

MUSWELL HILL & FORTIS GREEN ASSOCIATION

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January 2012

Bleak houses

Outcry by members against crossovers rocks MHFGA

A DELUGE OF HEARTFELT correspondence by members on the undesirability of converting front gardens into private car parks has been fired off in response to an item on crossovers in November's Newsletter. A resounding 'Yes!' came in answer to our Committee's question to members as to whether we should object, on principle, to local planning applications for crossovers, thereby altering our previously neutral stance.

John Crompton, our Conservation Officer, says, 'The article in the November Newsletter produced a flurry of very interesting and well-researched responses. It is clear that members wish the Association to take a firmer line with regard to pavement crossovers. We did not get a single response from anyone who had installed a crossover to explain why they had felt it necessary to do so.'

Early attempts at recycling

'I have been the Association's representative on the local Conservation Area Advisory Committee for many years and the loss of front gardens has been a matter of great concern throughout that period. These garden walls are a characteristic feature of the Conservation Area: the materials they are made from, unlike metal, would not have been needed as part of the war effort and so the walls look the same now as they did when the houses were built. Clinker and reclaimed bricks were largely used to build the walls so Muswell Hill people were at



Private car parks mar the streetscene on this N10 road packed with beautiful Edwardian villas

the forefront of recycling initiatives even then.

A further point that needs to be made is that once a wall has gone it is very unlikely that it will ever be rebuilt because, as one of our members has reminded us, "This right (to build a crossover) is sold to the applicant by the Council in perpetuity. No time limit is applied to the presence of a vehicle crossover."

'There are, of course, many other things not to like about the provision of crossovers - loss of trees and established greenery and attractive front gardens as well as road safety considerations for both pedestrians and other road users.

'So what will happen now? The Association has listened to what you had to say and has already started to object. The emphasis will be to object in those cases where the application would have a particularly serious effect on the street scene or where we would need to stress to the
(continued on page 3)

HAPPY NEW YEAR

to all our members and friends. May 2012 be a wonderful year of Association achievement bringing us an improved sense of community fostered by our projects, events and successful campaigns.

We are welcoming in the year with our colourful, new look Newsletter and hope you like it! We now have a cut-out membership form on page 8. Please pass it on to your friends and neighbours and encourage them to join us!

INSIDE:

Our forthcoming meetings including an exciting anti-terrorism event (pages 2 and 4)

Insightful Ally Pally news from our rep (page 3)

Snippets with useful local information (page 5)

Letters Special – members speak out against crossovers (page 6)



Saima's Membership Column

Dear member,

A very happy New Year to you! I hope you've enjoyed the festive break and unusually mild weather and are looking forward to working on those resolutions. Perhaps you have resolved to be more involved in the community and are looking for avenues to do this. Well, look no further! Our Association provides the perfect outlet. We are always on the lookout for new blood and new ideas and would love to work with you in achieving this goal. So please do get in touch.

New members

Our very warmest New Year's welcome goes to our latest members: **George Kyriakos Karageorgis** of the Clissold Arms, **Martin Page** of Lauradale Road, **Mr and Mrs Craig** of Avenue Mews, **Catherine Appleby** of Sydney Road and **Norman Bailey** of the Local Gallery. Thank you all for your ongoing support and please do get your neighbours to join us as well. This is easier to do now than ever as there is a membership form printed on the back of our Newsletter.

Member of the month

Mr Henry Barnett of Southern Road is our special member in this issue of the Newsletter. He was a professional photographer, as was his late wife, and still maintains a dark room in his house, along with all the equipment he once used including inks, lotions, etc. Henry thoroughly enjoys our Newsletter and is delighted with our active involvement in matters in our area. Once an active local campaigner himself, Henry is less busy with petitions and canvassing support for campaigns now that he is 99. However, he keeps a keen eye on local developments and strongly supports our efforts.

Please do keep on sending in your nominations for Member of the Month. We want to celebrate the good work done by our friends and neighbours and inspire more people to be active in our community.

Members' topic

I can't believe it is 2012 already! What an action-packed year it promises to be – we can look forward to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee as well as the London Olympics. If you are thinking of organising any related community events or celebrations, then do get in touch with us so that we can let other members know, through our Newsletter, our website and our community noticeboard in the Broadway.

