



New teaching blocks for three schools

Christ's College Finchley has unveiled plans for a new teaching block as part of Barnet Council's secondary school expansion scheme. The East End Road school was the first of three secondary schools across the borough to unveil their plans at a pre-planning consultation event.

The new teaching block will allow for one additional form of entry each year for five years from September 2013, plus an additional 21 students to the sixth form in 2013 and 2014. This would bring the school's total capacity up to 1,152 students by 2017.

Meanwhile, The Compton School will have a new teaching block containing classrooms for art, drama and music departments, space for student services and curriculum support, as well as related office and storage facilities.

Cophall School's plans will be shared with parents and residents in the next few months. All three Academy schools will provide an additional 30 permanent school places each per year from September 2013.

Expansion and choice

The total cost of the permanent expansions for the three

schools is expected to be £10.8 million, divided between the three schools.

Councillor Andrew Harper, Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families, said: "We have seen a huge number of families moving into the borough over recent years to take advantage of the first-class education we offer. This strategy allows us to expand our successful schools while giving parents more choice for their children."

The expansion plans come as work continues towards opening a completely new secondary school in East Finchley in September 2013. The Archer Academy, a mixed, non-denominational, non-selective free school specialising in maths and English, will be located at the Institute Arts Centre building behind the tube station.



Archer Academy head Mick Quigley, chair of governors Avis Johns and Mike Freer MP at the House of Commons. Photo by Allison Goodings

MP backs new free school

By Nick Young

The Archer Academy has received the unequivocal backing of Mike Freer, MP for Finchley and Golders Green and, as he put it, "the MP for the Archer Academy".

Speaking at a reception at the House of Commons for supporters of East Finchley's new secondary school, Mr Freer praised the Academy team for the thoroughness of their free school proposal, which he said had particularly impressed Lord

Hill, the schools minister (who has since been promoted to the Cabinet as Leader of the House of Lords). "I will continue to support the Archer Academy, which I am sure will go from strength to strength," said Mr Freer.

Avis Johns, who started the campaign for a new school and is now its Chair of Governors, spoke of how the campaign began following the realisation that her daughter would not have a secondary school in East Finchley. "Our children deserve the very best," she said. "We will be opening doors that they may not know are there."

The Academy, which opens in September, is now advertising for teachers and has even taken out a front-page advertisement in the *Times Educational Supplement*. "Active and engaged staff will be a feature of the Academy," said headteacher Mick Quigley. "We are building a school that we can be proud of."

School close to selecting first intake

The Archer Academy, the new secondary school planned for the area, will shortly be determining who the first children to go to the school will be. Applications for the first year's intake of pupils will close as Valentine's Day arrives, and offers will be made soon after.

Chair of governors Avis Johns reported that applications had been strong and the school was on course to be substantially oversubscribed in its first year.

Parents who have applied for their children to attend will hear on 1 March, which is national offers day, whether or not they have been offered a place. Because the school's admissions are run separately to Barnet's admissions process for the first year only, parents may find they are offered two places, one from Barnet and one from the Archer Academy.

The school recently announced that its first home will be the Arts Institute Centre behind East Finchley station, after acquiring the building from the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute, which will remain in the building as part of the deal.

Applications for September 2013 places remain open until midnight on 13 February, at www.thearcheracademy.org.uk/admissions

Housing plan changes fail to ease concerns

By Mandy Rabin

In early January, developers submitted to Haringey Council minor changes to their plans to build two houses on a plot of land north of the allotments by Fortis Green's covered reservoir. The plot, reservoir and allotments are designated as Significant Local Open Land, and plans to build on it have provoked opposition from hundreds of local residents, Tetherdown School and Fortis Green Community Allotments Trust.

Campaigners say the latest changes to the plans address none of the concerns of the local community. "They do not even comply with the council's modest requests to lower the height of the houses slightly and move one of them further south. Yet again, the plans were submitted during school holidays, making it harder for the community to object," said a spokeswoman.

Furthermore, the architect of the planned buildings discovered that the new house adjacent to the plot is 40 cm higher

than in plans approved by the council, raising questions about the council's ability to compel developers to build according to approved measurements.

Local activists are asking residents to submit objections to these plans yet again, to retain the character of this precious open space and keep cars off the pedestrian path. Comments on the plans can be submitted on Haringey's planning page at www.tinyurl.com/85woodside. Updates on the residents' campaign can be found at www.85woodside.com

Curiouser and curiouser

The Garden Suburb Theatre is presenting an innovative and exciting version of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* at Henrietta Barnett School Theatre, in Central Square, NW11.

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