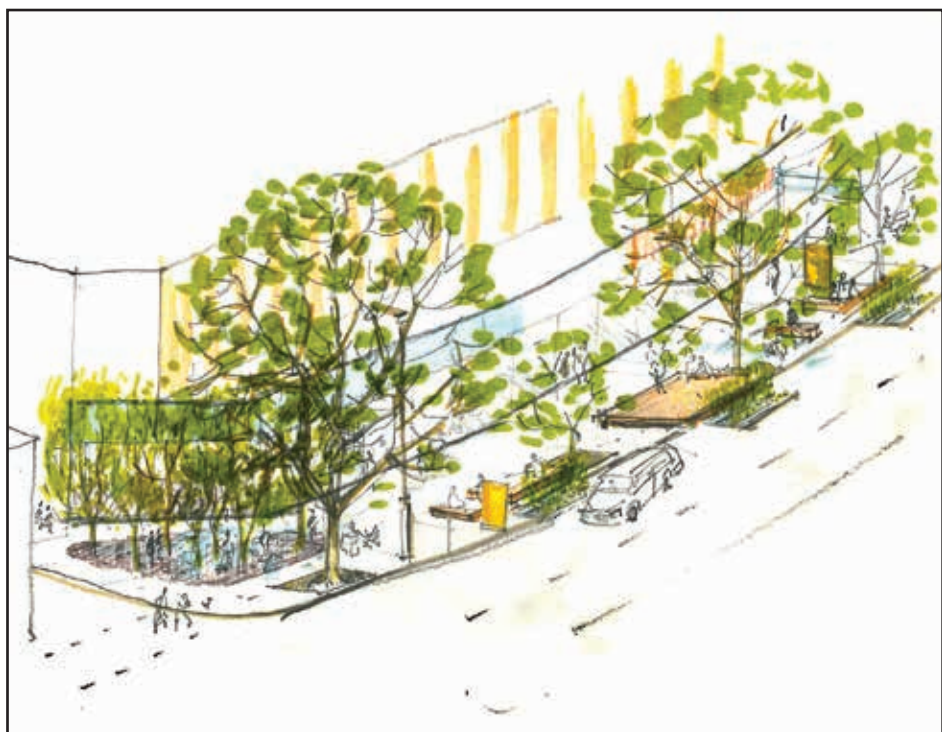


Cluttered pavement reimaged as town square

By David Melsome



Leafy: An aerial view of the new trees, seating and performance area on the redesigned pavement and, right, the area as it looked during the ideas event last summer

Plans can now be revealed for transforming the wide area of pavement outside Budgens and Amy's in the High Road into an attractive new town square for East Finchley. Designs have been drawn up by local architects MillsPower at the request of East Finchley Town Team, whose aim is to boost trade for N2's venues and shopping areas.

The plans incorporating dozens of new trees, improved seating and a complete repaving will be put in front of Barnet Council's planners soon and fundraising for the project is about to begin in earnest with the aim of starting the transformation later in the year.

The people's ideas

Architect Mark Power said his company's proposals had been inspired by public responses at the Town Team's *Happening* event held during the London Festival of Architecture last June. Among food stalls and live performances, passers-by were encouraged to air their thoughts on what a town square could be by pinning postcards onto a 'wishing line'.

"Analysis of these ideas revealed that more than 50% of visitors want improved planting, more trees, better seating and space for community events," said Mark, "effectively a green town square where residents and visitors to the neighbourhood can enjoy healthier surroundings and celebrate

the wonderful community and cultural variety East Finchley has to offer.

"Currently the wide pavement area between Budgens and Iceland is cluttered, with raised planters obstructing pedestrians

"The concepts we have designed show instead a generous expanse of uninterrupted and usable open space, where people can pause, meet, gather, as well as pass in both directions, and where stalls can be

trees marking and shading the edge of the pavement, keeping it accessible to carparking and open to the opposite side of the street.

A new grove of young trees close to the High Road and East End Road junction, level

scheme with local planting, porous tree aprons and free-draining surfaces will also help the immediate ecology.

Wooden bench seats will face one another rather than confront the traffic as they do now, and in one place will be broad enough to become a performance area for outdoor plays and concerts, impromptu busking or stand-up performers.

"With winds of change at last prevailing, and the support of East Finchley's three Ward Councillors, we will shortly be finalising these suggestions to put to the planners," added Mark. Kate Brown, Chair of East Finchley Town Team, said the group realised it would take a lot of effort to turn these aspirations into reality.

"Archer readers with long memories will be aware that there were plans in the 1980s to widen the Bald Faced Stag junction, which were defeated by local opposition. This is the reason that we have a wider pavement from Caffé Nero to Budgens," she said. "However little effort has been made to improve the space since then. These plans are designed in response to local feedback requesting more space for people whilst maintaining planting. In particular local people want more seating and a performance space for social activity which East Finchley values."

If you have comments on the designs email estownteam@gmail.com before the end of March.



Formal designs: The scheme to be submitted to planners shows: 1) larger planted areas for existing trees; 2) a new grove of cherry or birch trees; 3) a new London plane tree; 4) rain garden sustainable drainage; 5) seating and stage areas; 6) raised table at pavement level.

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and preventing other activities. Electronic billboards have been added recently, prioritising technological rather than human uses of the space.

set up for occasional festivals and family-friendly events."

Tree-planting

The scheme aims to reinstate a full complement of tall plane

with the pavement, will allow pedestrians to walk among them and their foliage will help to filter the air overhead. A sustainable urban drainage



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