Also, if you think that we, as an Association, should commemorate these events in some way, then I would be very interested in hearing your suggestions.


My details

Please keep your comments and feedback coming in. You can get in touch with me by post: MHFGA, PO Box 56960, London N10 9BA or email: saimawilliams@live.co.uk


Feel free to post in the Association Facebook group at:


www.facebook.com/?ref=home#!group.php?gid+56250985945

Bulletin board

 SUPPORT OUR MEETINGS in the New Year by coming along, perhaps bringing with you some non-member guests, to the exciting anti-terrorism event taking place on **WEDNESDAY 15 FEBRUARY** and the highly topical presentation 'Tottenham: Heritage and Regeneration' on **WEDNESDAY 14 MARCH**.

Both meetings start at 8pm and take place at North Bank, 28 Pages Lane, N10 1PP. Our venue is easy to get to by foot from most parts of the area but there are parking spaces available for those who need them. The 234 bus passes the door and there are stops nearby on Colney Hatch Lane for the 134 and 43 buses and on Alexandra Park Road for the 102 and 299 buses. Find out more about the anti-terrorism event on page 4.

 A NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER has been co-opted: her name is Sue Cooke and she is to take over from Pat Bloomfield in the area of planning matters at our spring Annual General Meeting. Welcome Sue – we hope you will enjoy your role.

 OUR REP on the Haringey Admissions to Schools and Organisation Forum (HASOF), Anne Ruff, informs us that since this summer there is no longer a statutory requirement for the Forum to exist. However, it will continue to function for the time being as there is no other representative body with an overview of admission arrangements and school organisation in Haringey.

Meet our worthy volunteers

OUR DEDICATED ANTI-GRAFFITI team, who also maintain the Association noticeboard, Jack Whitehead and Bill Jago, have produced the following update on their work:

'We have just celebrated our eighth Christmas as the Association's anti-graffiti team. We monitor the state of our area's cleanliness in respect of graffiti and flyposting by a highly scientific indicator – our time of arrival at the John Baird in Fortis Green Road. At 10am sharp we set off on our patrol, dealing with any graffiti and flyposting that we see. Our route ends at the pub, so the less cleaning we have to do, the earlier we arrive.

'When we started in 2004 we did not get to the pub at all as there was so much to be done. Now we get to the John Baird at about 11.40am. Our route is three and a half miles long and we walk quite slowly because we scan the scene carefully.

'We feel positive about the present condition of our area. It shows how even the worst graffiti artists respond positively to a cleaner environment, but you have to keep it up.

'We also manage the Association's noticeboard outside Ryman's on the Broadway. Many local non-profitmaking organisations send us their posters but we receive very few from schools and playgroups. If any of our members are involved in money raising fairs, concerts or shows, please send a publicity notice to:

MHFGA, PO Box 56960, London N10 9BA

(Maximum size A4 please)

'Local schools and playgroups do flypost the area before their events and, despite being very hardline on removing flyposters, we tend to turn a blind eye to this. But it would help greatly if the people who put the flyposters up would take them down soon after the event!

'If members have questions about the finer points of graffiti removal, have suggestions to make, or would just like to have a chat, we are at the John Baird most Mondays from about 11.45am to 12.45pm. We would be very pleased to see you.'

Alexandra Palace

news and views



OUR REPRESENTATIVE, Denis Heathcote, gives us his update on the most recent news to emerge from Alexandra Palace and Park.

Much of the November joint meeting of the Statutory Advisory Committee (SAC) and Consultative Committee was taken up by a lengthy presentation about a proposal to seek the designation of the south east wing of the Palace as a Unesco World Heritage site. We heard in detail of the lengthy, tortuous, bureaucratic and potentially expensive process involved; that the next review of the Tentative List would not occur until 2021/23 and that designation was unlikely to assist in attracting

funding. Bearing in mind the present difficulties in funding essential repairs and restoration, members decided to recommend to the Trust Board that the aspiration be supported in principle but be pursued as part of the on-going regeneration and renovation of the fabric of the Palace. This might avoid diversion of resources or staff attention. Some members objected strongly to the proposal as simply irrelevant in the context of significant capital requirements and the scale of much-needed repairs to the fabric of the Palace.

