



The Archer

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Ghost homes still haunt East Finchley wasteland years on



The former petrol station site on the High Road is still awaiting development. Photo Mike Coles

By Janet Maitland

A staggering 287,000 potential new homes with planning permission in London have yet to be built. Twenty one of these 'ghost homes' are in East Finchley, on what has become an ugly wasteland between Church Lane and Leopold Road. Planning permission was given almost seven years ago, but not a single brick has been laid.

We asked site owners Leopold Properties (East Finchley) when they planned to start. A spokesperson told us they were "looking forward to developing the site as soon as market conditions allow".

Given the urgent need for housing and the scale of the problem of developers not developing, a government announcement that a Delayed Homes Penalty is to be introduced was long overdue. "We will leave no stone unturned to get spades in the ground," said Chancellor Rachel Reeves a few months ago. Unfortunately, the penalty will not apply to existing unused permissions only new ones, so her

announcement will have no impact on East Finchley's wasteland.

Barnet Council's powers to act seem to be limited. It can revoke planning permission, but a council spokesperson told us that this is an "exceptional measure and only used in limited circumstances which don't apply in this case". The council could also serve a completion notice, but they don't plan to do so as it doesn't compel the builder to actually build.

Similar constraints on the council extend to the wasteland's depressing appearance. "It is private land and we have limited powers to enforce, but we will be speaking to the

landowners to see if they can clear it. We recognise it is an eyesore," said the council spokesperson.

The Archer asked landowners Leopold Properties if they could clean up the site and they made a good start in mid-May, getting rid of the undergrowth, litter and much of the junk. Local residents have got in touch with us to say they are keen to volunteer to tackle the graffiti and finish the job.

The spokesperson for the council said they had not yet made contact with Leopold Properties as planned but their teams would be "happy to be involved, if directed by the landowner".

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Barnet

Mercian Lodge, Ephgrave Lodge And Witcomb Lodge, 68 Lankaster Gardens, N2

External wall remediation. Installation of vertical cavity barriers and replacement of EPS insulation. Ref: 26/2200/192

36 Huntingdon Road, N2

Single-storey side and rear extension with glazed side roof with one roof light following demolition of the existing conservatory. Replacement of front window to match existing. Ref: 26/2184/HSE

456 Long Lane, N2

Single-storey side and rear extension. Ref: 26/2154/HSE

31 Leopold Road, N2

Single-storey rear extension with pitched roof. Ref: 26/2136/HSE

Archer Academy, Eagabs Close N2

Submission of details of condition 10 (Cycle Parking) 11 (Refuse and Recycling) pursuant to planning

25/0320/FUL dated 31/07/2025. Ref. No: 26/2042/CON

94 Leslie Road, N2

Erection of a rear outbuilding.

Ref: 26/2024/FUL

43 Neale Close, N2

Single-storey rear extension following demolition of the existing extension. Ref: 26/1916/FUL

4-5 King Street, N2

Removal of condition 5 (Parking space) pursuant to planning permission 21/0953/FUL dated 22/02/2021 for "Construction of a new roof including increase in ridge height with gable roof feature to front and rear elevations together with two dormer windows to rear elevation and one Velux window to front elevation to facilitate creation of one self-contained flat with associated parking space, bin store and cycle storage. Alteration to existing front fenestration with provision of Juliet balconies and front porch. Ref: 26/1887/S73

17 Trinity Road, N2

Roof extension involving rear

dormer with Juliet balcony and one roof light, outrigger dormer, and three front-facing roof lights. (amended). Ref: 26/1851/192

Haringey

13 Aylmer Road, N2, N2

Retention of roof alterations to existing single storey rear extension pitched to flat roof and replacement of all windows with white aluminum double glazing. Ref: HGY/2026/1589

6A Denmark Terrace Fortis Green, N2

Demolition of existing building and structures on site and the erection of a three storey plus basement building, comprising four residential units and 50 sqm of commercial floorspace on the ground floor, with landscaping, cycle storage and bin storage. Ref: HGY/2026/1355

23 Ringwood Avenue, N2

Roof and rear dormer extension; 2 no. front rooflights. Ref: HGY/2026/1466

BE PART OF IT Volunteers wanted

Compiled by Lynn Winton

Join the team at the new **Finchley Free Legal Advice Centre**. This new community-led initiative is providing free legal advice to residents who are most in need. If you have a legal background and can spare two hours a month, your experience could make a profound impact on someone's life. They are particularly looking for lawyers with experience in immigration, housing, benefits, crime and family. The new Advice Centre will rotate to different venues in the constituency every other weekend. Find out more by emailing sarah.sackman.mp@parliament.uk.

Dovetail DaCapo is a friendly place where asylum-seekers and refugees meet to make music together on **Saturdays from 2pm to 3.30pm at Wren Academy, N12 9HB**. The music is followed by a shared vegetarian meal. If you are interested in joining its rota of volunteers who prepare the meal (heating up soup, putting out bread, hummus, fruit, etc), they'd love to hear from you. They are also interested to hear from volunteers who would like to help in other ways. Email: jam@dacapo.co.uk

224 North London Air Scouts (N6) are looking for adult volunteers to help run fun weekly sessions for young people. No experience needed, full training provided. Flexible roles to suit your availability. Even a couple of hours a week makes a real difference. Interested? Get in touch at del@224.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 signpost people to help with the cost of living, employment, housing etc. You will need to be available for food bank sessions on **Tuesdays and/or Saturdays between 11.30am and 2pm twice a month**. To find out more about becoming a digital champion volunteer email: hello@finchleyfoodbank.org.uk

Youth communications charity **Exposure**, based in Muswell Hill, is looking for two new trustees, people who share a genuine commitment to young people and can bring expertise in fundraising, digital media, finance, charity governance or equality and inclusion. The role will entail four or five trustee meetings a year, with hybrid options available. To find out more, contact: info@exposure.org.uk

Do you enjoy swimming? **WeSwim** is a London-based charity that creates safe, welcoming spaces where disabled adults can swim with the support of volunteers 1:1 in the water. They are looking for volunteers who are keen to make a difference by working with the disability community in Crouch End, giving just a few hours a month. No swim teaching/coaching qualifications required, although being comfortable in the water is a must. Contact harriet@weswim.club for more information.

Highgate Newtown Community Partners is a vibrant charity dedicated to enriching lives and fostering a strong sense of community in North London. Its new Community Centre in Archway is at the heart of this work and they are looking for volunteers to support the Community Cafe which will be providing affordable meals. If you have a few hours to spare and can help serve customers, but most importantly provide a warm and welcoming environment, please email info@hncp.org.uk.

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