

SUBURB NEWS



The Newspaper of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association SPRING '86

FALLODEN WAY TRIUMPH

FALLODEN WAY - THE BATTLE

The Department of Transport's most recent plans for Falloden Way first emerged as an oblique disclaimer by the then Transport Minister Lynda Chalker in 1984. After keeping the Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick Report into the future of Falloden Way secret for a full decade—and in the process ensuring the expensive scrapping of two Archway Road public inquiries—the Minister announced that the Report was wholly out-dated and assured residents that no plans now existed for widening Falloden Way. Within six weeks the same Minister was confounding residents by announcing a consultation exercise into five fully developed schemes for Falloden Way, complete with landscaped scale models.

This shameless piece of deception may well have laid the foundation for the Department's undoing, for it so incensed residents that many who might have accepted the Ministry's word under normal circumstances, started taking a more critical interest. What they found shocked them. Officials at the exhibitions were uninformed, unprepared and very ready to try and mislead.

The net result was an overwhelming rejection by the Suburb of all the Department's proposals. This should have led to a strategic withdrawal, but the Department is not given to such displays of weakness and pressed on with the publication

of a draft order, ensuring that the period for legal objection fell during the holidays when residents might be expected to be away. As a final blow, the public inquiry was announced at a venue well outside the Suburb.

Such a show of ruthless insensitivity might well have deterred residents in some areas; in the Suburb it merely served to intensify and entrench the opposition. Objections continued to be lodged, right up to the opening of the Inquiry, and the Department's programmers put in long hours of ringing the changes on their word processor in answer to the many detailed letters of objection.

With the opening of the Inquiry in

East Finchley, any shred of optimism that the inquiry procedures would operate evenly between objectors and the Department were sharply dispelled by an Inspector whose inflexibility towards objectors contrasted strongly with the extreme tolerance he showed towards the provocative behaviour of the Department's counsel. But as the arguments flowed and the deficiencies of the "runway lights" were exposed, it became clear that the Department had once again underestimated the Suburb and the opposition it was capable of mounting.

The victory, when it came on March 13th, was no concession on the part of the Department or their Inspector. It was hard-earned, well-deserved and stands as a reminder to us all of the need to be ever-vigilant. If we ever become complacent or underestimate the Department's commitment to road-building at whatever cost, we shall risk losing the valuable ground we gained in 1986.

FALLODEN WAY - THE LESSONS

As the DTp returns to Marsham Street with its plans for Falloden Way and the surrounding roads totally discredited, there are a number of useful lessons to be learned from this expensive and distasteful exercise.

1. The first is that while we allow Falloden Way to bear the wholly inappropriate label of Trunk Road A1—and it is after all still an entirely residential STREET, not *truly* a section of the nation's arterial network—the whole Suburb will remain at risk from any hare-brained scheme that the DTp dreams up at the bidding of its masters in the British Road Federation.

2. Suburb residents when they come together in common cause are a force to be reckoned with. And now that the far-reaching effects of Ministry plans for Falloden Way are recognised throughout the Suburb, that force, properly directed, can overcome any odds. We have been most fortunate in the help we have had from our elected representatives and in the expertise and contacts of our traffic consultant Dr John Adams, but without the support and generosity of so many Suburb residents, their efforts might well have failed.



Standing room only in Bigwood Hall.



Lord Soper.



Councillor Halfon.

3. Exposure to the procedures of a road inquiry has been a salutary experience for many Suburb residents. The claims from objectors of unfair treatment at the hands of the Ministry have sometimes been thought to be overstated, but personal experience of the lies and deception practised by the Department through their officials and even their barrister has, I feel sure, been an eye-opener to many residents. This may, in many ways, be the most useful lesson to be learned; Suburb supporters now know the lengths (and depths) the Ministry will go to achieve its ends, but we for our part



Terry Rand.

know how effectively we can counter them, given the support, imagination and enthusiasm of residents.

4. The immediate battle—for time—has been won with this adjournment. As well as improving our organisation and ability to respond quickly to threat, we must now take every opportunity to consolidate our influence. The decisions we need for Falloden Way, if the Suburb is to benefit—detrunking, declassifying and traffic restriction—will be made by politicians. Residents should therefore lose no opportunity to persuade any politicians they know or meet of the merit of our case and they should also make sure that anyone seeking election to represent them should be prepared to pledge their active and unequivocal support for these essential measures. TR

FIGHTING FUND

Well over £4,000 was donated by residents, the Finchley Society and Friends of the Earth to the Falloden Way Fighting Fund following our appeal in the Winter issue.

The trustees, in accordance with the provisions of the Trust deed, have decided that any balance remaining, after all expenses have been met, will be held in the fund pending any similar future call on its resources for the protection of Falloden Way. Further contributions are welcome.

Lord Soper and Clement Halfon, Barnet's Deputy Mayor, have asked us to thank all those who gave so generously and helped to avert this threat to the Suburb once again.

TRUST HALTS ASMUNS DORMER

For the first time in its history the Trust has issued a High Court injunction to stop work which was being done without Trust approval. Last year Mrs Cohen of Hill Close purchased 6 Asmuns Hill and applied to both the Trust and Barnet to carry out a number of minor alterations at the rear of the property. These were approved by both authorities. In January of this year a large dormer window started to sprout in the rear roof and despite numerous warnings that this was being built without Trust approval, the work continued. Finally, on the advice of Macfarlanes, the Trust's solicitors, the Trust Council went to the High Court on 13 February to get the work

stopped.

Mrs Cohen is claiming that the Trust have unreasonably withheld consent and her lawyers are pressing for a speedy trial. In the meantime the dormer window remains unfinished.

Commenting on the case Chris Kellerman, the Trust Manager, said "unfortunately there is still a minority of Suburb residents who believe they can openly flout the Scheme of Management which was set up specifically to safeguard the high architectural standards of the Suburb. It is extremely unfair on the vast majority of Suburb residents if one or two people are allowed to get away with illegal alterations." CK



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