

Letters to the Editor

North Square
NW11

Sir
The Trust has announced that it wishes to review its planning procedures in co-operation with the R.A. I think that this is something that residents should welcome. The measures I would suggest are:

- Make available to residents all correspondence received in connection with planning applications.
- Have 'planning committee' decision meetings open to residents and give them the opportunity to speak.
- Write to objectors advising them of Trust decisions.
- Wider publication of application details, especially those relating to listed buildings (lamp post signs and letters to more neighbours).
- Set in place a planning appeals procedure (for both applicants and objectors).
- Increase the number of Trustees elected by members.
- Publish detailed minutes of all Trust AGM's in the following edition of 'Suburb News'
- Commission an independent questionnaire in 'Suburb News' every couple of years of what residents think of the Trust and any suggestions they have. Publish the results in 'Suburb News'

The first four of the above would bring procedures into line with the more open practice operated by Barnet.

Any additional costs due to these measures should be borne by a surcharge on application fees and perhaps the annual Trust levy could be increased. I believe that if people felt that the Trust were acting in a more consistent and open way in the interest of residents, they would be happy to pay a bit more.

I am sure that residents will have other suggestions. Many people grumble about the way in which the Trust operates. This is the chance to make a difference - so I hope many will spend a few minutes writing in to the R.A.

Yours
Andrew Botterill

52 Temple Fortune Hill
NW11 7XR

Sir,
From Suburb to Sulawesi
Now in the second year of my degree in Zoology at the University of Nottingham, I am now faced with the exciting yet daunting task of designing and carryout out my own individual research project. Scientific research and surveying play a vital role in gaining adequate protection for many species, many of whom still remain undiscovered. With up to 15,000 species being driven to extinction every year it is clear that a lot of carefully planned conservation work is required to reverse this trend.

With both my research project and conservation issues in mind, I have booked myself on to a conservation expedition with Operation Wallacea in Indonesia next summer (2002). Established in 1995, Operation Wallacea organises 300 self-funding students and 35 scientists to carry out wildlife surveys and conservation expeditions in the forests and coral reefs of a remote corner of Sulawesi, Indonesia, every year.

Sulawesi is an island in the Wallacea region. Having always been oceanic, it has a unique fauna, with 90% of the mammals being endemic to the island. Despite its great biodiversity, Sulawesi remains largely un-surveyed and, as logging and pressure from over-fishing and pollution increase, research becomes all the more important. Without the backup of data, protection of the areas and species is impossible.

I plan to spend eight weeks collecting species data from the coral reefs with the help of experienced scientists. Once I have completed my research, it will be made available to any organisations, including local conservation bodies, that may have an interest in its findings.

There is a catch however. Most of the labour involved in Operation Wallacea projects is carried out by self-funding volunteers. In order to complete an eight week expedition, I must raise approximately £4000 (that includes £2700 for the project, plus flights, equipment and expenses). I am in the process of organising several fundraising events, including a raffle, jail-break, parties and mountain bike trials. However, I am unlikely to be able to raise the funds without outside help. If anybody is able to offer me any help in achieving my goal or any fundraising suggestions, I would be very grateful.

Yours
Bess Manley

Lytton Close
N2 ORH

Sir
I guess Roz Archer has not really lived with Crittal windows herself. However, I totally agree with Lynne Lucas when she says "just try living with them".

I have suffered with them for more than 16 years. Not only, at least every other year, windows need re-decoration but they damage many other parts of your house. When I moved here I had all glasses changed to special double layered/toughened glass. Within the first year the water from condensation virtually damaged the expensive glass by seeping through between the two layers. Window sills are indeed another problem with the condensation permanently dripping on them. They crack, peel and need extensive re-decoration. The wall underneath needs re-decoration along

with the carpet which gets stained. I have re-decorated and maintained these windows many times using the best suitable materials suggested by experts but I have failed the battle. It works to some extent if you get the rust off, as I did, and used galvanized metal on the new patio door. But the paint still cracks and peels off.