Patch and fix

The Chief Executive, Duncan Wilson, responded to concerns raised about the nature of proposed repair works to the south façade involving protective netting, by indicating his intention to try to move towards a policy of long-term restoration rather than 'patch and fix'. He warned, however, that this might lead to a more selective approach. His intention is to appoint a conservation architect to draw up a conservation plan for the whole building. This would be a specialist contractor who could maintain skilled workmen on site.

A bid had been made to English Heritage for funds to investigate the source of leaks into the roof of the theatre and surrounding areas. Duncan Wilson agreed to reconsider the plan to install steel escape 'tunnels' and chain link fencing, to which the Alexandra Palace and Park Conservation Area Advisory Committee (APPCAAC) had objected, but warned that health and safety issues could not be overlooked.

He stated that he was reviewing the possibility of a more rational frequency of Board meetings in order to be able to deploy staff and volunteer resources more efficiently.

After discussion at the October Board meeting, it had been decided to make public, on the Haringey website, previously 'exempt' papers. These would go some way to answering questions, 'At least the answerable ones,' said Duncan Wilson, put by recent Joint Committee meetings about the Firoka lease and its consequences.

World heritage

Two Papers can be found, the first being a report by the Interim General Manager, Consideration of the Outcome of the London Borough of Haringey Standards Committee Determination Hearing (this hearing dealt with the conduct of Cllr Adje, former chairman of the Board and recommended that no further action be taken); the second, Advice on Possible Proceedings by Ian Harris of Howard Kennedy, Trust solicitors.

You can locate the papers at <http://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=105&Mid=5299&Ver4>. For the Trust Board meeting agenda and papers, click on 'Standards Hearing exempt reports for publication'.

The formal meeting of the SAC agreed the proposal to support the Unesco World Heritage Site designation as noted above, but took issue with a perceived failure to consult the Committee over a recently submitted planning application. The Chief Executive undertook to investigate but expressed his reluctance to delay temporary works intended to protect members of the public, while agreeing to withdraw the proposal for netting parts of the façade, to which particular objections had been made.

Foul drainage

On 25 November the Park Manager emailed to members of the two Committees his report which was to be submitted to the Board meeting on the 29th. He asked for rapid feedback on a proposal to carry out a foul drainage installation in addition to the surface water drainage works previously approved as part of Phase One of works intended to improve the cricket club grounds prior to their proposed use by Heartlands School. The project now includes an irrigation system which requires an above ground water storage tank needing planning permission.

Not surprisingly, this elicited critical comment by Denise Feeney on behalf of our Association, Colin Marr for APPAAC and by a representative of Alexandra Residents' Association.

Quietly slipped in

The way in which this late proposal appeared to have been slipped in, without going through the usual consultation procedures before going to the Board, was particularly criticised, as was the suggestion that an above ground storage tank would add to the visual clutter around the cricket Club. Denise wrote in trenchant terms about a mismatch between the proposed MUGA (hard surface playing area) yet to be submitted for consultation or planning approval and environmental policies already detailed in the Park Management Plan.

Continued from front page

Council that the application does not meet the Council's own criteria such as the property is not a single family dwelling or that the car cannot be parked at an angle of 90 degrees to the road. We will also point out the cumulative effect of the provision of crossovers in a road, not only in terms

of spoiling the street scene (loss of attractive original features and greenery), but also the fact that they reduce the amount of space left for other residents and visitors to park.

It is important that individual members make their views known to the Council as well. To this end we must keep up the pressure on the Council to ensure that it fulfills its

statutory duty to display a notice on the site so that local residents - and indeed passers by - are suitably informed about new applications and can comment on them.

For more on this subject see the Letters Special on page 6 and Pat Bloomfield's round-up on page 7 where she considers some new applications for crossovers.

Terrorism – could it happen in your street?

ALTHOUGH TERRORISM is one of the most topical issues of our time, it seems far removed from our leafy enclave. Complacency, however, is dangerous as our forthcoming event on 15 February at 8pm in North Bank (*see page 2*) will seek to demonstrate. Counter terrorism measures are relevant to us all and recent national news items prove how difficult it is for local people to spot a terrorist cell operating in their neighbourhood.

