

Letters to the Editor

The editor is grateful to residents who use the letters column but must reserve the right to edit long letters.

Erskine Hill
NW11 6EY

Sir
1) HENRIETTA BARNET
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT
Firstly, for this to be a success in both functional and aesthetic terms, it is essential that the selected architects present a master plan of the FINAL development of the site. Further, their initial proposals should be put on public display for all residents to view and to pass comment.

I am deeply concerned to hear that 'A consultation process has already been initiated and meetings have taken place with the Residents Association, Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust and the Institute'. As yet, there is no mention of the residents nor of English Heritage.

To ensure the continued integrity of this extremely important site at the very heart of the suburb, and to satisfy the sometimes diverse interests of the various factions involved, the appointed architects have a monumental task in front of them. I only hope that the 'openness and inclusiveness' promised by the school will become a reality.

7 South Square
NW11 7AL

Sir
Mr Kellerman's responses to the letters from Prof. Eilon and Mrs Field in your Summer edition raise several issues which should concern all Suburb Residents.

First the inconsistencies: why are the motives of Prof. Eilon's neighbours relevant ("The extension was required for medical reasons") when those of Prof. Eilon's are not ("the motives for making an application are irrelevant in law")?

Secondly the inaccuracies: "Both the Trust and Barnet consulted the immediate neighbours.." Clearly they did not; that no Notice as required by Planning law was properly advertised is not disputed, and one must question therefore whether the planning consent is valid if the necessary statutory requirements have not been observed.

Mr Kellerman fails to address the real concerns and the very cogent points made in the last paragraph of Prof. Eilon's letter and the last two of

The RA has a particular responsibility as representatives of the 5,500 property owners on the Suburb. I hope they take independent professional advice at all stages of the work.
2) 20 MILE SPEED LIMIT
We live close to the start of the new 20 mph speed limit in Erskine Hill. We note a considerable number of vehicles still appear to ignore this restriction, probably because they fail to see the signs. When driving, ones line of vision is concentrated on the road ahead – high level signs can be a dangerous diversion. I discussed this with Ken Murrell who looks after traffic matters for the RA and suggested that at the start of the new speed limit, a 20 mile symbol be applied to the road itself. He thought that CONSAM would object to more signs. However much one agrees with CONSAM and I am in total support of them, there is already such a proliferation of SLOW signs applied to the local roads that I believe some 10 additional 20 mph signs would hardly spoil the street scene.

Yours
Ivor Hall

Mrs Field's. The essence of the strict rules which we accept is that they should apply to all. He says "...PPC which looks at most application..."; did they look at these two and how did the members of the committee vote? What took place at the committee meeting and why can we not be told?

We accept restrictions on what we can do because we recognise that their purpose is to maintain the integrity of our attractive environment. We must rely on those who deal with matters which affect us to act fairly and for it to be seen that they have. They are not above error and should be sufficiently modest to recognise the fact. We are entitled to explanations, not to be fobbed off like troublesome infants. A little humility and understanding on Mr Kellerman's part would be welcome. An apology for the inappropriate tone of his replies to Prof. Eilon and Mrs Field would also not be out of place.

Yours
F J Fishburn

11 Wildwood Road
NW11 6UL

Sir
Can anyone tell me why an area as well kept as Hampstead Garden Suburb features such a neglected and ugly (not to mention the unsightly graffiti) roundabout situated at the junction of Wildwood Road and Kingsley Way?

Surely one of the primary approaches to the Heath Extension

Meadway Close
NW11 7BA

Sir
I refer to the comments made by Mr Kellerman on my letter, which was published in the last issue of the Suburb News. I found his response quite astounding and I really think that he should not be allowed to get away with it.

First, it is interesting to note the discrepancies between the comments he made (about my complaint) to the reporter from the Ham and High and those he made in the Suburb News. For example, he told your reporter that there was no need to consult/inform me as I am not an immediate neighbour, whereas in the Suburb News he says that 'both the Trust and Barnet consulted the immediate neighbours before granting' permission. I would very much like to know which neighbours he is referring to. There are, in fact, only two immediate neighbours: I am one (although my address is Meadway Close, only a narrow passage for pedestrians separates my house from No.11 Constable Close), and the other is the owner of

Thornton Way
NW11 6RY

Sir
I write in response to the points made by Mr Kellerman concerning my letter in issue 72 of the Suburb News.

The Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) was set up to advise generally on Hampstead Garden Suburb. Its members are independent. As the custodians of Hampstead Garden Suburb with a statutory duty to do all things possible to preserve and maintain this conservation area I would have thought that, at the very least, the objective opinion of the CAAC would have been of interest to the Trust.

I have never suggested that the Trust should refuse to process any application. This comment is a red herring which has been raised before and I have dealt with it. Constant repetition of invalid points does not validate them. Mr Kellerman's obsession with "the law" (as he sees it) but his total disregard for fairness is deplorable.

