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Local News Is Our Aim

THE ARCHER



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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Heading Them Off

By Sonia Singham

It was a privilege to be invited to participate in the Interview Skills Programme at Bishop Douglass Secondary School in November. The atmosphere was as one would hope it to be in a large secondary school, but what was encouraging, having had experience of and information about the behaviour of them, was the courteous manner of the students.

The organisation by the staff and the Education Business Partnership (EBP) made the day the success it was. The recently appointed Headmaster, Mr Kelly, has obviously made a great impact in raising the profile of the school.

Many people to whom I have spoken have commented on the improvement of the neighbourhood. The shopkeepers no longer feel as threatened because they

are assured of an immediate response to anti-social behaviour.

The impression that I got from the students I interviewed was that they were a committed group of young people, receptive to advice and the interest taken in them.

Let us hope that this positive attitude will continue and that the Head teacher and staff carry on helping to raise these young people's achievement.



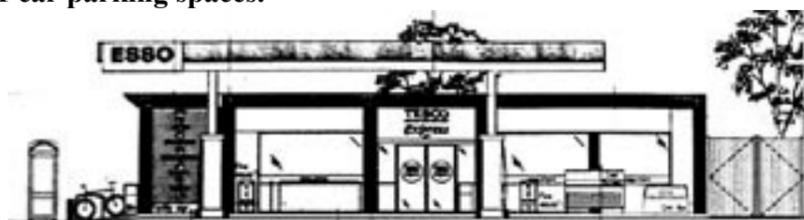
At least they would not have far to go to get the bus! Photo by John Dearing

Carbungle This was the sight on Fortis Green in December after a driver met an immovable object - in the shape of a bus stop...

Planning Blight

With all the attention presently on the proposed Waitrose development at the south end of the High Road, it is perhaps easy to forget that the proposal to build a Tesco Metro store at the Leopold Road petrol station is still with us (first reported in *THE ARCHER* in June). They plan to demolish the car wash building to make space for the new store, and for 11 car parking spaces.

Whether this has been affected by the Waitrose proposal is hard to gauge, but the Barnet Council Planning Department's database of planning applications (publicly available at Whetstone) shows that this one is still outstanding: not approved, not refused, and not withdrawn.



Unsettling

Indeed, a cursory scan of this database shows a number of outstanding applications for

East Finchley, some going back several years. The effect on the lives of those residents affected, not to mention the owners of businesses in the area is at the very least unsettling, and must, in addition, diminish the value of their properties; in essence, planning blight.

According to a reliable source in the industry, the legal framework governing the processing of planning applications requires councils to make decisions about them within eight weeks of receiving them, unless they have to go to the council planning committee, in which case they should be scheduled for the next meeting. It would seem that there are reasons why this does not happen in Barnet. It is to be hoped that when the new government regulations come into force, this lamentable state of affairs will cease.

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