Our meeting will feature items on terrorist funding, hostile reconnaissance and signs indicating possible bomb factories. Sgt Andy Underwood, who will be leading the event, says, 'Vigilance is one of the key words here. Your trips to and from work, those routes you use day in and day out...you'll be surprised at just what you notice but don't pay too much attention to. That delivery truck doesn't normally park there;

why is that person taking photos of a building; why is that person standing there watching commuters? These are just a few of the questions we have to be asking ourselves in the current climate.'

Another interesting feature of the February meeting is that we are fortunate in being the first residents' association in Haringey to be able to secure this presentation. Our Chairman, John Hajdu says, 'We really are extremely lucky to get this team coming here to share some of their expertise with us. It is important for every member of every community to be on the look out for the indicators we will be told about: we owe it to ourselves and to each other. These presentations, one of which I have attended, are truly riveting. You'll certainly be surprised and alarmed at how easy it is for a terrorist group to set up in your neighbourhood without you noticing!'

MEMBERS' LETTERS SPECIAL (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

concerns about the safety of cyclists, pedestrians, and other road users.

I have long argued that cumulatively the loss of front walls and front gardens for car parking has taken a bigger toll on the local conservation and natural environment than any other single factor. If you walk around Muswell Hill with open eyes the evidence is there to see, and it has all happened by small incremental decisions, drip-by-drip. The result has been that some of the most attractive roads in Muswell Hill, which once had the original clinker front walls and gardens that were key features of this Edwardian suburb, have had their character seriously degraded.

For example, look at Wellfield Avenue with its lovely houses, but with 70% of their gardens turned over to car parking it is now much less attractive than it once was.

Property values

Unfortunately, some residents and property developers have been keen on front garden car parking in the belief that it adds value to their property. This may have been true when there were only a few examples in a given street, but very quickly it becomes evident that the street becomes less attractive, and then arguably the actual gain from this factor reduces to zero.

Of course this trend has been driven by the increased demands of vehicle ownership, but it should never have been allowed to progress in the way that it has. And it is a one-way process with very limited prospect of any

property owner choosing to re-establish their front garden.

The sad fact is that although there are Council policies against vehicle crossovers, they have not in the past been applied with much vigour. For sure there will be some applications that have to be permitted because they meet the criteria for 'permitted development' but hopefully these will become increasingly rare. Haringey's new Local Development Framework will include new policies with specific reference to front gardens and hopefully these will be more strictly applied.

Exclusive use

I expect there will be some people who would argue that if proper provision is made for surface water drainage and some green-space is retained then that's OK, but I don't think that overcomes the main objection that car parking in front gardens is an unacceptable encroachment of road-space and vehicles right up to the front of the house. Of course there will be a few members of the Association who already have front garden parking, but mostly these instances will pre-date Council policy and the general awareness of the cumulative damage that front garden parking has led to – that was in the past. I see no reason now why these members shouldn't also support the Association in opposing new applications for crossovers.

There is one further point that is particularly relevant to the Association taking up this issue. When an applicant is granted a crossover concession he is

given exclusive use of the roadway and part of the kerb-space directly outside the property concerned.

The applicant is only required to pay for the costs of the work involved. In effect this is the private acquisition of what was a public and community owned asset.

Loss of amenity

The applicant/owner/developer gains (and up to a point this is reflected in their property values), while the community (other residents) loses in terms of loss or amenity, including the amenity to also use that part of the roadway and kerb-space. In this way, in instances where the Association objects to a specific application, it would be seen to be acting in the interests of the community and its membership generally. To my mind that is precisely what the MHFGA should be all about.

There is a related subject that is outside the scope of this current debate that still needs to be addressed – that is the need for a residents' parking scheme. It is I believe the absence of such a scheme that has led to many instances where residents have sought front-garden parking.

Parking scheme

I know there are people who are manically opposed to the idea, but in my opinion it is long overdue that we had a well-thought-through controlled parking zone (CPZ) for the whole of Muswell Hill. I would like to think this is a subject the Association could take on board too. Next year perhaps?

Meanwhile, if there are Association members who would like to know more about the Crossover Group, please email me.

