

Traders and residents unite to end TfL loading bay racket

Traders in the Market Place have joined the RA in writing letters to Transport for London (TfL) calling for the two remaining loading bays in the shopping street to be removed.

The bays have been a source of controversy since 2006 when TfL set up a CCTV camera to monitor their use. Since then thousands of fines have been issued to residents and visiting motorists who have not realised that the poorly designated bays are restricted. Many other drivers who have legitimately used the bays for loading have also been issued with tickets which TfL has often been unwilling to cancel.

The Residents Association has been helping shoppers fight TfL's Market Place parking tickets for years and has been instrumental in recovering thousands of pounds for motorists who have been unjustly fined for parking in the loading bays.

In 2008 the RA joined with local businesses to lobby TfL to remove the loading bay outside the post office but two other loading bays were left in place on the north side of the shopping street.

Gary Shaw, speaking for the RA's Roads & Traffic Committee

says, "TfL appears to issue tickets more or less on spec almost as soon as a vehicle stops in one of the loading bays regardless of circumstances. As a result they are chasing away customers who are essential to our local businesses. Once they have received a fine many of these shoppers will not come back to the Market Place again."

Two recent cases exemplify TfL's approach to enforcement; Antonia Clayden, who delivers Suburb News to the Market Place, received tickets on two occasions when she stopped in a loading bay to pass 150 copies of the paper onto an onward distributor. On each occasion her contact was out when she arrived and without help to carry the papers Mrs Clayden was unable to unload. Because they observed no loading activity TfL issued parking tickets to Mrs Clayden and is refusing to cancel them so the case will now be appealed at the Parking Adjudication Service.

If Mrs Clayden's case was not bad enough TfL also recently issued a ticket to a supplier whose van was stopped in the loading bay in order to deliver goods to one of the north side shops. Just as he was about to start unloading the

driver noticed that an ordinary parking space had become available outside the shop in question so he moved his van forward to unload from that more convenient place. Because he had not been seen to unload from the original spot inside the loading bay TfL issued a ticket to the delivery company. As a result the company is now refusing to deliver to the Market Place in the future.

Gary Shaw said, "These cases tell us everything we need to know about the way TfL handles its responsibilities for traffic control. Whenever we have questioned them TfL have told us that the loading bays only exist because the traders want them and that they are absolutely not used for revenue-raising purposes. However most of the main north side shops have now told TfL they do not want the bays any more because the Authority's enforcement practices are damaging their businesses."

"If revenue is truly not a consideration for TfL presumably they will now demonstrate that is the case by complying with the shops' request that these bays be converted to general parking use. In the meantime we are asking TfL to cease enforcement of these loading bays with immediate effect."

GARY SHAW



The building is four storeys at the side facing the suburb but the windows on the top storey now face only the other way (previously on both sides)

Snapping at our heels... the Chandos Way development

It is tempting to launch into a NIMBYish rant – how dare Barratts try to build houses and a hulking big block of flats hard up against the Suburb boundary? Don't they know that this is the Suburb? It's practically hallowed ground, for goodness' sake!... But a rational approach is the order of the day here: Barnet needs more housing; Barratt Homes, apparently, needs more money. Clearly, it's a match made in heaven. . .

Looking at it dispassionately, the Chandos site (currently occupied by the tennis club, which Barratts will rebuild at a site on East End Road) is not a terrible place to build. It's near the tube, backs onto the railway tracks in fact (what estate agents refer to as 'convenient for local transport links'), and is not a green-field site. It's an awkward shape, tapering to a very narrow triangle at the far end and is dominated by the looming presence of the Golders Green

lighting and mobile phone mast, so perhaps wouldn't be your first choice if you were wanting to live in this area, but presumably Barratts know their market well.

So why the fuss? It's London, flats get built, no-one expects an open view. Surely we residents most affected should just get over it? But there are a few issues of major concern. The first is the proximity of the proposed new buildings – including a large block of flats that will be four storeys closest to the Suburb's southern boundary – to Waterlow Court and Reynolds Close. Waterlow Court (architect: Baillie Scott), which is Grade II* Listed, is an unpretentious and quietly beautiful building. The Grade II Listed houses at the end of Reynolds Close next to Waterlow Court, are Parker & Unwin. Although Waterlow contains 54 flats, its scale is modest, unassuming – and it will be dwarfed by the new block.

Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust was established to help safeguard this unique, globally-renowned conservation area. Its express purpose is 'to preserve and enhance the character and amenity of the Suburb' and this includes the setting of the conservation area. Although the Trust has no direct control over building outside the Suburb boundary, it has the right to be heard when developments on its borders threaten, in its opinion, the appearance of buildings in its care. The Trust shares the concern about the proximity and height of such a dominant block adjacent to the Suburb boundary. A representative group of residents recently met with Barratt Homes and their planning consultants. They listened to residents' concerns but, ultimately, they have decided to submit their application unchanged.

There is a great potential opportunity here for Barratts to think of the long game – to use this high-profile site as a way of improving their brand name and image. Memories are long-lived in the property business and the name Barratts (now rebranded as Barratt Homes) still conjures up something at the bottom end of the market. It has worked very hard over a number of years to reposition itself as a quality builder and the Chandos scheme is the perfect opportunity for them to show that they can work in a sensitive, harmonious way with the existing surroundings. The adaptation of their plans to meet the concerns of Suburb residents and the Trust could have a value in terms of their reputation that outweighs the relatively small cost of modifying their original proposal. I hope that their application as submitted is not their final word.