I note that motives are irrelevant with regard to 8 Thornton Way but in Mr Kellerman's response to Professor Eilon's letter, also in issue 72 of the Suburb News, he prayed in aid the fact that the extension of 11 Constable Close was "required for medical reasons". Either motives, or needs as I would prefer to call them, are relevant or they are not. This is another example of the arbitrary decisions made by the Trust. If medical needs were taken into account for 11 Constable Close what need was taken into account for the extension to 8 Thornton Way (which despite what Mr Kellerman writes has not been built because the application has yet to be dealt with by Barnet)? Since the house was empty and for sale when the application was made and remains empty and for sale twenty months

warrants a more attractively landscaped and planted roundabout in keeping with the beauty of the surrounding area!

Would it not be possible to forego some grass verges, 'sleeping policemen' and new street lighting in order to apply pressure to the London Borough of Barnet (or whoever is the appropriate authority) to address this issue?

Yours
Mark Pollack

9 Constable Close. Neither was consulted, either by the Trust or by Barnet. He further implied to the reporter of the Ham and High that the roof extension could not be seen from my house, whereas now he claims that it is visible only from 'an upstairs bedroom', as if this is justification for lack of consultation. In fact, it can be seen from three bedrooms. Clearly, the Trust has failed, lamentably in this case, to safeguard the harmony and beauty of the buildings in the vicinity of the extension.

Then, to crown it all, he presents his responses to my letter and to another letter by Mrs Field in the most arrogant fashion imaginable. Decisions are made behind closed doors and there is no appeal procedure, and certainly no transparency. I do believe that we should embark on a thorough examination of current planning procedures in the Suburb, with the view to making them more democratic, more transparent and more accountable. I am sure that many residents of the Suburb will agree that such a review is well overdue.

Yours
Prof. Sam Eilon

later, need was not and is not a requirement.

The proposed extension is not a "modest one". The plan specifies an extension nearly 11' high and 12' wide – almost half the width of the existing house.

The number of members on the Trust Council and the Property and Plans Committee and whether they are elected or appointed has absolutely no bearing on the fact that the Trust is secretive and unaccountable. When a planning application is made to Barnet the entire file, the planning officer's recommendation and the meetings of the planning committee are all open to the public. The public can ascertain which councillors are sitting and how they voted. Objectors may speak and be questioned. None of these procedural matters apply to the Trust.

The proposed extension to 8 Thornton Way should be "prohibited" because it does not comply with the published design guidelines, because it is architecturally disastrous and completely destroys the proportions of the existing house (a view shared by the CAAC) and because of the loss of privacy and amenity that would result.

Do the Trustees with their "very high level of professional expertise share Mr Kellerman's opinion? If they do, how do they and Mr Kellerman reconcile it with the design guidelines from which I quote just a few points "...houses will not be put in close relationship Great care will be taken that the houses shall not spoil each other's outlookall proposals are assessed on their individual merits The rear of houses were as carefully designed as the front..... Lower standards of design are not acceptable at the rear etc. etc.

Yours
Frances Field

9 Laburnum Grove
Sunnyside
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE16 5LY

Sir
You may be surprised to receive a letter from this postal address so I must introduce myself straightaway as a resident of the "Suburb" before being called up for service with the RAF in September 1939 and for a short while after demobilisation in 1946 before commencing my career with the Home Office in various parts of the country.

The reason for this letter is an urge to write having seen in the Spring issue No.71 of "Suburb News" the excellent picture of the Memorial Gate and the view of the wood beyond. I have to admit, I was overcome by nostalgia as memories of my childhood came flooding back to the days when my friends and I used to walk the short distance from home in Willifield Way, through the 'always' partly closed gate (or over it) to our 'den' which was located off the main path under an old hawthorn bush that had grown in the form of an arch providing a cave. I remember finding it again during a walk just before the war and our initials carved in the trunk, now much larger, were still visible.

You may ask how I came to see the article on the Memorial Gate. This is a story in itself but briefly, my sister Pam and I have both provided material for Michael Holton to include in articles he has written for "Suburb News". Pam has drawn from her memories of life in Willifield Way during wartime and I from my service with the Royal Air Force. The premonition of disaster which prevented me from boarding the troopship Lancastria before she was sunk at St. Nazaire in June

1940 with such a terrible loss of life, was included in Michael's fine article entitled "The Battle for Britain on the Suburb – 60 Years on" in "Suburb News" for Autumn 2000 issue No.69. In this same issue on page 4 is a picture of the Warden's post on Willifield Green in which our father James was on duty at the time the landmine fell a short distance away. Michael kindly provided copies of "Suburb News" in which information provided by us had been included. The story of the Memorial Gate being the most recent.

May I congratulate you on the excellent Residents Association web site which has enabled me to visit the familiar places once again and relive the happy days spent in such a unique area of London.

Can you or any of your readers please help with information on a pre-war Suburb event that may have taken place yearly or less frequently. We called it "The Pageant" and it was something special because we used to decorate our houses and put out flags and in the evenings all lights were on. Where a garden wall was close to the path, jars were placed with lighted candles or nightlight inside. Little Wood hosted an open air theatre production that was very picturesque.

I went to school at Christ's College, Finchley with Philip Holton, Michael's brother. Sadly he became one of the early casualties of the war. The only other pre war friend still living on the Suburb who I have had any contact with is Len Aldred.

I will leave it at that, hoping that you will find this of interest. I certainly have enjoyed recalling past memories and from the copies of "Suburb News" I have gained knowledge of the Suburb of today.

Yours
V J Flowers

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