Colin Marr

colin.marr@blueyonder.co.uk

A taste treat at North Bank

KEEN MEMBER, Carola Zentner, has kindly contributed a write-up of our most recent event:

'A splendid evening was had by all who attended our November event at North Bank. We had the pleasure of meeting and greeting Zahda Saeed, who not only talked us through the preparation of Indian food but also showed us her own video demonstration on how to do it and then followed up with a very generous tasting session of dishes that she had prepared. If the proof of the pudding is in the eating, then Zahda got a starred A with her truly delicious onion bhajis, potato and onion pakoras and mint chutney.



Zahda helps Chairman, John Hajdu, to some of the delicious food on offer at our event

'Just about everybody in the room had questions to ask afterwards, which is a pretty good sign that they were very stimulated by the evening. Nobody went hungry and few people would have needed any more food that night. The only person who had good reason to feel stressed was Zahda herself, who had the removal vans outside her house the next day!

'Zahda, originally from Manchester, fell in love with Muswell Hill when she first came down to London when her doctor husband had been offered a consultant's position at the Royal Ear Nose and Throat Hospital. Furthermore, she is so happy to live in one particular N10 street, that this will be the third move the family has made within it. It won't be the last move either because she wants the perfect house and a really good kitchen for her demonstrations and cookery courses.

She wants to update her video and is writing a cookery book and intends starting courses imminently. Every demonstration ends with a sit down lunch. If you are interested you can contact her on 07967 750 667.'

Waitrose arrives

THE SITE OF THE SLUG AND LETTUCE pub/restaurant is shortly to be occupied by a new branch of the upmarket grocer Waitrose. Our Conservation Officer, John Crompton, has sent in a comment to the Council on the Waitrose planning application and below are some extracts.

'There are concerns about the proposed delivery arrangements. The applicant states that the main delivery will be before 7am and we urge the Council to make this a condition. The reason is that the application premises are situated adjacent to a bus stop on a bus lane which comes into operation at 7am. This is the busiest bus stop in Muswell Hill in the morning and it is not unusual for there to be three or four buses at the stop at any one time which people are boarding or alighting from.

'As far as the smaller deliveries are concerned, there is a concern that these may be after 7am and will thus interfere with the smooth and safe operation of the bus stop and bus lane.

'It should also be borne in mind that from about 9am onwards the pattern of use of the bus stop changes with more use by older people and parents with young children in push chairs. These passengers should be able to board the bus from the kerb and it is therefore essential that at no time can delivery vans be parked outside the application premises. Can this be controlled by Condition? Has the applicant explored the possibility of using the rear of the premises, accessed via Dukes Mews for these smaller deliveries?'

Snippets corner

* A large fallen tree brought Muswell Hill traffic to a standstill on 13 December. Storms encouraged the rotten specimen to crash down onto Colney Hatch Lane near the Pages Lane junction just feet from the site of our community planting project. Fortunately, no one was hurt and no damage sustained to property. The wreckage was cleared that evening.

* Chorak, the Muswell Hill shop which recently suffered a burglary, will not reopen until mid-January due to the requirements of its insurance company. More was stolen than was originally reported.

* The next Muswell Hill, Alexandra, Fortis Green and Highgate Area Forum and Committee, takes place on Thursday 12 January at 6.30pm. The meeting will be held at St Michael's CE Primary School, North Road, Highgate N6 4BG.

* Fortnightly waste collections with weekly recycling collections will start in our part of Haringey in March. Veolia, the company responsible for these collections and the Council will be giving presentations at the next Area meetings. They will also speak to residents' groups.

* North London Brass (NLB), a Muswell Hill brass band, rehearses on Wednesday evenings from 7.45pm to 9.30pm at the Methodist Church at North Bank. The Bandmaster is Paul Hooper and the band is part of a wider network of brass bands. New members on all brass band instruments are very welcome.

* If you are interested in accessing information on the location of mobile phone base stations (masts) in our area visit www.sitefinder.ofcom.org.uk/

* An archaeological report is now available covering the St Luke's Hospital site in Woodside Avenue. To view it visit www.inst.knightfrank.com/view/stlukes

* Our Association representatives attended a November meeting on the regeneration of Muswell Hill organised by the Muswell Hill Traders Association. Many interested parties were brought together and found a close match in aims and priorities. We look forward to working closely with this well-organised group.

