



Restaurant's bid for shisha smoking turned down AGAIN

By Janet Maitland

The long-running saga over whether the Oasis restaurant on Church Lane, N2, should be allowed to host shisha smoking has reached another milestone after Barnet Council once again refused permission.

If you thought the Secretary of State had already ruled against shisha smoking back in January, you are right. However, the main concern then was that the ventilation system had only been tested for smoke drift on a single day. So the owner Khalil Jelbouia had the system tested over seven days and submitted another application.

The council agreed that the new ventilation system installed last July is very powerful, but they cannot be certain that it will prevent smoke from drifting outside in all situations because the roof is partially open due to smoking regulations. According to the council's report, a "combination of increased wind speed, direction and varying numbers of smokers" might therefore offset its effectiveness. Testing the system over seven days wasn't enough.

Catch 22

But how can the Oasis test the system in any way at all when that makes them liable for an unlimited fine for not complying with the ruling of the Secretary of State? And when it is the council that is responsible for enforcing the ruling?

We asked the council what would satisfy them that the

system had been properly tested and what they had done to enforce the ruling. "The use of the premises is under investigation," said a spokesperson. "In the meantime, the applicant is able to seek advice from the Planning Service regarding alternative proposals."

Key issue is odour nuisance

The council report makes a point of stressing that its refusal is based on no other consideration than the nuisance of odour to neighbouring properties on Church Lane, Leopold Road and the future housing development to be built on the old Esso site.

It also states that "the principle or morality or location of the unit comprising shisha use" are not material considerations and neither are "health issues arising from shisha smoking". Furthermore, the proposal for smoking is not considered detrimental to the character and appearance of the surroundings. Consideration has been given to the Oasis' former existence as a pub.

Of the 140 people who commented on the restaurant's application, 119 supported it. Seventeen of the 21 objectors live on Leopold Road.



Green and silver: From left to right, champion gardeners Caroline Broome, Rosie Daniels and Diane Berger.

Garden winners all in a row

There were two hat tricks for local gardeners in this year's London Gardens Society awards. Caroline and David Broome, of Church Lane, N2, won Best Small Back Garden for the third year on the trot and Diane Berger, of Willifield Way, Hampstead Garden Suburb, won Best Large Back Garden, also for the third year. At the same time, Rosie Daniels, of Park Crescent, N3, was runner-up in the Best Patio section. Congratulations to them all.

Kick start to library fundraising

The Archer Academy will officially unveil its £250,000 fundraising campaign to build a new library and resource centre this month and it's being backed by award-winning local children's author Anne-Marie Conway, who will donate £20,000 from the sale of her new book.

It is one of a number of initiatives to help reach the school's ambitious target to 'Make Beaumont Brilliant', so-called because the library and resource centre will be built at the Upper School site on Beaumont Close, N2.

Anne-Marie will read from her book, called *Unicorn Girl*, at a special Q&A session for students, and later for parents and residents. She said: "My eldest son joined the Archer Academy the year it opened and I've also taught drama there, so it's close to my heart."

Headteacher Lucy Harrison said: "It may seem ambitious to try to raise a quarter of a million pounds in the current climate. But we are passionate about the value of reading and independent study, and are determined to ensure that our GCSE students

have the space and facilities they need to support their learning."

People who want to support the appeal can buy 'leaves' at different prices, starting with Platinum at £5,000, going down to Green at £50. Every

purchaser will have their name displayed on a permanent tribute in the finished library. The appeal has so far raised more than £38,000 and people can donate online here: <https://tinyurl.com/archermbb>

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RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

Phoenix nights

There's something about the movies that endures. Well, in the world of Netprimeflix, it may not endure for everyone, but it sure as hell does for me. It was the first place you could watch flickering images on a silver screen that towered in front of you in a way that no megascreen TV can ever manage.

It's been going for well over a century and here in East Finchley we've had our own magic box of tricks since 1912. I'm not old enough to remember the old Picturehouse or even much about the Rex, but the 1970s and the Phoenix is where I come in.

Back then the pubs closed at 11pm, TV had only three channels, shut down before midnight and was mostly in black and white. So what was a poor boy meant to do after playing in a rock'n'roll band? Well, I'll tell you what we used to do on Friday and Saturday nights, we used to go to the movies. And that meant the late night show at the Phoenix.

Arriving just in time before the first film, bottles of cider and cans of beer hidden under our coats, we knew we were entering another world. We'd pay a couple of quid, climb the old twisting staircase to the auditorium, find the right seats and settle down to watch films they didn't show at the Odeon. It was a movie education.

Trust me on this, but watching *Casablanca* or *Some Like it Hot* in the dark on a big screen is so much better than watching them on TV. Settling down to our favourite double bill of *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Chinatown*, or indulging in late 60s nostalgia by getting recreationally wasted to *Woodstock*, or even drifting our way through *The Man Who Fell to Earth* followed by *2001: A Space Odyssey* was the perfect way to end an evening.

Now older, and no wiser, but still in love with flickering images, I have constantly returned, knowing that the Phoenix might change, but would still be the same, still an experience, still show movies that I couldn't see at a multiplex and do it in style.

Do I care that the Curzon group are going to take over the programming? Maybe, but if they are going to keep showing the kind of films that got me hooked on movies I'll go with it. If the choice is that or a dark screen and a selection of executive apartments, I'll go with the Curzon Phoenix East Finchley.