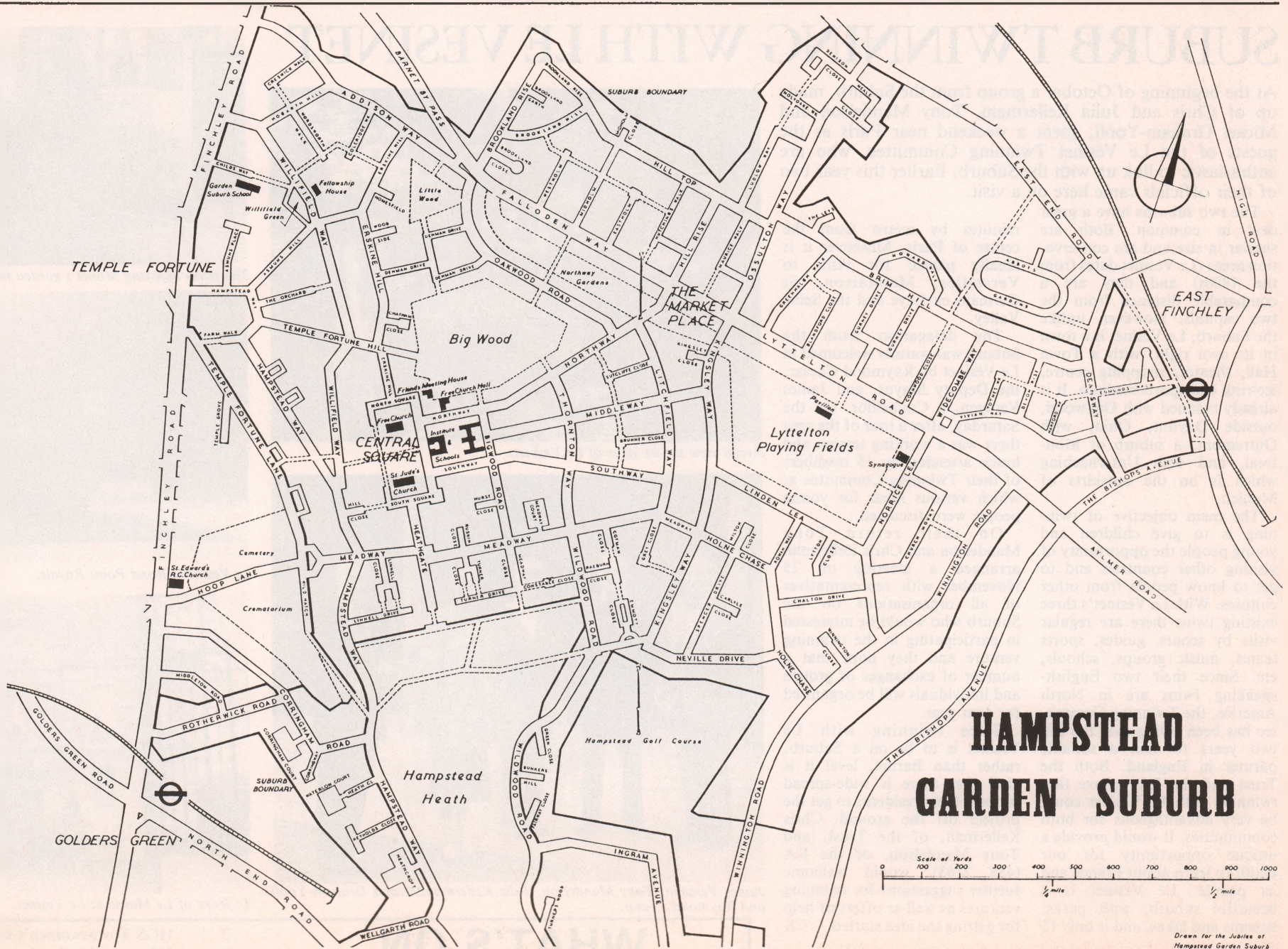


SPANIARDS FIELD

Millionaire property developer Godfrey Bradman has submitted new plans to both Barnet and the Trust for the redevelopment of Spaniards Field in Wildwood Rise. The original plans for the demolition of the existing house and the building of a Queen Anne-style manor house were deferred by Barnet in the Spring, following widespread protests from local residents. To meet these criticisms the height of the proposed new house has been reduced by 2 metres by moving the swimming pool from the basement to a separate complex, and by moving the house a further 2 metres away from the lake.