* A 2,500 signature petition against cuts in the Parks budget was ignored by Haringey Council. The reduced budget is now resulting in job losses and the closure of parks depots.

MEMBERS' LETTERS

SPECIAL

So many members responded with letters to our item in the November Newsletter on the purchase of crossovers and conversion of front gardens into private car parks that it is not possible to publish them all. For this we offer our apologies. However, here is a representative sample of the letters sent in. For more on this subject, see the front page and Pat Bloomfield's comments on page 7.

Crossovers? No, thank you!

I think the Association should revise its position on objections - in fact I didn't know it had such a position.

Crossovers give a street a very broken-up and uncared-for appearance, particularly when there are several in a short space. The parking areas they give access to are almost universally bleak. This visual blight is compounded by a sort of moral or neighbourliness consideration too. By building a crossover, residents appropriate not just the new parking area that was once an attractive front garden but the space in front of it too. This appropriation - marked out by a white line - prevents other residents from parking on what was once a communal stretch of kerb, whether or not the off-street parking space is itself in use.

Re your list of criteria, I was under the impression that the council now disallowed pave-overs and crossovers for properties in which the car would have insufficient space to park at right-angles to the house.

I'd appreciate if you took my comments on board in your survey but did not publish my name as I wouldn't want to offend any of my crossed-over neighbours!

Name and address supplied.

Front gardens are cherished

In my view the MHFGA has a particularly valuable role to play in trying to stem the trend for residents to convert front gardens into parking spaces, because its representations carry more weight than those submitted by private individuals and are referred to in Planning Officers' reports. As a stakeholder group with a large body of members spread throughout the area, the Association can represent a general view with geographical spread and

continuity over time. It can be impersonal and objective. It isn't a direct neighbour. The Association's objections to crossovers can be done on the basis of principles, and of reminding Haringey Council to apply its own policies. The proposed development management document for the LDF puts the objections to crossovers particularly nicely:

Front Gardens

3.68. *Front gardens play not only a key role in London's ecosystem but are also important space where people can relax and socialise. Cumulative loss of front garden space can contribute to an exacerbation of local climatic conditions, loss of biodiversity, an increased flood risk caused by surface water run-off because of the greater expanse of impermeable services where front gardens are paved over, and finally the loss of vegetation can also contribute to increased air pollution in urban areas.*

(Extract from Haringey's draft Development Management Policies)

Creating private off-street car parking

3.76. *On-street spaces can be used by many different people with different purposes throughout the day, whereas private spaces will generally only be used for one purpose, often by a specific vehicle, and will remain unused at other times. For example, a resident's private parking space will often be unused for most of the daytime if the car is used for the journey to work.*

(Extract from Haringey's draft Development Management Policies)

Both the saved policies and the draft LDF require that 'the Council will resist off-street parking that would harm highway safety, hinder pedestrian movements or provide inadequate sightlines'.

Of course members and even Committee members of the Association may be among those who submit planning applications for crossovers, but that is

not an argument for the Association not to submit objections. If it were, it could also apply to planning applications for other types of developments, and from that MHFGA could become an association which only objects to planning applications which are not their members' ones.

Most objectors who are private individuals can only have a local perspective and one that applies at the time of application. I think MHFGA policies should reflect interest in the area generally. Please do continue to object to crossover applications, and resist crossovers to prevent more streets becoming like Elms Avenue where visitors can't park easily because so many of the houses have crossovers. Apart from the practicalities, front gardens are a cherished feature of streetscenes in Muswell Hill.

Elizabeth Sutton-Klein
Cranley Gardens

The Crossover Group

I am encouraged by the idea that the Association might take a stance against vehicle crossovers and parking in front gardens. Members who attended the Area Assembly in September 2006, when this topic was brought out into the open, will not be surprised to hear that I feel very strongly that we should! Shortly after that meeting I became spokesperson for an informal cross-Haringey group of residents known as the Crossover Group and we have campaigned with considerable success in reducing the number of crossover applications that get Council approval.

