

# SUBURB NEWS



THE HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION NEWSPAPER ■ WINTER 04/5 - ISSUE 86

## North Square site plan angers residents

In December 2004 the newly elected chairman of the Trust, Mervyn Mandell, addressing the RA's monthly council meeting said that Barnet's planning permission for development of the corner of Northway and North Square, which the Trust as the freeholder has asked Barnet to renew every five years since 1990, would not automatically be renewed following recent changes in planning guidelines. It is thought the current Barnet permission will expire later this year.

"If we don't do something now this could be a lost opportunity for us to make some money which could be spent on Suburb projects for the benefit of the community" he said. The Trust has advised some local residents that an application to the Trust has been received for a house on the site. The land is held on a long lease by EDF Energy Networks which has an electricity sub-station there. A spokesman for the company has said that the application was not EDF's idea.

In a letter to residents, Andrew Botterill and Mike Milner, who live in the square, urge residents to object on the grounds that the design is inappropriate because:

- The plans are the ones presented in 1990 without any changes;
- Trees including mature oaks subject to preservation orders would be lost;
- The envisaged house is too large for the site.

They claim there is a conflict of interest for the Trust. As a regulator its Articles of Association state that it will 'maintain and

preserve the present character and amenities of the Suburb' and as a developer, the Trust will benefit from an estimated half the proceeds of the sale of the plot.

In 1995 the RA's Consam committee was chaired by Mervyn Mandell. He wrote a letter of objection to Barnet asking them not to give consent for the development on the same grounds which Mr Botterill and Mr Milner are objecting. At the Trust AGM later that year the then chairman Eddie Caplin said\*: "Five years ago (1990), there was much discussion between many bodies within the Suburb – including the Trust, the RA, the churches and a great number of others – on the idea of creating a community centre. Then, as now, a major element of these discussions covered how this could be financed.

In this context, and with a view to opening up as many options as possible whereby the Trust could fulfill its duty to provide all of us with useful amenities, the Trust applied for planning permission to develop the site at the corner of Northway, next to the Tea House. This site was included with freeholds we purchased from Ashdale in 1989.

Amongst the options that were being explored at the time, were the ideas of either building such a centre next to the Tea House or building the centre elsewhere but selling the site next to the Tea House to raise funds.

In a conservation area such as ours, one cannot apply for simple outline planning permission from

the local authority, so specific plans for a house were drawn up. The Trust applied to Barnet for planning permission to confirm the potential of the site. This consent has recently been renewed.

Although I was not a member of this Council five years ago, I was a member of CONSAM within the RA and recall much discussion at the time. Although the RA pressed for the option of a community building on the site, this particular proposal was backed on the understanding that the Trust was not to undertake any purely speculative development.

To ease the fears of any of you who believe that we are moving in with the bulldozers tomorrow, I can confirm that it is the unanimous view of the Trust Council that no building will take place on this sensitive site unless:

a) There is widespread consensus in the community that developing the site would be the right way to provide or fund specific communal amenities.

b) There is very comprehensive and widespread advance discussion as to what to build on the site.

It is very difficult to envisage answers as to how or when, or indeed whether, this site would be built upon. The current problems at the Institute (who own the Tea House next door) compound these uncertainties.

As options for enhancing Central Square unfold over the next few years, we intend to ensure that ever wider discussion and consultation does take place."

RICHARD WAKEFIELD

\* Suburb News Issue 49, 1995



It took nearly two years but the RA's determination, and a tireless campaign by its Conservation and Amenities Committee (Consam) under the chairmanship of David B Lewis, has resulted in the replacement of around 100 street name signs by smaller ones to a traditional design. Another 50 will be replaced shortly. See Consam committee report in the RA's annual report with this issue.



## St Jude's Church Rooms for sale

On the other side of Central Square, tucked away behind the tennis courts and with no vehicular access stand the Church Rooms. Built in the '60s and paid for by the church congregation the building is in disrepair and very little used. The church lease has a more than 900 years to run. The freehold was part of the package when the Trust 'bought the Suburb' back for £77,500 in 1986. Some three years ago it was nearly sold to the Institute who would have provided community space in a new building as well as using it as a base for art classes, but under the terms of the Charities Act the Church is obliged to seek other appropriate bids and the current highest one has come from the Hampstead Sephardi Group who wish to build a small community centre and synagogue on the site.

News of this development without any consultation with those living nearby upset some

residents and Rev Alan Walker, who is an RA council member, took the opportunity of a visit by some of them to the December RA meeting to put the record straight. He explained the situation and said the synagogue offer was not only the best financially but the people behind the bid had, unlike others which had been mainly schools, expressed no interest in car parking or access other than on foot and had said they were keen that the building be put to community use as well as a synagogue.

He also said that the church has no obligation to consult local residents at this stage. If a new buyer wished to change or rebuild planning permission would have to be sought from the Trust and Barnet. There would be full consultation then. Mr Stan Myerson from Willifield Way queried the manner in which the site had been marketed; what were the value of offers

generated and were they in keeping with local values. Mrs Myerson, who had circularised residents and the St Jude's congregation, said she was afraid that a synagogue would affect residents and could result in a situation as in "Kingsley Way with security men dotted all over."

Both Alan Walker and Mervyn Mandell stressed that nothing had been finalised, that there would be proper consultation before it had and that the sale of the Church Rooms would provide much needed funds for improving church facilities and giving the Trust funds for use on the Suburb.

David B Lewis, Chairman of Consam, said: "The RA could not possibly object to the use of the Church Rooms as a synagogue any more than it could object to its use as another church, a mosque or a Hindi temple. However the design of any new building should be appropriate and sympathetic to the site."

## Proms at St Jude's 11-19 June 2005

Full details of this year's Proms at St Jude's will be available shortly. Previous and future supporters are encouraged to become Friends, who among other benefits enjoy

priority booking. For Friends in the Gold and Silver categories benefits also include an invitation to a spectacular musical soiree on Sunday 13 March.

For further information about the Friends' scheme, contact Thomas Radice, Friends' Co-ordinator, on 8455 1025 or email thomas@radice.clara.co.uk

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## Valentine show for gallery

The Garden Suburb Gallery, relaunched with a select Valentine show including a celebration of 30 years of 'LOVE IS...' cartoons by Suburb resident cartoonist Bill Asprey. Bill and his wife Mercia came to the Suburb 33 years ago, "once the newcomers, now we are amongst the longest residing residents in our close." Commissioned by the originator, Kim Kasali, Bill, as well as doing the daily cartoons, created, wrote and drew a LOVE IS... strip for the *Mail on Sunday* that ran for 20 years. Another Mail favourite was Bill's Roald Dahl character the Big Friendly Giant adapted and drawn as a colour strip

cartoon. A LOVE IS... drawing will make a stunning Valentine, as will Valentine offerings from Ellen Gilbert and Daphne Sandham. We have Valentine cards too.

**New sales assistants needed**  
The Gallery reopens with a fresh look and new lighting installed by *Suburb News* advertisers Harland and Voss. Some volunteers have enjoyed helping from the start but we need more to keep the Gallery open longer. A regular three hours a week, 11-2pm or 2-5pm, seems to suit everyone best. If spending a morning or afternoon a week meeting fellow residents appeals, please call in or ring 8455 9132 or 8201 8366.



## Residents Association AGM

The Hampstead Garden Residents Association AGM will take place on 21 March in the Henrietta Barnett School hall, Central Square. The notice and report and accounts are included with this issue. All members are invited to attend, ask questions and stay for a discussion and to meet council members and other residents over refreshments afterwards.