

## NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

### The launch of the new 'Identi-Pic' Service

This new service for the photo-imaging of property was described in the summer '97 issue of **Suburb News**. The scheme is being officially launched on the Suburb on 1 November. After this any Suburb resident can arrange to have property photo-imaged by contacting General Accident's agents, Brownhill Morris and West (16 Bromley Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 5JE Tel: 0181658 4334).

Many people have already marked property such as videos and cameras with their postcode and house number (and recorded the serial numbers); but some items (such as jewellery, silver, pictures, carpets) are difficult to mark in this way. The 'identipic' service overcomes this problem. It holds images of these latter items: if they are stolen, the police can trace them by comparing the images with the property they recover. (The system is not designed to hold images of branded items such as videos and cameras, because all items of a particular model look the same. However the serial numbers of such items can be used instead, because they are specific to each item.)

#### The procedure

The procedure is very simple. You arrange a mutually convenient date with Brownhill Morris and West. They will send you forms for you to record (in advance of the visit) the descriptions of the items of property to be 'imaged', and the serial numbers of branded items to be recorded. When the photo-imaging has been completed, they will give you window stickers to indicate to a potential burglar that your property has been photo-imaged and is therefore too incriminating to be worth stealing. And the

coded images of your property will be held in a secret location for accessing only by the police in the event of its being lost or stolen.

#### The cost of imaging

Anyone can take part, but the cost depends on whether the resident has a General Accident Neighbourhood Watch Home Contents insurance policy. For those who do, there is a fixed fee of £28 for the first ten images, and £2 for each image thereafter. For those who do not, the fixed fee is £75. Serial numbers are recorded free.

#### Special offer on imaging

The fixed fee is waived for policy-holders who make the necessary arrangements before 31 January 1998 (including those who change to this GA policy).

#### Ongoing reduction in premiums

Provided they make the necessary arrangements before 31 January 1998, Suburb residents who already have a General Accident Neighbourhood Watch Home contents insurance policy (and those who change to one) will get a reduction of 10 per cent on their renewal premium if they have their property imaged. It is appreciated that many people will be too busy over Christmas to have their property imaged during this period. However, the strong advice is to contact Brownhill Morris and West as soon as possible, and in any event before 31 January 1998.

#### Some questions answered

**Q.** Having been 'identi-picked', what happens if I acquire a new object and want it added to the list?

**A.** Brownhill Morris and West representatives regularly visit the Suburb and a further visit to

photo-image additional valuables can easily be arranged.

**Q.** If stolen items are recovered, can I elect to take back some items and be paid out for the others?

**A.** Yes.

**Q.** Presumably people will lose their no-claim bonus if they are paid out for anything?

**A.** Yes, they will lose some no-claim bonus on a step back basis.

**Q.** But if all the items are recovered and they claim for none of them, do they retain their no-claim bonus?

**A.** Yes.

**Q.** Who keeps the images?

**A.** The images are kept in a safe in a secret location. The items are coded, and can only be recovered on to the police imaging computer by the police calling up the items by code number when it has been established that they have been stolen.

**Q.** Does this scheme supersede the previous scheme of marking property with postcode and house number?

**A.** No. The 'Identi-pic' service is in addition, and complementary, to it.

**Q.** Suppose an item has been photo-imaged and is subsequently stolen, and then the police recover it, how likely is it that the police will actually take the trouble to use the system to make a match; and what are the chances of succeeding?

**A.** The police often recover property from someone they suspect of being a burglar, but cannot charge him or her unless they can prove that the property has been stolen. They, therefore, have a very strong incentive to make the system work in order to trace owners and thus secure a conviction.



ALL CREDIT TO SUBURB RESIDENTS WHO ARE TAKING ACTION TO SECURE THEIR PROPERTY AGAINST BURGLARS.

## Crime on the Suburb

The crime situation generally is encouraging

#### Vehicle crime

Vehicle crime for the 12 months up to the end of August 1997 was decreasing - down to 408 crimes as compared with 498 for the 12 months up to the end of August 1996, but not yet down to the lowest 12-month vehicle crime level of 328 at the end of April 1995.

#### Other crime

Other crime (i.e. crimes ranging from robbery and bodily harm to common assault and indecent exposure) for the 12 months up to the end of August 1997 has decreased to 202 as compared with 254 for the 12 months up to the end of August 1996.

#### Burglary

But by far the greatest success story is the burglary situation. Regardless of the tendency to leave doors and windows open and unattended during the warmer weather, there were only 27 burglaries during the three months of June, July and August 1997 (in June, July and August 1996, there were 53), and for the 12 months up to the end of July 1997 the burglary figure was down to 145, which is the lowest 12-month figure since records began some seven years ago, rising slightly to 147 for the 12 months up to the end of August 1997.

