Safety fears over darkness on the North Circular

Safety concerns have been raised after it was reported that street lighting on a section of the North Circular Road has been out of action for around six months.

The area concerned is the stretch between the flyover at Strawberry Vale eastward to Coppetts Close, N12. This part of the road has a nature reserve on its north side and the St Pancras & Islington Cemetery on its south side.

Iayn Clark, of Sylvester Road, N2, has raised the issue with the Department of Transport and Barnet Council. He was told that responsibility for street lighting here had been outsourced to a contractor, who in turn said they had no record of a fault. It was finally confirmed to him that Transport for London are the responsible body. He is awaiting a response from them.

Hazardous northern pavement

Mr Clark said: "It seems a lot of people who should know are ignorant of the true situation. This appears very peculiar. I look forward to the issue being resolved and wonder why nobody from council staff and police (who drive down this road at night) has done anything about it before.

"There are pavements on either side of this road but it is mainly the north side that gets used by people walking or cycling to Tesco etc. In the area not lit by the lamps the pavement is in total darkness unless a car's lights light it up.

"It can be a hazardous pavement as branches can fall across it and not be clearly seen by a cyclist. If a cyclist hits a large branch they could easily be thrown into the road and killed as cars and trucks travel at 50 mph on this stretch."

Farewell to Raglan?

One of Muswell Hill's best-known hotels could be closed and turned into flats. Owners of the Raglan Hotel on Queen's Avenue want to convert it into 18 luxury apartments.

Plans to build eight one-bedroom, eight two-bedroom and two three-bedroom flats are with Haringey Council. The façade of the building will remain unchanged.

Larry Lipman, managing director of property company Safeland who bought the three-star hotel 18 months ago, told the Ham & High newspaper last month that the 50-bed Raglan had been unviable for many years and was falling into a state of disrepair.

New look? Plans are afoot to turn the Raglan Hotel into flats

The way Bernie sees it…

It's often an eye-opening experience seeing life through someone else's eyes, but what if that someone else was your dog? When Rachel Stoplar wanted to contribute to the hand-drawn map series on the excellent Londonist.com website, she enlisted the help of her elderly chocolate labrador Bernie.

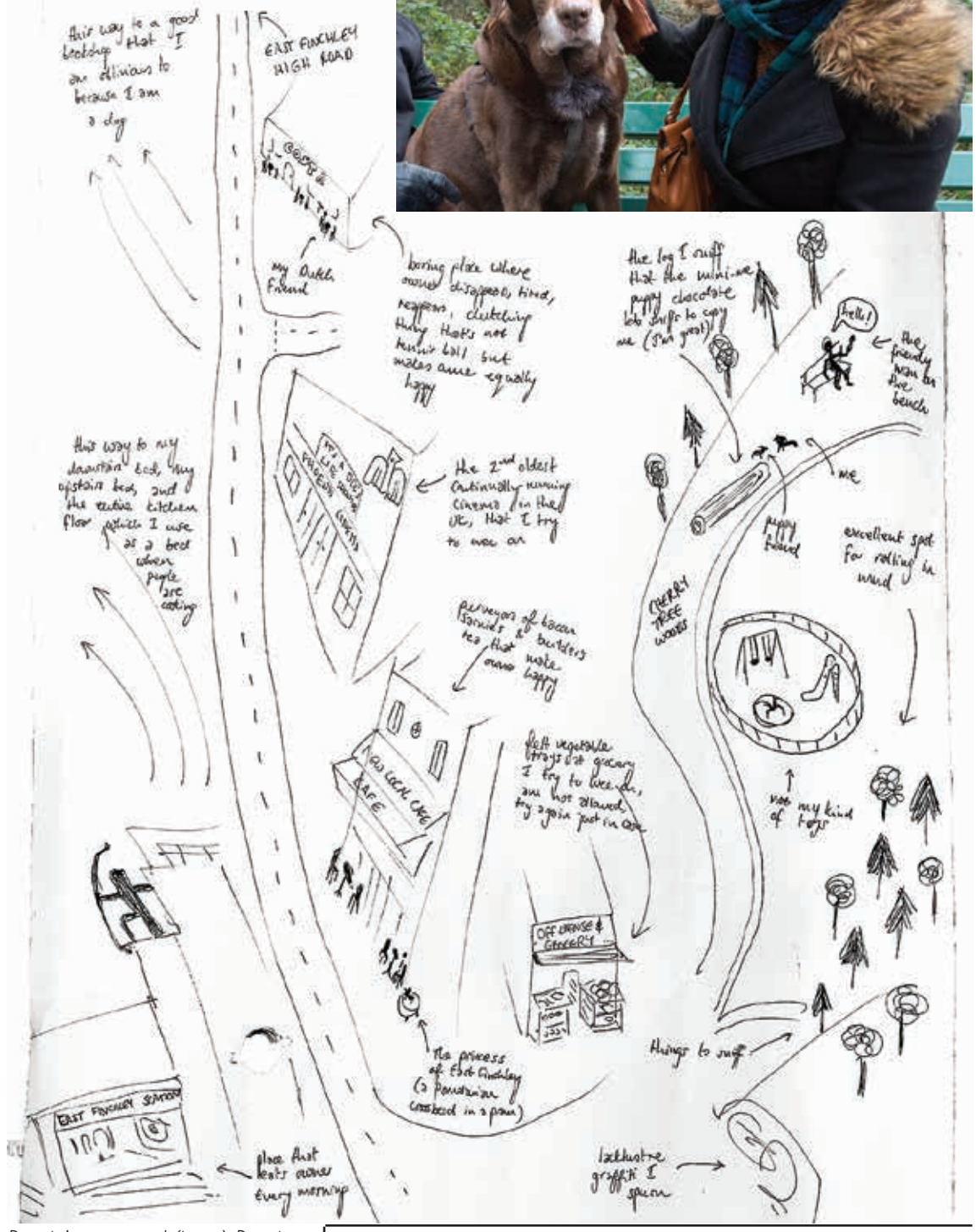
The map Bernie and Rachel came up with is a fascinating dog's-eye view of some of the most familiar spots in East Finchley, the Phoenix Cinema, Cherry Tree Wood and the High Road among them.

As Londonist put it: "See this village-y corner of north London in a way you've never seen it before: a combination of places to wee on, things to sniff, the best spots for rolling in and a selection of furry and non-furry friends along the way."

Highlights for Bernie include Cherry Tree Wood, which features an "excellent spot for rolling in mud", "the friendly man on the bench" and "the log I sniff that the miniature puppy chocolate lab sniffs to copy me (I'm great!)".

The New Local Cafe is the "purveyor of bacon sarnies and builder's tea that make owner happy" while the Phoenix is "the 2nd oldest continuously working cinema in the UK that I try to wee on". Rather poignantly, Bernie sees the tube station as the "place that eats owner every morning".

What would your dog (or cat) draw if they could map out their neighbourhood? Send us your pet's maps and we'll print the best ones. Email the-archer@lineone.net.



Bernie's map and (inset) Bernie with Rachel .Photo by Mike Coles

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