Also the energy we waste having these windows is ridiculously higher than the well maintained wooden windows. Roz Archer's suggestion surely is a standard remedy but have you listened to the Healthy Building experts who reckon a little air circulation through windows is much healthier than to completely seal your room.

I am all for conserving the character of our houses, but surely the loss of energy, the continual waste of materials and resources should, in these cases, justify some kind of compromise between the owners, National Heritage and the Trust to devise a strategy whereby in replicating the same original design we would be allowed to replace the old unhealthy and wasteful materials such as our metal windows, with alternatives like wooden ones.

Yours
Sophie Samadi

Fontmell Magna
Dorset SP7 ONY

Sir
I was delighted to see the imaginative proposals for the long overdue development of the Central Square site illustrated in the current Suburb News.

If the plans are progressed, I feel Option B would complement in a sensitive way, the outstanding symmetry of the Lutyens building and provide, hopefully, on a compact site, much needed accommodation for the School, whilst at the same time ensuring the continuance of an historic community based centre for the admirable work of the Institute. It would certainly be a sad day for me to see the partnership between the School and the Institute weakened further by the loss of a strong 'presence' on the site.

The one criticism I have of the Outline Plans as shown for Option B is that of the miniscule windows lighting the roof space, which are out of character with the fenestration of the present building. Also, a word of warning to the construction engineers. The land on the Southway aspect of the site is unstable and transversed with hidden underground water courses. When the Northern Line came to Golders Green in 1905, thousands of tons of spoil was dumped there to make up the ground. Tests in the past - especially when underpinning of the Queen Mary Hall became necessary in the 1970s - proved that 'natural earth' was almost 15 feet below present ground level. Springs occur across this area and flooded basements several times. To this day, the water hazard is only kept at bay by the use of pumps in the sub-floor of the School Gymnasium.

To see the huts removed and replaced with purpose built aesthetically pleasing accommodation brings joy to my heart. The so called Art Annexe - or, as it was known by my staff as 'The Temple of Mithras' - was erected in 1953 on a seven year lease! The only pity is that, to my reckoning, no less than £250,000 of precious funding has been spent on abortive plans for the School site since then, so it is surely time that a long held dream became a reality.

Yours
John Enderby

Howard Walk
N2

Sir
Thank you for printing 'Windows on the Web' to which I do not have direct access. Our street and others nearby have Crittal steel windows. Myself (with many neighbours concurring) find these very unsatisfactory. They lead to loss of heat and draughts, even when in good condition, but also they can deteriorate even with regular maintenance and become even worse - what with jamming and slamming. Heat losses on this scale are totally un-green. Good curtains, as suggested by one e-mailer, need to be kept closed to work and I, for one, do not care to shut out daylight and rely on the electricity board which also is ecologically unsound.

I have over years tried to get the Trust to call a meeting of their experts, residents and window companies to work out a replacement solution that would fulfil, as best possible, appearance, heat loss, comfort, cost, etc. As a resident, I wish to preserve the Suburb but also to take into account ecological, health (cold harms) and convenience. I have been turned down every time by the Trust, i.e. re a meeting/debate toward finding a mutually acceptable solution.

What has been suggested is secondary glazing. This has other snags which I will not go into here, but that could be discussed if a meeting or brainstorming session were only to be allowed to happen. I call on the Trust to do so.

Yours
Michael Brown

P.S. I have replaced as a trial, with permission, one room with new steel double glazing windows. I am still not impressed with steel.

Erskine Hill
NW11 6EY

Sir
Henrietta Barnett School Development
I was pleased to have the opportunity to view and comment on the master plans for the proposed development of the Central Square site. I have sent my comments to all concerned and would like to air a few of them in Suburb News. There are three matters which need to be addressed:

1) The need for the proposed developments
The main drive behind the development is the ambition of the school to become top in their category of best schools. This probably started in 1989 when they expanded from 459 to 650 pupils when they took over the then private school occupying Bigwood House. The school, since then, has changed from being a school for the children of residents of Barnet to a school which, in its ambitions, is now prepared to take up to 50% of its yearly intake from outside Barnet.

This ambition has resulted in the need for special accommodation for such subjects as Sciences which, we are advised, cannot be found by converting the present accommodation because much of it is shared with the Institute.

