



Eleventh hour proposal to alter design of flats

By Janet Maitland

The owner of the unsightly wasteland on the corner of Church Lane and the High Road, N2, has applied for approval to alter plans for the flats he was given permission to build well over two years ago.

Timing is already tight as construction of the two blocks of flats cannot begin until the owner meets several conditions, such as the submission and approval of a drainage strategy. No such submissions have yet been made even though

be at odds with the surroundings and an overdevelopment of the site.

It took three years, another failed submission, a successful appeal to Secretary of State MP James Brokenshire, and then yet another submission before



New block: An artist's impression of the new development on the corner of the High Road and Church Lane released late last year

the council will cancel the permission to build if the flats are not started by the end of November, whether the recent application for alterations is approved or not.

The application includes 'changes to layouts of units, windows, entrance doors and roof lights, extension of amenity space, raising height of one block by 300mm and lower ground floor levels of block 2'.

Original eight homes become 20

Seven years ago the land was home to an unremarkable Esso petrol station. Then Esso sold it to Leopold Properties who made an unsuccessful application to build eight homes, refused as they were thought to

Barnet Council agreed in 2019 that the development could go ahead.

This was despite local residents protesting that the density had almost doubled in the final application and now consisted of 20 flats in two large 'overbearing' blocks, rather than the three terraced houses along Leopold Road and one block of six flats that the Secretary of State gave permission for in 2018.

Plan detail unavailable

It is not clear what impact the latest changes, if implemented, will have on residents' concerns as detailed plans are not available. The site, known as Leopold Court, is for sale with Goldschmidt & Howland for £6 million.

Black Gull still flying

By Iain Smith

Readers of our March edition may remember reading that East Finchley's Black Gull Books might be closing. This was the result of Chris Overfield, the owner, deciding to retire to the south coast this year.

This would be very sad for East Finchley, as the bookshop is unique in its mix of antiquarian and other quality second-hand books.

Now for some good news. Chris has told us his departure from the business will not happen this year so Black Gull Books will stay open under his ownership for a further period, probably until next summer.

This gives more time for him

to find a way of passing on or otherwise ensuring the survival of one of our most interesting High Road shops.

In parallel, the book shop has relaunched its series of special events. There has also been some targeted marketing intended to raise its profile in East Finchley and selected nearby areas. Look out for any such offer posted through your letterbox.



Alma mater: David Hughes and his mum Wendy visiting Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge University, last summer, where Mr Hughes was a student in the 1980s.

Schools set me up for life, says Jubilee honours man

By George Ryan

An education leader has thanked his old schools after he was recognised by the Queen for his role supporting students.

David Hughes, 56, who grew up on The Grange estate in East Finchley, has been made a CBE in Queen's Platinum Jubilee Honours list for services to further education.

The former Woodhouse Grammar, now Woodhouse College, pupil from 1977 to 1984 said his time at both schools "set him up for life".

Mr Hughes has spent the past two decades supporting the skills sector and has been the chief executive of the Association of Colleges, which represents colleges including Barnet and Southgate College, since 2016.

Mr Hughes said it was a "huge privilege" to have been recognised, adding: "I never thought I would be in this position now, getting an honour from the Queen."

Tribute to local schools

"When I was growing up, my mum instilled in me and my three brothers a strong set of values which I carry with me to this day. It was my education at Martin Infants and Juniors and then Woodhouse which really set me up for life.

"As a teenager I didn't know anyone who had been to university. I remember going home from sixth form one day and saying over dinner that there was a meeting for people who wanted to apply for Oxbridge. My brothers told me, 'People like us don't go to Oxford or Cambridge,' and that made me even more determined to apply.

"There are lots of people I went to school with who had all the potential in the world, but they were not as lucky as me. I've spent my whole career trying to make sure no one feels like they are not worthy of education. Talent is truly classless."

Mum followed in his footsteps

The father-of-three, who now lives in Loughborough, Leicestershire, still regularly visits East Finchley to see his 83-year-old mum Wendy in Tarling Road.

Mr Hughes said: "I was the first in my family to go to university, but it was my mum who was second, when she pursued a French and Spanish degree in her fifties, complete with a year abroad in Seville.

"The great thing about college education is that it provides opportunities for people of all ages to gain new skills and pursue their passions. It's the amazing people who work in colleges that I want to share this accolade with, and I am glad this helps shine a spotlight on our remarkable sector."

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