

Campaigners keep up pressure for school

Caroline McClatchey

Demand for TUC building to become a primary

CROUCH End campaigners are keeping the heat on Haringey Council to turn the TUC building into a much-needed primary school.

Since the TUC decided in June to sell its leasehold for the National Education Centre in Crouch End Hill, residents and local politicians have been urging the council to do something to solve the schools places crisis.

The council owns the land and the building, the former home of Hornsey College of Art. It has been meeting with TUC chiefs over the summer and a decision is expected next month.

Education spokesman councillor George Meehan said: "As soon as the TUC announced it would be leaving the site we have been in discussions about its future use including the possibility of a new school for Crouch End.

"In the past couple of weeks, detailed negotiations have been taking place and two meetings held.

"It is hoped negotiations will be concluded in September."

But a new proposal to demolish a hostel opposite the TUC building to make room for a block of flats has the community even more worried.

Developers want to knock down Highgate Lodge, in Waverley Road, and build a five storey complex of 15 two-bedroom flats and four bedsits,

with basement parking for 12 cars.

Campaigner Sue Hessel told Broadway: "There is not the social infrastructure – school places, GPs – to cope with yet more flats.

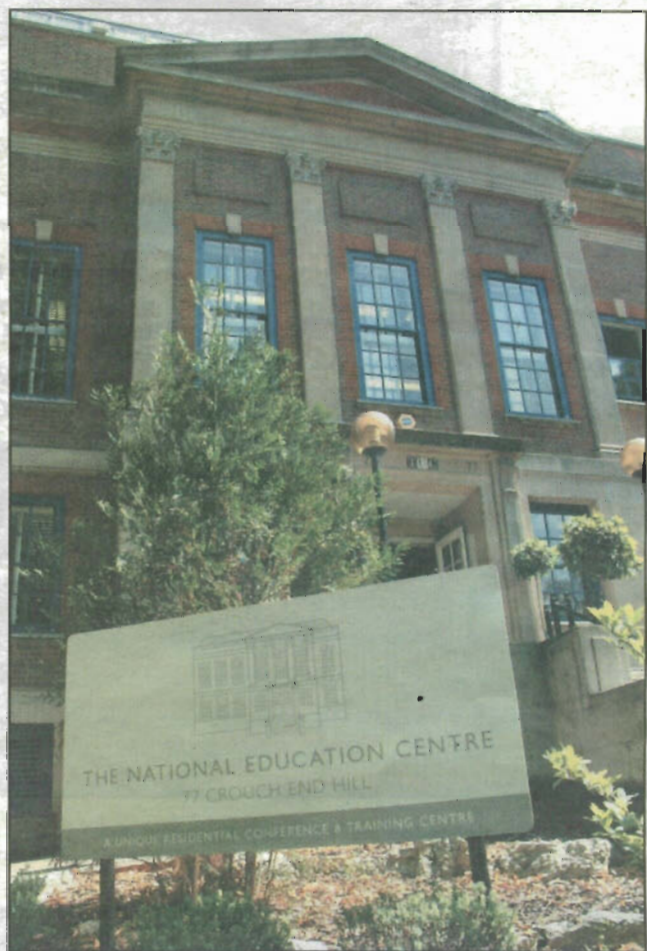
"Haringey Council, as landlord of the TUC site, has a say in what the building is used for. We need to create enough pressure to remind the council of its obligations towards the youngest members of our community who have no political voice of their own."

Liberal Democrat councillor David Winskill said: "The need for a primary school in the area is well known, and this would be a fitting new use for a site which has already contributed so much to learning in our borough.

"The TUC has a good track record in the area and I hope they will resist the temptation to cash in on the development potential of the site and instead look to the great potential for a positive lasting legacy."

A TUC spokeswoman said: "We are still in discussion with Haringey Council. Some of the staff taking voluntary redundancies will leave mid-September but the others will stay on. The building should effectively be closed by the end of the year."

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The TUC building will become vacant by the end of the year

(Picture by Polly Hancock)