

# Letters to the Editor

Erskine Hill NW11

Sir,

What a contrast. The deliberate lack of consultation of residents, (in May 2008, 12 who lived in the immediate vicinity of the site turned up for a presentation!), by the school over the recently approved development of the Institute site is in stark contrast to the very wide consultation, with open forums, of the Van Heyningen & Haward proposals of 2001/02 is clear.

The Institute site encloses the North side of, and is clearly visible from Central Square. Any development on it is therefore of paramount importance and must be treated with great sensitivity.

By delaying their planning applications to both Barnet and the Trust the school were able to pressurise both under the threat of the loss of a £7 Million government grant. Such delaying tactics gave neither organisations, or the Residents Association Council the opportunity to correct the schools failure to properly consult.

There was no doubt, in my view, considerable mileage in the 2001/02 (A scheme) which constructed new buildings in the open space between the Institute and the old Junior school. Low, set back from the Northway and Southway frontages such a development would have done the least damage to Central Square and its environs. In reading Hopkins Architects report it appeared their first idea was to do just that but that the planning department of Barnet wanted to maintain the open view across the centre of the site! A view at present of wire fences enclosing sports pitches!

If only the architects, the Trust and the RA could, at that early stage, have got together and argued the lack of harm such a modest development to

the Institute site would have been in contrast to the controversial development now to take place.

Yours  
Ivor Hall

Heath Close NW11 7DT

Sir,

The proposed wings to Henrietta Barnett School, despite what was said to the contrary last Tuesday, ignore the wider architectural traditions of the Suburb, and particularly the stylistic cues of the more major buildings amongst which they will stand.

The proposed design is essentially a brick Greek temple, presumably on the basis that knowledge/wisdom is a classical virtue, and classical means Greece. However, it is rather the Roman arch, of the two classical traditions, which is exemplified throughout Hampstead Garden Suburb, making the roaring silence of its omission here, in buildings at its very heart, doubly incomprehensible.

Both Lutyens' churches, the Free Church and St Jude's alike, as well as the main Institute block itself, contain contrasting rectilinear and circular elements, the latter relieving the severity and/or dominance of the former. The new designs have none of that sort of contrast, but rather impose a strong verticle regularity consistent with no other institutional HGS buildings (but no doubt pleasing to Mussolini).

As worryingly, the use of 2" bricks – arguably a pre-requisite, and in themselves likely to confer a degree of visual conformity – was, so far as the architect was concerned, an unresolved issue, one dependent upon cost, he said (and, it was sensed, public apathy). Details shown of other buildings which his practice had designed, but using 2½"

bricks, suggested that these would be his preferred gauge for this project too.

When we were shown photographs of Suburb buildings with (for their time) innovative or 'modern' windows, it appeared further justification for supposedly equally radical fenestration in the new wings. Similarly, the lecture as a whole appeared to justify or rationalise the taking of (what amounted to) an entirely new approach, one in which Le Corbusier's 'form and function' imperatives were uppermost.

If we interpret the diversity-within-homogeneity of the original Garden Suburb architectural scheme as giving us, its present custodians, carte blanche to intrude every type of novelty in new builds, then not only will the coherence and integrity of the Suburb be compromised, but we shall have initiated a decline which our successors will be unable either to resist or to reverse.

Yours  
David Pope

Church Street, Dorset SP7 0NY

Re: Tea House Sale

Sir,

I was shocked and saddened to read in the current issue of Suburb News that the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute, without any consultation with community based groups, had sold the covenanted lease.

Has the Institute or the buyer noted that a Change of Use Certificate is likely to be required from the Planning Authority before the Tea House can be used for private housing?

I recall that when I became Principal of the Institute in 1953, the Tea House, under the terms of its lease from the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust dated 1952, was used as a kindergarten for the Henrietta Barnett Junior School and, in the evenings and at weekends, for a host of community activities. Later it housed a canteen and centre for the English as a Foreign Language Department of the Institute along with the same

community activities as before.

I, therefore, question if the Trust or the Institute has the moral right to sell the Tea House to a private buyer without consultation with the Residents Association as its loss to the community will be profound.

As a community based charity, the motives of the Institute might also be questioned.

Yours  
John Enderby

Hampstead Way NW11

Sir

From informal canvassing of opinion among residents at the Northern end of the Hampstead Way "straight", there appears to be a significant majority in this part of the Suburb in favour of one-hour CPZ extension. The only alternative on offer is uncontrolled parking which is the situation we have right now and which clearly doesn't work.

Hampstead Way has become virtually a parking lot for all-day parkers to the detriment of

residents and shoppers alike.

Every weekday morning, dozens of cars turn up, mostly the same cars day in day out. They then stay all day, blocking parking spaces solidly up until going home time

OK, we would have the parking fee, but it is a small price to pay to alleviate the present totally unacceptable situation, where parking for residents and visitors within less than 200m or so of one's front door is frequently impossible. This is not only frustrating and highly inconvenient, but is also putting off shoppers from using Temple Fortune.

Finally, it hardly needs to be said that the look of the Suburb is being spoiled by these solid lines of vehicles just sitting there doing nothing all day. The difference on Saturdays and Sundays is amazing! All things considered, some sort of control over parking can't come soon enough and the one-hour CPZ, though not perfect, seems to be the best solution yet devised.

Yours  
Peter White

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