These are figures of which we can be proud and from which we can take great encouragement. It means that burglaries for the whole of this area are now running at less than 2.5 per cent. Brownhill Morris and West who insure only Suburb homes that are in Neighbourhood Watch areas and which have been subject to a security survey, say that burglaries of the Suburb houses which are on their books are

now running at less than 1 per cent. Figures for comparison with elsewhere in the country are hard to obtain. However, the 1996 British Crime Survey gives an incidence rate for the country as a whole of 8.3 per cent with the figure for the Greater London area being 10.9 per cent.

Of course, much credit for these results must go to our local police. But credit is also due to all Suburb residents, an increasing majority of whom are taking the correct actions to secure their homes and make them thoroughly unattractive targets for burglars.

PETER LOYD



## Volunteers for Kenwood

There are vacancies for volunteers in the Visitor Information Centre.

Hours are flexible but they particularly need help at weekends and offer a range of benefits including; experience of working at one of London's top visitor attractions; interesting experience in dealing with the public; free admission to lectures, walks and guided tours; travelling expenses; discount in the restaurant and access to a computer WPWIN 6.1.

The Visitor Information Centre has application forms or ring 340 5303.

## THE TRUST AND INFRINGEMENTS

In this article we look at the question of infringements and see whether the Trust and Barnet, in co-operation with local residents, could take more effective action to control this problem.

On the Suburb there are tight controls exercised by both the Trust and Barnet and the approval of both authorities is required for even minor alterations. The Trust's authority is derived from the Scheme of Management in the case of freehold properties, and the Trust exercises landlord control over the leasehold properties.

#### LOCAL RESIDENTS

It is often forgotten that the New Trust was set up on the initiative of local residents who felt that a separate authority was required to maintain the character of the Suburb and safeguard its heritage.

Prior to 1974 landlord control was initially exercised by the Old Trust and suburb Leaseholds and subsequently by the property companies which acquired the Suburb. Unfortunately the standards for alterations in those days were not so stringent and many changes were allowed to take place which would not receive approval today. Moreover in the early years of its existence the new Trust had to establish its own guidelines and was perhaps too lenient in what it would allow.

#### MOST APPLY TO BOTH

Fortunately most suburb residents apply to both the Trust and Barnet before undertaking work requiring approval. However, in a few cases residents carry out alterations without reference to either authority. This usually happens when houses change hands, since some new residents are unaware of the special restrictions operating on the Suburb, which cover

things like hedges, front doors and the colour of brick work. Once they are told, most new residents are anxious to make amends by reinstating whatever they have altered or by applying for retrospective approval. Infringements caused by ignorance are usually quite simple to rectify.

More serious problems are caused by a small number of residents who have no interest in conserving or preserving the Suburb and believe that they should have absolute freedom to do what they please with their houses and gardens. They see Barnet and the Trust as interfering busy-bodies who try to curtail their legitimate rights.

#### PLEASE LET US KNOW

For the Trust it is much easier to take action while an infringement is actually taking place, so please let us know when you suspect that illegal work is taking place. If you phone the Trust, we can immediately check whether the work has been approved or not. Although both the Trust Architect and Manager travel round the Suburb almost daily, it is impossible for 2 people effectively to police over 3,500 houses.

Once an infringement has taken place the Trust will not hesitate to invoke the full sanction of the law.

#### REMARKABLE PLACE

One of the principal reasons why the Suburb is such a remarkable place is because of the attention paid to details by the original architects. Front doors, gates, hedges, painting, chimneys, glazing bars, hand-made roof tiles, and paint-work colour are all part of the overall fabric and once they have been spoiled the Suburb as a whole is poorer. Most people live on the Suburb because in terms of its architecture and town planning it is unique and, despite a number of infringements in

the past, it remains relatively unscathed. If residents would like the Trust to maintain a hard line against even minor infringements, we require your assistance. Residents should help create a climate of opinion favourable to conservation so that would-be infringers are made to feel that it is anti-social to rip out their front doors and hedges and paint their drain-pipes purple.

#### PLEASE HELP

Please help us to mount an effective anti-infringement campaign by undertaking the following:-

- When houses change hands, please go and talk to your new neighbours and tell them about the planning procedure operating on the Suburb. For its part, the Trust writes to all new residents about the role of the Trust and Barnet.

- Once we receive a planning application, we always notify the immediate neighbours, so if you see work starting which you don't know about, please ring the Trust immediately. Also contact David Williams on (359 2000) who is the Planning Officer at Barnet.

- If you feel that Barnet are not taking a tough enough line on infringements, please write to the Suburb Councillors.

- If your neighbours are deliberately flouting the policies of both Barnet and the Trust, please go and talk to them. Pressure from residents can help in getting infringers to mend their ways. Uglification of one Suburb house can spoil a row of terraced houses, both sides of a semi or even a whole street.

We are confident that if residents actively cooperate with Barnet and the Trust we can together solve the problem of infringements. Without your assistance the job is much harder to accomplish.

## HAMPSTEAD - GARDEN - SUBURB - TRUST

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