloom, the parish secretary and sacristan, Hugh O'Gara and Daniel Servini. He added that his heart was in a turmoil. He was indeed looking forward to retirement, but was also dismayed at the thought of leaving so many friends.

He is succeeded by Father Terry Tastard, who joins St Mary's from Brook Green where he was also parish priest.

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