Unfortunately, the Institute has yet to decide its accommodation requirements on the site at the end of the present lease in 2004. Until such a decision is made it would be unwise to start any work on site. However, this should not stop the school from obtaining all necessary approvals for its development.

I am sure there would be much more sympathy for the school's development proposals if it were to temper its ambitions and return it to a more local school where some 20% only were trawled from outside the Borough. The school may even be surprised by the latent talent already living in Barnet, talent which might even maintain the high standards school has already attained!

2) Finance

We learn that the finance for Phase 1, the first 'block' is nearly all in place but for Phase 2, the second block, no finance is yet available. The financing of Phase 1 is mainly Government money, the money for Phase 2 will rely on private finance and money from the Institute, assuming it remains on the site. It is therefore quite possible that Phase 2 will not be built.

3) The architecture

Because of the present lack of finance for Phase 2, Option B as shown on your front page is a non-runner for without BOTH new blocks the scheme would be a disaster.

Options A & C, both infill in the centre of the site between Bigwood House and the Institute, would still be architecturally acceptable even if Phase 1 only was built. Because Option C will obscure much of the centre of Lutyens North elevation I favour Option A which, if Phase 1 only is built would, on plan, appear lopsided, from ground level it would hardly register.

The drawings for statutory and other approvals must be presented showing both the Phase 1 development only and the full master plan proposals.

Yours
Ivor Hall

Erskine Hill
NW11 6HG

Sir,
Older residents of Hampstead Garden Suburb will have been disappointed to read in the Ham and High newspaper recently that Mayor Livingstone had rejected an extension of the H2 bus route to ease their journey to see the doctors at Temple Fortune Health Centre and bring them nearer to the Finchley Road shops.

Garden Suburb Ward Liberal Democrats wrote to Transport for London last year to request this

extension to the H2 circular route, and the reinstatement of the 13 bus route beyond Golders Green, as a result of residents' survey returns, which showed a real need for it.

We were delighted that Lynne Featherstone, Greater London Assembly Liberal Democrat transport spokesperson, took up the cudgels on our behalf, and will be appealing for Mayor Livingstone to reconsider his decision, to help make life easier for Suburb residents who want to use public transport to get about.

Yours
Marjorie Harris
Chair, Garden Suburb Ward
Liberal Democrats

Erskine Hill
NW11

Sir,
Queen's Golden Jubilee
In addition to a picnic and fireworks I think we should celebrate Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee in a more permanent way.

Hampstead Garden Suburb has many streets and closes named in the English way after various builders, architects, artists, poets and statesmen, more or less prominent. Henrietta Barnett is commemorated in the school and her Trust Fund although Queen Mary's lively interest in her friend's project is recorded only in Queen's Court.

But the dramatic area at the heart of the Suburb between Lutyens' two great churches goes by the cold soviet style name of Central Square. In 1977 a considerable donation was collected and sent to the Prince's Trust following fireworks and floodlighting; let us in 2002 celebrate Her Majesty's 50 years as Queen by renaming the square Queen's Square. I believe the council of the RA were unwilling to consider my idea when it was raised with them, but if residents are interested perhaps they would.

Yours
D M Woodfield

Anyone wishing to endorse Lady Woodfield's proposal is welcome to write to:
The Editor, 26 Hampstead Way
NW11 7JL;
Diana Woodfield, 5 Erskine Hill
NW11 6HA
or sign a petition in the Garden Suburb Gallery.

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

ENGLISH

Why settle for less?

- Top grade, experienced teachers •
- Friendly, small classes •

Approved Teacher Training Centre

FREE CLASSES 2-4!

for our registered students
WP and Computer Training



GOLDERS GREEN COLLEGE and School of English

11 Golders Green Road, NW11 8DE
Tel: 020 8905 5467
Email: GGCOL@easynet.co.uk

Jane Collins

ARCHITECT

JANE COLLINS
ARCHITECT
27 CALVERT ROAD
HIGH BARNET
HERTS EN5 4HH
TEL: 020 8440 5870
FAX: 020 8440 6078