



Easel does it: Alan, above, paints the busy scene at the roundabout in Muswell Hill Roundabout and, below, his tranquil painting of a house in Fortismere Avenue, N10

The artist appearing at a roundabout near you

If you happen by chance to be passing the roundabout in the middle of Muswell Hill, don't be surprised if you see an artist working at an easel. This spot happens to be a favourite location of north London *plein air* painter Alan Lancaster.

Plein air means 'open air' in French, says Alan, and it was an approach used by the impressionists who wanted to catch the fleeting effects of light and time. "The view from the roundabout is one of the most interesting in north London with its assorted array of period

buildings, bus stops and people on the move. "It is not environmentally friendly though and something I did not take into account when I chose the subject is that the best light for painting happens to be during its very chaotic rush hour."

Light on a facade

Alan usually wakes early and has his equipment packed and ready to go. He checks his weather app and, if everything looks fine, loads up his motor scooter and heads off looking for potential subject matter. He especially likes to paint buildings but it is usually the way the light is falling on a façade that draws him to it in the first place.

"Painting on location means you have to be ready for any scenario to unfold," he says. "On a lovely summer's day last year, I started to paint a view of the Free Church in Hampstead Garden Suburb when an hour into the painting the girls from Henrietta Barnet came out to play rounders. A member of staff did ask me if I minded and I said no. Ducking from fast moving balls, I persevered, finding the game had become the subject and the church the backdrop to what turned out to be a far more dynamic painting."

Full of character

Alan's obsessive interest in residential architecture has resulted in him becoming a well-known house portraitist. "Like a human face, an interesting building is full of character and invariably reflects the personality of its owners."

You can follow Alan's daily painting journey on Instagram at [alanlancasterpleinair](https://www.instagram.com/alanlancasterpleinair) or on his website www.alanlancaster.co.uk



Open artists

The East Finchley Open Artists group is hosting its two annual open house weekends on 29-30 June and 6-7 July. Sixty artists will be displaying their crafts at 17 open houses around the East Finchley and Finchley Central area, with an opportunity for visitors to browse and buy. Find out more at www.eastfinchleyopen.org.uk/events

Objectors hit out at tennis club plans

By Diana Cormack

Residents living around the Fortis Green Tennis Club off Southern Road, N2, have received letters from Haringey Council informing them of a planning application for new housing on the site (described in previous editions of *The Archer*) to which objections could be made by 10 May.

Representatives from Cherry Tree Road, Summerlee Avenue and Summerlee Gardens, all in Barnet, and Shakespeare Gardens in Haringey gathered in a local garden to discuss this with the help of East Finchley Councillor Arjun Mittra.

Under the proposals, the trees seen at the rear of the photo printed here will disappear, to be replaced by the blank wall of a club house, the bulk of which will block out any light or view from the family garden it will be overlooking. Those on the opposite side of the road fear being overlooked by several balconies.

Also lost will be the garden which lies between the end of the Cherry Tree Road cul de sac and the tennis courts in Haringey. Only by crossing over this can vehicular access be provided, along with creating a turning-circle which, despite

residents' views on its efficacy, the applicants claim will be of benefit to the narrow road.

The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood have raised the question of biodiversity with both councils and underlined potential damage to the surrounding woodland, along with other detrimental effects on the environment, the danger to wildlife and possible run-off water problems.

Objections to the proposed plans have been sent to Barnet as well as to Haringey for a decision to be made. Many feel the site is too small and that the proposed alterations are inappropriate for the tennis club itself, reducing the number of courts from four to three. At the time of writing, owing to the high number of objections and considerable local interest, the consultation end date has been pushed back to 10 June.



Not in favour: Objectors to the tennis club development plans meet with Councillor Arjun Mittra, centre



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