



Letters to The Editor

Send your correspondence to: "Letters Page", The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA. (Due to space restrictions, letters over 200 words will be edited)

Noisy Crowded Road

Dear Editor, In last month's article on the noisy North Circular road, the reporter ends by saying this will continue until the NCR is thoroughly improved. Perhaps the reporter should know that the NCR attained its unenviable reputation for noise, after large tracts of it were improved!

In East Finchley, after the completion of our section to six lane standard, we shall enjoy more noise, vibration and pollution. Oh yes, and 47% more traffic along our High Road. That's progress?!

Yours etc. Colin Rogers Ward Councillor, East Finchley

Waitrose - the political dimension

Dear Editor There is clearly no point in repeating the arguments for and against Waitrose; my view is that the arguments against the development far outweigh the benefits.

What bemuses me is that the process of land assembly by Waitrose obviously started a long time ago in discussion with Barnet Planners in order to test the water. As so often is the case, and I have no reason to doubt otherwise here, the Planners will probably have said that provided certain planning criteria are met, there will be no objection in principle to an application for a supermarket on the site. From here, Waitrose simply had to work the scheme up, ensuring that the political water was being tested with Council Members. Clearly, if the initial meeting with the Planners had met with very strong arguments on planning grounds against the proposal, it is unlikely the idea would have been progressed.

The only real issue is the recommendation of the Borough

Planning Officer: to approve, refuse or simply to set out the pros and cons and leave the recommendation to elected Members. The latter would clearly be the weak option. A recommendation for approval which is then overturned by the Council would be a disaster and would be highly likely to be overturned at Appeal. But such an outcome would play into the hands of Members who would be able to protect their political credibility by having the decision removed from them.

The only way to ensure that the development does not go ahead is for a recommendation of refusal by the Planners to Committee. Will they have the conviction to do so, or will the political pressure be too great?

Sweetener

As to relocating the library, this is a rather transparent palliative to sweeten the Council into approving the development. The library is where people are used to having it, occupies an attractive building and refurbishment is possible provided funds are available. There are many avenues for such funding, one surely is planning gain from other developments but in this case not Waitrose.

Yours sincerely Stephen Kersley Leopold Road, N2

Takeover

Dear Sir There is a simple solution to the Waitrose controversy - Waitrose should be enabled to take over the existing Budgens premises.

If Barnet Council has the power to evict businesses through compulsory purchase orders, could it therefore not force the eviction of Budgens?

The parade of shops opposite the tube station would survive, the village atmosphere would be preserved, the area would not be blighted by months of building work

and East Finchley would gain the standard of supermarket it so patently deserves.

Yours sincerely Mike Walsh Baronsmere Road, N2

The Elusive Detective

Dear Sir I telephoned the police recently to speak to a Detective Constable at Colindale Police Station on 020 8200 1212 with regards to one of our clients.

The operator at the Police Station asked me which department the detective worked for. I informed the operator that I had no idea which department, but said that his name should form part of their database.

I was informed that they do not have a database for the names of their personnel. I was amazed. This facility could easily be installed without any high costs to the taxpayer. I was put through to several departments before I was connected to the Detective Constable's extension, to be confronted with his voice mail. This was most frustrating as it was important to speak to this Detective Constable urgently. I had no alternative but to contact his direct superior. This experience has occurred on several occasions and, I believe, needs addressing.

Terry Stone, Manager, East Finchley Advice Service

Evidence

Dear Archer. Thank you for maintaining the debate on Waitrose's plans to erect a new supermarket near the entrance to Cherry Tree Woods.

I want to comment on your response to K. Goaman's letter, printed in Archer May 2003:

1) 'Balanced reporting' requires a recognition that powerful organi-

sations already have a huge media bias in their favours through PR and advertising, as well as the advantages they have through the employment of large teams of lawyers.

2) You argue that there are more people in favour of the Waitrose plan than would appear from the letters you receive, because those against it are more 'vocal'. The only way to gauge opinion would be a compulsory survey of the entire neighbourhood - with the full facts presented. Many people are unaware of the scale of the proposed supermarket, and of the proposed demolition of many houses. East Finchley Councillor Alison Moore carried out a survey of public opinion, which showed a three-to-one majority against the supermarket (Press 15 May 2003). Perhaps this needs reporting in THE ARCHER.

3) If those who oppose the plan are more passionate and articulate, then that is good evidence that their opposition is based on DEEPER NEEDS than those of the less vocal in their approval of the scheme.

4) As you recognize, THE

ARCHER is funded by small local businesses. Why, therefore, is it not clearly opposing a scheme that will definitely destroy or displace some of our favourite local businesses?

5) A point that has been neglected is the increased impoverishment of the area as a result of a large additional supermarket. At present, profits go to a diverse collection of small shops. If Waitrose wipe out competition from small local businesses in the area, the profits will be concentrated further in the hands of big business.

Yours sincerely, Mo Dodson Southern Road, N2

Editor's response:

The results of the Labour Party survey were published, in full, in our March edition. The Archer is supported (not funded) by local businesses - large and small. However, as a community publication, our responsibility is to the whole community. We strive to represent the views of all - and to report the facts without bias.

What's On...

E-mail your listings to the-archer@lineone.net

Fortismere School Summer Fair 12 noon to 4pm on 5 July. The fair will be officially opened by Steve Pemberton ("Tubbs" from the BBC's The League of Gentlemen), admission £1 adults, 50p children and concessions, free for under-fives.

Hampstead Garden Suburb Open Gardens Day, Sunday 13 July Call 020 8455 0455 for full details.

Kenwood Summer Evening Concerts, Saturdays from 5 July to 30 August and Sunday 24 August. For details visit http://www.picnicconcerts.com/concerts/ or contact English Heritage

Pentland Finchley Carnival & Companion Dog Show Saturday 19 July at Victoria Park, N3. Pedigree & novelty classes entries from 12 noon, judging begins 1pm Further details from annelewis@hotmail.com and Dunlop Pet Shop, 1 Long Lane, N3. Entry £1.25 per class or 6 for £6. All profits to RSPCA East Finchley branch clinic.

Wild Thyme presents an all female production of Hamlet at 8pm (except Sunday - 4pm & 7.30pm) every night from 2 - 12 July Upstairs at The Gatehouse, Highgate, N6. Box office 020 8340 3488. Tickets £10 (£8 concs) Tuesday - Friday & matinee, £12 (£10 concs) Saturday & Sunday.

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