There are many arguments as to why crossovers and front garden parking are objectionable. Suffice it to say that these arguments include concerns for the conservation/heritage built-environment, concerns about the natural environment and ecology, and

continued on page 4



A typical Muswell Hill streetscene with traditional front garden walls

PLANNING MATTERS – a round-up from Pat Bloomfield

Progress report

Eden Primary, 79 Creighton Avenue

Construction of the new school started in late September/early October and John Hajdu and I had an interesting site visit with Peter Kessler, Chair of the directors of Eden Primary Trust, on 3 November. Pile driving for the foundations was under way and good progress had been made with site clearance and earth moving for landscaping later. The outline of the plan of the building was already evident and I look forward to an interesting building and a good school.

Peter advised us that the first intake of 30 pupils is now in temporary accommodation in Fortismere School next door with a deputy head and a security officer. The plan is for the new building to be ready to accommodate the second intake in September 2012.

Applications update

Land at rear of 10-12 St James's Lane

The application for a new house on the site of disused garages was considered by the Planning Sub-Committee on 5 December and was approved. We had objected, but as the height and bulk of the proposed house had been reduced since an earlier application was refused, and the adverse effect on surrounding properties thereby mitigated, an approval was expected. Conditions attached to the approval include retention of existing trees and a check on possible site contamination from the previous use.

Application Ref: HGY/2011/1550

New applications

390-392 Muswell Hill Broadway (premises now occupied by the Slug and Lettuce public house)

An application has been submitted for a Waitrose Local including conversion works and new shopfront. No doubt this small supermarket would appeal to many people, but arrangements for deliveries will need careful consideration because of the bus stop close by and the bus lane passing along this part of the Broadway. The use of the Mews at the back does not seem to be a possibility for deliveries.

Application Ref: HGY/2011/2121 and 2122

Land at the rear of Gilson Place, Coppetts Road (previously Lynx Depot)

When most of the site was re-developed for housing, a condition of the planning approval was that there would be part of the site set aside for employment/office use. An application in 2008 for office development of this set aside area was approved but not implemented.

A new application replaces this extant application for the same use and without significant alteration, that is, it simply extends the time limit. This has been approved very recently

Application Ref: HGY/2011/1624

Still in the pipeline is a separate application for a housing development on the site. This would be contrary to the condition referred to above. There would also be an increase in height of buildings close to existing houses 135-141 Colney Hatch Lane which pre-date the whole development of the Lynx Depot. This would give rise to serious overlooking from the proposed flats.

I have supported local residents in their objection to the change of use and to the overlooking.

The applicant states that the proposed change of use foreshadows 'forthcoming and emerging policy'. He may well be right. *Application Ref: HGY/2011/1833*

9 Wellfield Avenue

Anyone walking along Wellfield Avenue recently will have probably noticed the sad state of number 9 which is missing the upper part of the front façade.

This state of affairs has arisen because in carrying out internal alterations, roof works and preparations for a rear extension, all work classified as 'permitted development', the structure was found to be unsafe. This meant that part of the front of the building had to be taken down but I understand that photographs and measurements have been taken and some materials set aside for re-use in re-building work.

An application for Conservation Area consent has now been submitted for the re-building work and it includes a statement specifying works to the front in some detail, including new windows, brickwork, fascias and pargetting, all to match the original or similar in nearby properties.

Our concern is that the council should only give consent on strict condition that conservation issues are fully complied with. I have been in touch with the Conservation Planning Officer and shall be sending a comment on the application shortly. *Application Ref: HGY/2011/2232*

262 Muswell Hill Broadway

This is another case of loss of part of the front wall. This scaffolded site near the W7 bus terminus at the top of Muswell Hill is becoming all too familiar with the work seeming to make little progress. The hold-up is apparently due to lack of a full planning application which the Council has requested following the enforced removal of parts of the building. The original application was only for a new shopfront and clearly far more extensive works are now required. I shall keep in touch with the Planning Officer on the matter.

Crossovers with front garden parking

(see also front page, page 4 and Letters Special, page 6)

a) 13 Dukes Avenue

This was an application for a crossover, removal of most of the original front garden wall with loss of the garden. It was the first crossover case we objected to after agreement at our last Committee meeting to modify our policy of neutrality on crossovers. I am pleased to say that the application was refused but owing to a mix-up, the tree in the garden was cut down before the application was decided. This is a pity as there are few street trees in this stretch of the road.