Commenting on the proposals, Chris Kellerman of the Trust has said that this is the first time since the building of the new Orchard that proposals have been received for the complete demolition of a house. However, the existing building has no architectural merits and is riddled with asbestos. Moreover, the site is totally secluded and does not form part of a street scene. Both Barnet and the Trust will be considering the new plans in November, and residents are welcome to inspect the plans at the offices of either the Trust or the London Borough of Barnet.



Chairman's Statement

The Trust's effectiveness and viability must ultimately be judged on three criteria. The first is whether it is properly discharging its main function, which is to seek to protect and preserve the Suburb's architectural heritage and its environmental amenities for the benefit of residents present and future while not unreasonably withholding permission for alterations and extensions which are in harmony with the intentions of the Suburb's founders.

The second is whether its policies are understood and enjoy the support of the majority of residents. The third is whether its finances are soundly administered.

To take the third criterion first, the year under review has been marked by a number of important developments, chief among which has been the agreement reached with Ashdale that the Trust should take over from Bernard Thorpe the collection of ground rents and rack rents as well as the maintenance of the unadopted roads. This is a significant move for two reasons. First it marks a start in the restoration of the Trust's position as landlord, damagingly lost in the Sixties, and points the way to further moves in this direction as the profitability of the Suburb as an investment for Ashdale begins to wane over the next few years. Second, it secures for the Trust a substantial increase in income. The change-over did not take place until the year under review was well under way, so its full benefit will not be felt this year, but commission income from Ashdale should rise to over £10,000 next year.

This year, on the other hand, the Trust has made a start with a programme of badly needed office modernisation as well as of investment for the future. The Trust's offices have been redecorated, which they had not been for many years. New, modern typewriters and filing cabinets have been acquired, filing has been completely reorganised, and basic details of all properties on the Suburb have been computerised for easier, faster and more reliable access. The general transformation of the offices has been good for staff morale as well as generating working conditions which are more conducive to efficiency.

At the same time a start has been made with the refurbishing of the upstairs flat above the Trust offices, which in due course will be let commercially, thus generating further income.

These developments have naturally meant fresh expenditure, but income has risen broadly in line with costs, and the management charge to freeholders based on actual costs for 1985-86 will be only £1 more than the amount estimated at the start of the year. At £22 it will still be less than it was in 1983-84, notwithstanding the effects of inflation. As we undertook two years ago, there will only be one bill for management charges, and this will be sent out to freeholders prior to the Annual General Meeting.

One item of expenditure which has substantially increased is legal costs. These are incurred when the Trust seeks the views of its professional advisers on particular applications for planning consent or in cases of blatant infringements. The number of applications for planning consent continues to rise, but so also does the number of householders who seek to contest the Trust's decisions or to resist Trust pressure when infringements have occurred. This makes it necessary for the Trust to ensure that its own position is soundly based in law, and legal advice is costly. Litigation is even more so. A current example concerns an unauthorised — and unacceptable — dormer window in the old part of the Suburb which the Trust is seeking to have removed. This may lead to court proceedings

which will be costly for one or other of the two parties concerned.

The Trust Council strongly believes that situations of this kind should never arise. Great efforts have been made and continue to be made to ensure that residents are aware of the need to apply for planning consent before making alterations to buildings and to explain the Trust's thinking to would-be applicants before they even submit plans, in order to save them the trouble and expense of putting in applications which are bound to be rejected. Many of the consents given are the result of detailed prior consultations with the Trust Architect, leading to substantial modifications to the original plans and making them more likely to be acceptable to the Trust Council. This is as it should be.

As has been said many times, the Trust cannot operate effectively and in the ultimate interest of residents as a whole without their understanding and support. All too often householders tend to regard the Trust as an alien outside authority seeking to impose its will on them arbitrarily. It is worth recalling that the Trust is the result of an initiative by the Residents' Association and the HGS Protection Society at a time when planning controls had become lax and undesirable developments were taking place which still disfigure an otherwise unique suburban landscape. It has continued to act in the spirit of its founders and in accordance with their intentions. The presence of four elected residents on the Trust Council, including its Chairman and Vice-Chairman, is intended as a reflection of the true nature of the Trust as a body which is of the Suburb, responsive to its views and needs, and not some remote and impersonal bureaucracy. But for that partnership to flourish it is important that residents should take an active interest in the Trust's work, and not just when their own pet project has been turned down. In that connection the steep fall in the number of company members is to be deplored, as is also the decline in attendance at Annual General Meetings. The Trust Council welcomes an intelligent and critical interest in its stewardship of the Suburb's affairs and will do all it can to foster it.

GEHM



The New Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust Limited
862 Finchley Road, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London NW11 6AB
Telephone: 01-455 1066 & 458 8085