



Ask told "on yer bike"

By John Dearing

As reported in last month's edition of *THE ARCHER*, the Ask chain of pizza restaurants has applied to Barnet Council to take over the former Barclays Bank building at 84 High Road.

The application for change of use to a hot food takeaway (reference C02502D/06) was considered at the meeting of the Finchley & Golders Green planning sub-committee on Thursday 9 November. There was no mention of converting it to a restaurant.

At the meeting, it emerged that the company planned to run a delivery service from the rear of the building, using the alleyway between the gardens at the rear of Fairlawn Avenue and the buildings on the east side of the High Road as access for their vehicles, potentially a fleet of small motorcycles.

None of this had been mentioned in the planning application (the plans reveal provision for a driver area and helmet shelf, but it is not obvious), nor in the consultation notice distributed by Barnet's planning department. It was, however, discussed in the planning appraisal, a document prepared by the planning officers from discussions with the applicants, and used as a

brief for the committee.

Delivery downside

When it emerged that the consultation notice had been distributed only to buildings immediately adjacent to the former bank, the planning committee voted to defer considering the application until its next meeting on 7 December to give the planners time to consult everybody who would be affected. The planners, however, have merely distributed essentially the same notice more widely, and there is still no mention of deliveries.

There are no planning limits on the density of hot food takeaway sites in any given town centre, so the only other grounds for refusing this application are that there has been no study on the effects of noise or fumes on nearby residents. If it goes ahead, the residents of the west side of Fairlawn Avenue are likely to experience the sound of motorcycles just behind their gardens until late every evening.



Naty and Raffaele de Martino bring a real taste of Italy to Church Lane.

A rocketing success

By John Lawrence

Those living near Church Lane know it's already one of East Finchley's hidden treasures, with its excellent general store, florist and beauty shop, Indian takeaway restaurant, fish and chip shop and newsagent.

Now it's even richer with the arrival of a new Italian restaurant in the experienced hands of Raffaele and Naty de Martino.

The couple have opened La Rugoletta, serving pizza, pasta

and panini mixed in with a dash of poetry and painting.

Raffaele, who has run the Da Vincenzo Italian delicatessen in Fortis Green for three years, reckons Church Lane is ideal for his new business.

"I've always liked this spot. I go by instinct and I think it's going to be good here. News spreads very quickly and we've already had a lot of people trying us out," he said.

The premises has stood empty for more than two years after an earlier attempt to turn it into a restaurant fell by the wayside midway through redecoration.

Spotting its potential and unable to reach the landlord any other way, Raffaele and Naty put a note under the door and now the place is theirs.

Poems, paintings and pizza

This is a genuine Italian restaurant with a chef working at

a real pizza oven right in front of diners and the quality of the food on offer is high. The walls are decorated in warm red and brown tones and hung with paintings and poems by local artists.

Raffaele, from Salerno, near Naples, and Naty, from northern Spain, want to give La Rugoletta the feel of a proper pizzeria, but this doesn't stop them offering a full English breakfast for the morning trade too.

La Rugoletta opens Monday to Saturday from 9am to 10.30pm, closing slightly later at weekends. A licence has been applied for but, in the meantime, customers are welcome to bring their own drinks.

And for those wanting to know the meaning behind the name, La Rugoletta is the Neapolitan dialect word for rocket, the delicious leaf that also happens to be Raffaele's favourite ingredient.

Spoil the fraudsters' Christmas

By John Dearing

In the weeks before Christmas, identity fraudsters can easily conceal fraudulent transactions among the increased credit card transactions their victims make. For some unfortunate people, the New Year can start with more discomfort than just a hangover.

National Identity Fraud Prevention Week ran from 16-22 October. Organisations taking part included the Police, the Identity and Passport Service, credit checking companies, and the Federation of Small Businesses. The ways in which your identity can be stolen were highlighted, and the steps you should take to prevent this happening.

Typical tricks include:

Bin raiding, where people go through your rubbish looking for bank statements, pre-approved credit offers, utility bills and anything else they could use to establish an illegal account in your name.

Card skimming, where a shop assistant or waiter copies the information from your card and sells it to professional criminal gangs.

Unsolicited phone calls asking you to update your personal information.

Similarly unsolicited emails (this is called 'phishing').

Theft of your wallet or purse, together with bank cards, driving licences and many other sources of personal information.

Fighting back

There are many ways to protect yourself against identity theft:

Purchase a home shredder and shred all documents that could possibly carry personal information.

Check your credit card and bank account statements carefully, as soon as they arrive.

If any statement is late, assume it has been stolen and check with the relevant company.

If possible, regularly monitor your accounts online.

Obtain a credit report from one of the credit reference agen-

cies from time to time to make sure there are no accounts illegally set up in your name.

Never give PIN numbers to anyone, especially unsolicited callers.

For more information, visit the National Identity Fraud Prevention Week web site at www.stop-idfraud.co.uk.

Be a-mazed by new museum attraction

By John Dearing

Visitors to the Church Farmhouse Museum in Greyhound Hill, Hendon, can 'get lost' now that work on a new maze has been completed. The turf and brick maze is believed to be the first of its kind in the borough of Barnet and will be officially inaugurated next spring, although visitors to the museum can explore it now.

The maze is known as a 'puzzle maze', because it has several false trails as well as the correct one. Made from nearly 1,000 bricks set into grass, it was designed by the borough's Heritage Officer Hugh Petrie and building contractor Martin Cragg and was constructed through money left to the museum by the late Colette Anna Fontaine, from Edgware, with additional funding from the Friends of Church Farmhouse Museum.

Museum benefactor

Ms Fontaine was an artist and a museum enthusiast. On her death, she left an equal amount of money to both

Barnet Museum and Church Farmhouse Museum. Church Farmhouse decided to use its share to enhance the museum garden's appeal to children and create a lasting memorial to Ms Fontaine's generosity.

Councillor John Marshall, Cabinet Member for Learning Infrastructure, said: "This maze is a fine addition to the Church Farmhouse Museum which will, I am sure, be popular with visitors old and young. Mazes are magical things that can provide hours of fun for children. I am looking forward to testing my puzzle solving skills to reach the centre of the maze."

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