

Viewpoints

End blight with a piazza to soothe the shoppers

WHEN ideas were first sought for a piazza in front of Hornsey Town Hall, I wrote to Barbara Roche, MP for Hornsey and Wood Green, suggesting that this quiet, attractive, square might be ideal for setting up outdoor chess tables and benches as are enjoyed in other European capitals – which people could use to take a break from their shopping, unwind and relax.

Now I see that this, in fact, is what is being proposed for Muswell Hill, in a £50,000 improvement scheme – while we in Crouch End are to be blighted by a McDonald's on the site of the Powerhouse instead, with the prospect of late night noise, litter on the green and all the negatives which attend these venues.

Why is it, when this space cries out to be a haven of beauty, peace and tranquility, are the planners so bent on destroying what little character remains in Crouch End Broadway, by turning it into yet another ugly anonymous commercial blot on the landscape? Don't let this happen. – MRS. E. HIGGINS, HASLEMERE ROAD, N8.

Go slower, please

THE WRITER "Disgusted of Muswell Hill" (Viewpoints, Journal, February 24) complains that he or she is shaken up when driving over the road humps in Rosebery Road. Has it occurred to him or her that if they were to drive at a more appropriate – i.e. a slower – speed, as requested by the residents of Rosebery Road, they wouldn't be shaken up in the first place? – Joseph Nicholas, Jansons Road, N15.

The best chance of saving our town hall

I WAS delighted to see that the community-backed Hornsey Town Hall Trust is going to bid for the town hall. This said, it strikes me as outrageous that, thanks to Haringey Council, we should have to bid for what is, after all, a public building, built with public money that belongs to us.

No-one round here wants the site handed over to a developer – as the council intends – because all they do is overdevelop.

Richard Milner, the council's executive member for finance, is "looking for local residents with the right set of skills to work with us".

Looking back over the past few months, many such residents have come forward. The Business Plan already presented by the Hornsey Town Hall Trust (it can be viewed on the campaign group's excellent website www.hornseytownhall.org) drew on just such skills, not only from local people but from some of the most professional and finest in the lan.

Why have they been snubbed without reasonable explanation?

I suspect that Mr Milner and his colleagues want to work with no one but themselves, in their quest to offload the site as quickly as possible to a developer. – Kitty Butterwick, Avenue Road, N6.



HORNSEY Town Hall

Don't take a risk with our homes

HARINGEY Council is promising council tenants new kitchens and bathrooms if they vote for an ALMO. What they DON'T say is that the council already has £126million to spend on home improvements between now and 2010, and could raise extra money through right-to-buy receipts and other means.

The final Stock Options Appraisal Group report that was FULLY accepted by the council explicitly states that the proposal is an ALMO with flexibility, and that it will go out and look for other sources of funding, which can only mean stock transfer or PFI (both privatisation options).

The ALMO is a private company, and those tenants and leaseholders who sit on the board will, through company law, be accountable first and foremost to the ALMO, and not to other Haringey tenants and leaseholders.

Tenants in other authorities have been thrown off the boards whenever they have spoken out.

The bottom line is that we don't need a separate private company in Haringey to manage our homes. Why can't we stay as we are AND have direct investment in council housing? Why must we trade the security of having publicly

Efforts being ignored

RICHARD Milner's statement on Hornsey Town Hall in last week's Journal falls short of the standards of a public servant in his position. It neither acknowledges the considerable efforts already put in by local people, with the unstinting and heartfelt support of Barbara Roche, MP for Hornsey and Wood Green, nor offers any explanation why the council is choosing to ignore these efforts.

Instead, it seeks to sow further confusion by drawing others into the process, while the core argument – the intention to sell to a developer – remains unaltered. – Sarah Montgomery, Steering Group, Crouch End for People, N8.