

# NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

## Suburb Burglary

Burglary on the Suburb and its immediate adjacent areas (Police 3 Beat) is increasing at a serious and quite unnecessary rate due to the carelessness and the lack of concern for security shown by a number of residents. This is particularly depressing, considering how well this area did during 1994.

By August 1994 Suburb burglary had decreased to a yearly figure of 186, a decrease of 41.3 per cent over the previous 12 months - a figure so noteworthy that our performance was even given a special mention by Sir Paul Condon in his latest report (Report of the Commissioner of Police for the Metropolitan 1994/95, page 31). But, since then, there has been a steady upsurge virtually month by month in the 12-month running totals until today the 12-month figure is up to 238 burglaries which is an increase of 28 per cent over the figure of a year previously.

No doubt it could, and will, be argued that 238 burglaries in 12 months out of a total of some 6,000 homes in the Beat is not all that serious. It is, after all, only 4 per cent. But this is false reasoning. In the first place, we know that only some half a dozen Suburb burglaries a year are from houses that have marked their property and have Marked Property stickers prominently displayed. And, as a third of Suburb houses have done so, it means that 232 burglaries were from the remaining 4,000 homes.

But not all of these 4,000 homes are at equal risk because not all are equally apathetic. Even though they may have failed to



mark their property, many have burglar alarms which are used correctly and many have at least had a free security survey carried out by the Crime Prevention Officer (PC Peter Davis, tel: 733 5570) and have actually taken his advice.

However, there could be as many as 2,000 Suburb homes that really are not adequately protected, many of which can clearly be seen to be empty during the day with both partners out at work, or during the evening or at night with owners away. They run the very real risk of being burgled sooner or later with all the misery, waste of time, loss of valuables and sense of being personally sullied that a burglary can cause.

Of course, some of the burglaries that take place are not due either to carelessness on the part of the home owners or, when an alarm sounds, through the failure of neighbours to dial 999. But those burglaries where the residents or their neighbours are blameless are few and far between. The vast majority occur for reasons that are noted by police on the crime reports - 'through insecure back door', 'through open kitchen window', 'through forced patio door', 'through open bathroom

window'. And the items stolen are a give-away too. Items such as television sets, or boxes of wine - how did the burglar get these bulky items out of the house if not through the front door that had not been double-locked, or through a back door where the keys had been left in the lock; or items such as expensive jewellery from the master bedroom, where the jewellery had been left unlocked on display or hidden in some obvious place such as in a shoe or in the fridge!

One of the problems is that there is a considerable turnover of houses on the Suburb. Possibly a third of the Suburb could consist of residents who have lived here for only four years or less, and not all of them have acquired the basic security wisdom of many longer established residents. But there is also the problem that some residents are convinced that they live a charmed life and, whatever the risk of burglary to others, they continue to believe it cannot happen to them - until it does! These are the people who not only leave doors and windows open or not secured when they are out, but also make it quite clear to a burglar that their homes are unoccupied. The centre house of three unoccupied ones is particularly attractive to a burglar as he can force an entry at the back where he is not overlooked and is unseen and unheard.

We are all at risk if burglars get the message that the Suburb is an easy touch again. So, come on you small number of Suburb residents that are letting us all down. Let's reverse this adverse trend and start once more winning the battle against burglary.

Peter Loyd

## Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute/ the Henrietta Barnett School

The ill advised and unnecessary action of the London Borough of Barnet in seeking a Compulsory Purchase Order on the Central Square buildings owned by the Institute imposes a very substantial threat to the Henrietta Barnett School and the local residents.

The Institute has always made it clear that its ideal solution was for the School and the Institute to remain together on the site provided that a reasonable rent is paid and funding is provided as a long term low interest loan to alleviate the accommodation problems of both organisations and to help achieve that aim.

We spent time, effort and money on discussions with the Department for Education and Employment ten months ago. During these discussions, we made what were acknowledged to be helpful suggestions but the DFEE suddenly disappointed everyone by pulling out of the discussions because they felt they could not lose the case.

