



Fire in Fortis Green

By Erini Rodis

A ray of sunshine caused untold damage to a house in Fortis Green one bright January morning.



The aftermath - possessions are placed in a removal van, leaving behind debris from upstairs.

Photo by Erini Rodis

Fire fighters attended for several hours on 24 January and believe that the initial spark was caused by a concentrated ray of sun being reflected off a magnifying mirror and onto some nearby curtains.

The next day the owners, though distressed at having to salvage items from the charred remains of the upper floor, were grateful that nobody was hurt: "Extensive fire and smoke damage occurred to the upper floor, and there's water damage everywhere else. But no-one was in and the pets managed to stay in the kitchen and escape the blaze."

Repairs are likely to take around six months.



Standing up to protest: (L-R) Kathryn Scorza, Ken Cordeiro, Anne Lalaguna, Jenny Jones, Noel Lynch and John Scott, in front of part of the proposed supermarket and car park site. Photo by Erini Rodis

Supermarket Stand Off

Local campaigners joined Ken Livingstone's Road Safety Advisor, Jenny Jones in a bid to raise awareness about the effect that a high-capacity supermarket car park might have on the High Road.

The general consensus is that traffic on that stretch of High Road is congested enough, especially during "rush hour" without a high capacity car park adding to the problem.

Also joining them on 24 January were "Warning on Waitrose" campaigner Kathryn Scorza, local Green Party councillor Noel Lynch, Ken Cordeiro, representing residents of Baronsmere Road, and speaking up for vulnerably close Cherry Tree Woods, Anne Lalaguna.

Think Twice

Jenny Jones was on a Radio 4 programme only the previous evening, urging parents to think twice before using their cars to drive their children to and from school. "A phenomenal amount of people heard it" she reassured, "I am sympathetic that people see it

as a choice and not that they're being forced to do it."

Like lazy car use generally, the idea of a 2000 cars-per-day car park is considered environmentally destructive, not only to the survival of nearby nature sites, but also to the health of everyone who lives nearby.

Proprietor of GLH, John Scott, describes the idea of having the entrance to such a project so close to the bridge as "ludicrous, whichever way cars turn into it will cause huge problems for traffic flow in East Finchley".

Library Protest at Martin School

By Daphne Chamberlain

At a public meeting in January at Martin School, Infant School Head Pana McGee told the packed hall, "It is desperately important that the library stays in this accessible spot for those who need it." She said that many children, introduced to the neighbouring library through school visits, take part in holiday activities and homework clubs there.

Councillor Phil Yeoman declared that all Labour Councillors opposed re-siting. "This is a very big ward, with a very big disparity between rich and poor. Moving to opposite the Tube station would be detrimental to community spirit."

Adam Fagan, Chair of the meeting, remarked that the field shouldn't be up for grabs either. "If you live at Strawberry Vale, Cherry Tree Wood is a hell of a long way away."

In reply, Barnet's Head of Cultural Services, Pam Usher, said that a key objective of the Council was to sustain a "Best Value" library service. The move would supply East Finchley with a brand-new library at no cost, meeting the demands of the next 50 years. Lack of access was the main concern, but the present building has too many small rooms and a leaking roof.

Opinion in the hall was that these problems are not insurmountable, and could be rectified with money from the sale of Park House. Also, if children - and other members of the community - were distanced from the library, access would still be affected.

Have you seen a consultation survey?
Pam Usher said that there had been no feasibility study

into improving the existing building, as it was not Council policy to do this for every library, but a consultation survey had been sent to everyone in the area. Only five people in the hall had seen this survey.

Chair of Governors Theresa Harrison demanded a public consultation before the relevant Council Cabinet meeting.

Speakers agreed that everyone concerned was astonished by local reaction, and that the bombardment must be kept up. Protesters were advised to write to Waitrose, Council Leader Victor Lyons, relevant Councillors Peter Davis, Lynne Hillan and Kanti Patel, and to Head of Committee Roy Goddard, and to get three other people to do the same. Councillor Colin Rogers recommended asking questions, keeping a record, and sending a copy to East Finchley Councillors. (For further information, ring Kath at East Finchley Constituency Office on 020 8883 0411.)

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