



Nursery plans for Bobath Centre site

By Daphne Chamberlain

The Bobath Centre will leave its site at East End Road on 25 November. The new owners, 250 East End Road LLP, run by 13 investment companies and represented by international estate agency Savills, have submitted a planning application to Barnet Council which involves amendments to the Grade 2 listed frontage of the existing building, demolishing unlisted extensions and replacing with new ones, and creating an outside play area.

The application states that the new extensions will keep to the same roof line as the Grade 2 frontage. Barnet Planning and Conservation Officers visited the site in June, and original proposals for the western part have been amended.

The new owners state in their application that they have come to an arrangement with a children's nursery. This means they don't have to apply for change of use, as the Bobath Centre was used to assist children with cerebral palsy.

Questions and concerns

However, the proposals do not cover the entire site. A large area of land at the back will be separated by a temporary boundary, "to ensure safety and security to nursery users". Many people are questioning the future of this unused land, and indeed the proposed nursery provision.

The plans indicate a nursery

for up to 170 children, with 26 staff. Storage, staff space and playground size appear to many to be insufficient, and it is not clear that a new nursery on these lines is needed in this area anyway. Existing nurseries Monkey Puzzle and Scribbles have both stated that they are not involved.

An extensive international nursery chain, actively looking for new sites, has requirements corresponding closely to the space in the planning application, but neither they nor Savills have answered enquiries from *The Archer*.

Neighbours also question the viability of the scheme. The plans provide only four car spaces and one disability space, but 12 cycle areas.

Dropping off times are estimated as three minutes, which seems unrealistically short, and there are concerns about traffic congestion around the entrance and exit to the site.

Fun Palace for all

A reminder from last month's edition that East Finchley Library will be hosting a free festival of arts, music, sports, science and dance on Saturday 6 October.

The Grange Big Local Fun Palace will feature music MC'd by Benteki, of Repräsent radio, with football run by the Monday Club, cheerleading from Saracens, free manicures from Vales Nails, dance from SOTO CIC, art with East Finchley Open Artists, the chance to look for aliens with Mill Hill

Observatory and much more. Also on display will be information from the archives of East Finchley Library, and organisers are hoping to collect stories about it from people who have used it over the years. For more information check out the Fun Palace website www.funpalaces.co.uk



Sword play: Matt Lewin fashions a foam blade in his garden workshop.

Where superheroes buy their supplies

By John Lawrence

A whole fantasy world is coming to life in a garden shed thanks to the creative talents of props and costume maker Matt Lewin. Give him a little time and he can conjure up anything from a Viking chieftain helmet to a Wonder Woman shield.

You may have seen Matt, 26, and his Dragon Workshop stall at the East Finchley Festival back in June when he had much of his Star Wars, Marvel and Lord of the Rings-inspired armoury on show.

He uses cardboard and foil to build the templates for his creations and then makes the final products by cutting and moulding floor-mat foam, before giving them a realistic metallic or paint finish, all in a workshop shed in his parents' garden in Bedford Road, N2.

From hobby to business

"I always loved making Airfix models and all sorts of things out of cardboard when I was young," said Matt. "I started making items from films like Lord of the Rings because I wanted them for myself. Now I'm hoping I can make a business out of my hobby."

Matt's customers are often comic and film fans who go along to massive conventions dressed as their favourite characters. He's also had orders for shop window props and even a request for a bespoke shield from his own prop-making hero Adam Savage, who has 3.9 million followers on YouTube.

Matt said: "A lot of orders



Battle gear: Helmets and a shield made by Matt.

come from America but I'm hoping to build up my business in this country too. The Scots Guards Association Band have asked me to make 13 bearskin helmets for them, using foam and fake fur. The real thing are too hard to come by, apparently."

Find out more about Matt's creations on Facebook and Instagram @thedragonworkshop and buy them by searching 'thedragonworkshop' at www.etsy.com/uk.

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