Application Ref: HGY/2011/1473

b) 41 Queens Avenue and 32 Queens Avenue

Both these houses in the Conservation Area are used by Haringey for temporary housing.

I have objected to both applications which involve the loss of front walls (original in the case of number 41), on the grounds of adverse effect on the street scene and the loss of general free parking space which is very limited in Queen's Avenue and nearby.

Application Refs: HGY/2011/1954 and 2107

c) 1 Treeside Place, Cranley Gardens

Here is yet another application in this seemingly endless saga. The application was for closure of an existing crossover, part of the original design of the new house, and formation of a new crossover nearer the junction with Muswell Hill Road to give access to the parking area in the garden.

The application was approved at the Planning Sub-Committee despite much opposition, including a written objection from Cllr Jonathon Bloch on the ground of the dangerous location.

Application Ref: HGY/2011/1292

MUSWELL HILL & FORTIS GREEN ASSOCIATION

(affiliated to the Haringey Federation of Residents' Associations)

OTHER PEOPLE'S EVENTS

ALEXANDRA PALACE: the London Model Engineering Exhibition is on FRIDAY 20 to SUNDAY 22 JANUARY. Use the Palm Court Entrance.

For advance tickets ring 01926 614101.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL - HORNSEY AND WOOD GREEN GROUP: the group meets on the third Wednesday of every month at 8.00pm at the Friends Meeting House, Church Crescent, N10 3NE, in the Rainforest Room in the basement (ring the top bell). For more details email jane.bywaters2@hotmail.com or call on 0777 6230182.

FARMERS' MARKET: the Alexandra Park farmers' market takes place EVERY SUNDAY at the Hornsey Gate entrance, from 10am to 3pm. Ring 8302 9010 for more information or see www.weareccfm.com

HIGHGATE CHORAL SOCIETY: the next concert is taking place on SATURDAY 11 FEBRUARY at 7.30pm at All Hallows Church, NW3 2LA. Bach's St John's Passion will be performed. For further information email Chris Ashley at Christopher.ashley1806@gmail.com

MUSWELL HILL FRIENDS OF THE EARTH: the group meets at 7.30pm on the second Tuesday of every month at the Friends Meeting House, Church Crescent, N10 3NE. For more details contact Tim Root on tim@timroot.net or call him on 8340 7764 or 07726 793265.

MUSWELL & HIGHGATE PENSIONERS' ACTION GROUP: Members of the group meet regularly at Hilldene Court, 11 Alexandra Park Road, in the lounge on the first floor. A lift is available. Phone Janet Shapiro on 8883 9571 or email her at janet.rmshapiro@btopenworld.com for more details.

MUSWELL HILL TOY LIBRARY: upstairs in the Library, it is open on MONDAYS 2-3.30pm and THURSDAYS and FRIDAYS 9.30-12 noon.

NORTH BANK: weekly exercise classes for the over 60s take place in the Garden Room on FRIDAYS. The Fitness Plus class is from 10.30-11.15am (if recommended by the instructor) and the General Fitness class is at 11.45-12.30pm. There is a 'meet and chat' slot with refreshments provided at 11.15 – 11.45am. Sessions are £2. For more information phone David Restarick on 8365 2466 or email community@mhmc.org.uk Age Concern Haringey advice and help sessions take place on the last FRIDAY of each month from 10.30am -12.30pm. Call the number above for more details. North Bank's address is 28 Pages Lane, N10 1PP. Visit www.mhmc.org.uk

MET POLICE DROP-IN SURGERIES: the only surgeries scheduled at the moment are being run by the Muswell Hill Safer Neighbourhood Team. They will take place on WEDNESDAY 11 JANUARY, 1 – 1.30pm at Royal Palace Café, Park Road; FRIDAY 20 JANUARY, 12 noon – 12.30pm at Hornsey Central Hospital, Park Road and SATURDAY 28 JANUARY, 4-4.30pm at Starbucks, Muswell Hill.

The team can be emailed at: MuswellHill.snt@met.police.uk Alternatively, call 8721 2765 or 07760 170127.

www.met.police.uk/teams/haringey/muswellhill is the team's website.