



The Archer

www.the-archer.co.uk Email: news@the-archer.co.uk

[f](#) [X](#) [@](#) @TheArcherN2

Voicemail: (messages only) 0800 612 0748 for editorial and general enquiries

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Copy Editor John Lawrence	Production Editors Nadia Savvopoulou Ridhi Shah	Editorial Team Ruth Anders, Diana Cormack, David Gritten, David Hobbs, Janet Maitland, Lynn Winton
Sub Editor Lucy Moorman Fiona Macdonald	Distribution Toni Morgan, Jane & David Marsh	
Picture Editor Mike Coles	Finance David Marsh	Social Media: Justine Csaky

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Cannabis factory: The disused Finchley Mortuary off the North Circular. Photo Mike Coles

Flourishing cannabis factory discovered at former mortuary

By Janet Maitland

When police officers raided the old Finchley Mortuary in April this year, they found 700 flourishing cannabis plants. But not a soul was in the building, nor have any arrests been made since. The investigation is ongoing.

The mortuary is tucked away in a secluded spot alongside the North Circular, off Avondale Road, N3. Before it became a cannabis factory, its potential as a film location was, and still is, advertised by Locations Hub who say it is "mainly empty but perfect for dressing" and a good choice for locations that need to be "clinical, empty, derelict or spooky".

The site has a considerable historical pedigree. Over a hundred years ago, Bernard Spilsbury, one of the founders of forensic pathology, carried out famous autopsies there, such as Lord George Sanger, the circus owner, and Margaret Lloyd, one of the victims of the 'Brides in the Bath' murderer. Spilsbury became a household name after identifying human

remains in the home of famous murderer Dr Crippen in 1910.

But why was the mortuary allowed to become empty and derelict? It was decided by Barnet Council in 2015 that the facility was no longer viable because it was underused, so it was decommissioned, subject to an agreement that neighbouring Brent would deliver a shared mortuary service, available to Harrow, Barnet and Brent.

The mortuary was returned to the council's property base and Barnet Property Services estimated its disposal value at just under £1 million for a possible 15 two-bedroom flats, subject to planning permission.

However, the mortuary became not new housing but a storage facility for hundreds of

objects and documents related to Barnet's heritage.

The council revealed in 2018, in response to a Freedom of Information request from local blogger Mrs Angry, that the collection was given to Capita, who were contracted in 2013 to run most of Barnet's services.

In turn, Capita sub-contracted the care of the collection to Ad Hoc Property Management, who stored it in the mortuary, where it went missing. A police investigation in 2018 established that "the items were disposed of as a result of human error".

Since then, criminals have obviously found new uses for the building, if the discovery of the thriving cannabis factory is anything to go by.

BE PART OF IT Volunteers wanted

Compiled by Lynn Winton

Barnet Bereavement Counselling Service is looking for a volunteer fundraiser to help grow its online presence and support its vital work. The role is remote with flexible hours and could suit an A-level/university student in business, marketing, events, or related fields. You will create engaging social media content and promote fundraising campaigns. Find out more by emailing Salli Cohn at info@barnetbereavement-service.org.uk

Finchley Foodbank is looking for a new kind of volunteer to help people with all things digital, such as searching the internet, sending emails and booking appointments. You will help them find services and support connected with the cost of living, employment and housing. You will need to be available for sessions on Tuesdays and/or Saturdays from 11.30am to 2pm twice a month. To find out more about becoming a digital champion volunteer, email: finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com

North London Hospice on East Finchley High Road is looking for more volunteers. Whether you want to get work experience, help temporarily whilst between jobs or are looking for a long-term role, please call in to the shop and talk to the manager Anastasiya. Age is no barrier, ages 14-94 welcome. You will play a vital role in funding the hospice and enjoy the camaraderie of a very inclusive team.

Driving Aid to Ukraine is a non-profit organisation based in N2 delivering lorries of humanitarian aid across Europe to the Ukrainian conflict zones, via border transfer points. They require all kinds of volunteers: to run a social media campaign, to raise funds and seek grants, and to organise collections of vital aid. Find out more at Drivingaidtoukraine.org and get in touch with Michael on 07791 912389.

If you'd like your organisation to be included in this column please email news@the-archer.co.uk

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Barnet

220 High Road, N2

Change of use of part of the ground floor commercial (Class E) to one self-contained flat (Class C3). Changes to fenestration

93 High Road, N2

Demolition of rear storage building, rear steps and landing. Construction of side and rear extension to existing rear outrigger and excavation of basement below, to provide two additional residential units. Mansard roof extension with terrace to front to create an additional residential unit at third-floor level. Associated cycle storage and amenity space

Ground Floor flat, 34 Park Hall Road, N2

Erection of a garden room

Land at High Road (between East View House and Hilton House), Grange Estate, High Road, N2

Submission of details of condition 11 (Electric Vehicle parking provision) 19 (Play equipment) pursuant to planning permission 22/3544/FUL dated 03/01/2023

4 Trinity Avenue, N2

Roof extension involving hip to gable, rear dormer window, three

front-facing roof lights and new side gable window

26 Abbots Gardens, N2

Non-material amendment to planning permission 24/5627/HSE dated 14/04/2025. Amendments include change of the roof to the ground-floor rear extension from flat to pitch roof.

74 Brendon Grove, N2

Non-material amendments to planning permission reference 25/0860/HSE dated 22/04/25. Amendments include increasing length of the side wall from 300mm to 400mm

4 Old Farm Road, N2

Renewal of fencing to rear garden and installation of security rollers over new fencing

9 Lewis Gardens, N2

Single-storey rear extension with one roof light following demolition of the existing boiler room. New veranda to the existing porch.

121 High Road, N2

Variation of condition 1 (Approved Plans) planning permission reference 24/4643/FUL dated 30/12/24 for 'Mansard roof extension with terrace area and 3no. rear facing rooflights to create one studio flat.' Amendments to

include alterations to the layout to convert Flat C (Studio Flat) into a one-bedroom flat

267 East End Road, N2

Single-storey rear extension with one roof light and new terrace area. New front entrance. This application seeks to renew the lapsed planning permission permission 17/4899/FUL

Haringey

38 Bancroft Avenue, N2

Damp prevention channel. External and internal windows and doors replacement. Understairs w/c with shower. Garage conversion to utility room. Flat roofs renewal. Garden room to existing domestic dwelling.

38 Ringwood Avenue, N2

Single-storey rear extension, two first-floor extensions, loft conversion with rear facing dormer, roofing works, window replacement and associated refurbishment works including; structural, plumbing, electrical, drainage and external works.

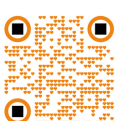
5 Church Vale, N2

Renovation and structural works. Pending.



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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Life Insurance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Will writing | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Income Protection Insurance |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mortgages/ Bridging | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Key Person Insurance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landlord Insurance |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Family Income Benefit | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health Insurance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Home Insurance |



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