CHRIS STEPHEN

CLAIRE CALMAN

LETTERS

Erskine Hill, NW11

Sir

The school, some 15 months after completion of the two new Blocks on the Institute site on Central Square did, on 17 February 2012, complete the planting of the screening trees around the school site.

This work was carried out not in accordance with the original Hopkins Architects application drawing of 2008 HBS/A 3002 but to the Landscape company Capita Lovejoy's drawing 4738 L 1000 of 2010 submitted and approved by both The Trust (2010) and Barnet (2011).

The original proposed tree planting, as proposed by Hopkins in 2008, was for three new trees on each side of the Central building complimenting the balanced architecture of the two new wings. This has been replaced by the unbalanced planting of two new Oaks (*Quercus Robur*) in front of the North Block and the leaving of two existing Oaks in front of the South Block, the latter are out of alignment with the new trees to the former block. I find the present tree planting along this frontage to be unacceptable.

I ask if it is a good idea to plant Oaks so close to the buildings bearing in mind the problems the Trust has with the Oaks on the adjoining Electricity Sub-Station site off Northway. Might it not have been a better idea to have planted trees such as *Magnolia Grandiflora* which not only keep their leaves year round but also produce wonderful scented flowers and I am told can be safely planted close to buildings.

Through your pages I would ask the Governors, and I believe some 5 or 6 live on the Suburb, to look again at the present planting to the Central Square frontage of their site and consider the planting of three new trees in front of the new North and South Blocks and in addition, a proper, appropriate hedge in front of the South Block.

Yours

Ivor Hall

Hutchings Walk, NW11

Sir

Dr Papadopoulos has become a rather prominent figure in the Suburb and so I've been doing a bit of digging. (Investigative reporting used to be part of my job.)

In 2010 Dr Papadopoulos and 'Concerned Residents' demanded that a Surveyor be appointed by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors to determine the fairness of the Trust's Management Charge. The Surveyor determined that the Management Charge was fair. The Trust duly paid his fee of more than £8,000, which of course had to be included in our Management Charge.

In 2011 Dr Papadopoulos and the Concerned Residents again demanded that a Surveyor investigate the same accusation against the Trust. The Surveyor again ruled in favour of the Trust, at a cost of £11,000, again at the expense of us Freeholders.

Indeed, way back in 2007, as I subsequently discovered, Dr Papadopoulos had brought a complaint against the Trust in the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal on the same grounds as in 2010 and 2011; that application was also rejected but cost residents, I understand, £20,000 in legal fees.

That makes a grand total of at least £37,000, which of course doesn't include the very large amounts of staff and volunteer time needed in preparing a defence against these applications.

What a shame. If I were an unscrupulous property developer wishing to destroy our traditions, such repeated and costly attacks on the Trust is exactly the way I'd go about it. With every effort being made to bend the Suburb's building rules to accommodate – gross extensions, paved over gardens, unsightly alterations – we should all be more supportive of the only organisation which has the power to protect the Suburb's social and aesthetic integrity.

Yours

John Whiting

War is not like the movies

Suburb resident Chris Stephen spent four months in Misrata, Libya, reporting from the besieged city for The Guardian. Here he explains why real war is not like the movies.

War is louder than the movies. Much louder. Anyone who has been shooting will relate to that. A gunshot is like a movie explosion. An explosion is like the world exploding – no movie sound system could cope with it. The loudest sound I have ever heard was a scud missile exploding in the sky above Misrata at night after being hit by a US navy interceptor missile. It was like the whole sky tearing itself open.

You never get to see what is going on. Lawrence Durrell gave an interview about it once, saying

that war for him was being in a field, and in one corner something vicious was going on, but it was not clear what. That is war. All you are ever able to see is your own localised piece of chaos.

You get used to it. People ask you what was it like, and the honest answer is that you get used to it. The extraordinary becomes normal. In Bosnia years ago I dated a girl arranging to meet her after the next shell – they came in at half hourly intervals from a lone gun up on a hill. In Misrata, you got used to waiting each night for the arrival of the four or five grad missiles lobbed into the town. Once they were out of the way you could relax and sleep. I was back in England when Gaddafi was killed and was surprised by the popular reaction

to the TV pictures. First, because he was wicked. And second, because those blood stained images had been my constant companion, reporting day after day from Misrata's main hospital. Bloody corpses came in and bodies in shrouds went out, and sometimes you joined the soldiers in crying for their friends. But mostly it simply became normal.

I have come to think it is not the horrors you see or even the terror you sometimes feel, but the sheer intensity which you get used to. War, when it is not your family being killed or your town being destroyed, is like a drug. The smart thing is not to get hooked.

Nobody should be a full-time war correspondent.

The Institute
Summer Short Courses

The Institute's new Summer Learning Programme offers you the opportunity to choose from over 60 inspirational short courses running over the holiday period and starting from just £35. Broaden your horizons this summer!

The Institute Arts Centre, Beaumont Close, N2 0GA
(behind East Finchley tube station)

THE INSTITUTE SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAMME 2012

www.hgsi.ac.uk · 0845 871 4141

CHARITY NO: 312951

The Institute