This resulted in the wastage of large amounts of public and charitable money which could have been spent to benefit the community. The Judgment established that the Institute has the legal right to charge rent to the School and a Notice to Quit was issued which expires in August 1997. This notice was given in order to trigger the point from which rent should start but, at the same time, indicated the Institute's willingness to negotiate.

Since then, several constructive meetings have been held between the Institute and the School and resulting from these, the Institute agreed to extend the Notice to Quit by a year if a reasonable rent was paid which means that the School was not at risk. This makes a nonsense of the only reason LBB gave for instigating the compulsory purchase procedures - that the School was at risk, and it raises the question - what is the real reason for this sinister move? The Institute has gone to

a great deal of trouble over the past ten months to progress plans for new buildings to enable the Institute and the School to remain on the site and the huts to be demolished but sadly while this creative and constructive exercise was taking place, the borough was already planning to try to compulsorily purchase the site with the full knowledge and support of the School. These tactics are hardly likely to engender trust between the parties.

School supporters have already pronounced on the DFEE offer which readers should be made aware took the Department three months to produce and imposed a two week timescale for the Institute's response.

The offer is to buy a 99 year lease at a peppercorn rent for the School for £3.2M which is a capitalised rent of £230,000 a year, 70% of the current rental valuation.

The offer does not address the issue of which portion of the buildings will be occupied by the School and which by the Institute when the new buildings are erected.

It does offer £1.1M to the Institute for new buildings and the possibility of a Design Technology block for the School. In return the Trustees are asked to give up some of their rights over the site. The Institute has never asked for grants for buildings and would prefer a long term low interest loan.

The Institute is considering the offer and taking advice on it and will be meeting with the minister in due course.

The CPO initiative is a huge setback to negotiations and will be vigorously challenged by the Institute and Barnet is unlikely to

succeed in its objective. The process is likely to take several years and the Institute is advised that it has an excellent case to prevent the CPO in the ensuing public enquiry. If it is successful however, what will be the effects?

1. The Institute will be lost to the community it serves and may relocate to a different part of the borough.

2. The School will have lost the protection of the Institute and will be completely dominated by LBB which may decide to change its character and status.

3. The charitable buildings will no longer be owned by a charity fulfilling its aims but by a local authority which in the long term may not wish to keep the School on the site.

If the Institute were indifferent to the needs of the School it would have been impossible for both organisations to work together harmoniously at grass roots level. The borough however, although ostensibly protecting the School is prepared to risk its future by a speculative CPO bid which can only increase the vulnerability of the School whatever the outcome.

I am very sorry that the School felt that it had to support LBB in this latest development because the best way it can protect itself is to settle with the Institute which will continue to support its character and identity.

Suburb residents have in their midst, two very successful organisations which continue to work together and which may both disappear in their present form if the authorities cannot be persuaded to act responsibly.

Fay Naylor

To the Members of

## THE NEW HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB TRUST LIMITED

Notice pursuant to Article 30(6) of the Company's Articles of Association

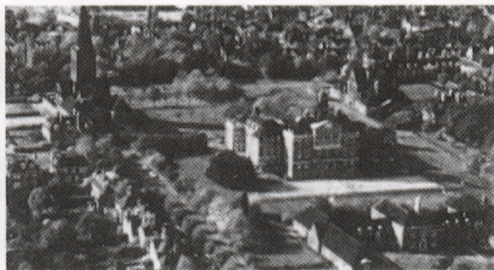
Following the election to fill one vacancy on the Trust Council we hereby declare that:

- (a) the number of valid voting papers received was 522;
- (b) the number of voting papers rejected was 35;
- (c) the number of votes cast for each Candidate was:

PIA DURAN : 302

MICHAEL KRITEMAN : 220

- (d) Pia Duran has been duly elected as an Elected Member of Council



Aerial colour photographs of the area around Central Square are available from the Trust Office or the Garden Suburb Gallery.



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GRIFFIN STONE, MOSCROP & CO  
Chartered Accountants  
Registered Auditors

**HAMPSTEAD - GARDEN - SUBURB - TRUST**

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