



# Residents unite against plans for new tower block

By Janet Maitland

**A Residents Forum has been set up to give a more powerful voice to people living in Prospect Ring, N2, and to those objecting to plans for a new 13-storey tower block on the estate.**

The forum started after Barnet Homes, who manage the council's housing stock, held its first consultation event about the proposed new block. "It wasn't a consultation, it was a telling," said Patricia Chinyoka, who set up the forum. "And it was clear from the way they'd changed the plans at the second meeting that they're still not listening."

## Proposed block too tall

Barnet Homes' original proposal was for an 11-storey block with 42 flats, but this was changed to a narrower building of 13 storeys with a reconfigured layout and 51 flats after many residents expressed concerns about losing their light, views and privacy. The Prospect Ring community is also concerned about the impact on local services, traffic and parking spaces.

Antonia Dietmann, another resident, said: "We don't know how they can justify another tower block when residents have clearly asked for no more than five storeys. The forum means we'll have a much

greater impact on the planning process. We've got a strong community here already, and this is making it even stronger."

Barnet Homes say they've responded to residents' concerns by changing the design of the tower so it will have less impact on residents' light and privacy. "We've balanced parking needs with providing much needed affordable housing and good quality amenity space," said a spokesperson. "The planning application will set out the comments we've received and how they've been considered."

## Next stage

Barnet Homes was due to send the plans to Barnet Council by the end of October ahead of an application to the planning committee by the end of December. A statutory consultation period of 21 days will follow.

The Residents' Forum will be producing a template letter to help anyone who wants to object. Copies are available by emailing [prospectringforum@gmail.com](mailto:prospectringforum@gmail.com).



Looking good: John Kazul in his blue specs. Photo Ruth Anders.

# A clear-eyed view of running a good business

By Ruth Anders

**The first thing you notice about John Kozul are his eyes; hardly surprising, as he is a dispensing optician. John owns Stewart Duncan, which is celebrating 55 years in business on the High Road.**

From childhood John knew he wanted his own business. Having trained in Zagreb, romance brought him from Yugoslavia to England, where he managed Dollond & Aitchison's flagship Oxford Circus branch for ten years.

## Learning from a legend

In 2002 he met Alan Stewart-Duncan, whom he describes as a legend. "The thing about Alan was he didn't have clients, he had friends," says John. "He knew many very well, seeing families through two or more generations, which makes for much deeper relationships."

Taking over the business in 2002, John realised that this was the secret of success. He grew to love East Finchley and his clients as much as Alan had before him. His own 'friends' look for a targeted personal service rather than a cheap 'two

for one' deal.

John looked for optometrists to chime with this principle, and Declan Ronaghan and Stan Wan, poached from other companies, fitted the bill. With an exciting range of international spectacle frames, he has plans to modernise the shop and his

enthusiasm is palpable.

And why the sparkling eyes? They are enhanced by his own very cool blue frames which his staff encouraged him to wear. "They told me I need more colour now that my hair is grey, to stop me fading away into black and white!"

# It's all about the community, says station prize winner

By Neil McNaughton

**For nine years Nino Santos, known as Santos, has been trying to win one of London Underground's Community Award or Underground in Bloom prizes, but with no luck. A couple of runner-up awards was all he could boast.**

Then this year the customer services duty manager at East Finchley Station hit the jackpot with first place in the Community competition and runner up in the In Bloom section. The secret of this year's success, he told *The Archer*, had been a collaboration with Martin Junior School.

Their Destination N2 project encouraged people to tell their own stories of how they and their families had ended up living or working in East Finchley. The colourful display of handwritten notes in the station foyer delighted commuters throughout the summer.

## Nine years looking out for us

Santos has his own story to tell. He came to the UK from Brazil 21 years ago, did various jobs, married an Italian lady and has raised a family here. He has worked in customer relations

at East Finchley station for the past nine years.

"I have seen many children growing up as they pass through, including some who have gone from Martin School through to university," he said. "We always take our holidays in the UK and I often meet people who recognise me and it is like meeting old friends. East Finchley is a great community and I love being part of it."

## A green welcome

He is also proud of the creative display of flowers and other plants he has created in the foyer and praises the station book swap scheme. Next time you are passing through, it is worth looking out for Santos and having a chat about what's going on in N2. He considers his job as much more than answering travel queries; it is also about giving customers a friendly welcome to our neighbourhood.

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