

Will heart of Crouch End be sold to highest bidder?

WHAT more evidence could anyone need than the Broadway Letters page of March 18 to be convinced that Haringey Council's primary motive is to sell off the heart of Crouch End to the highest bidder?

Hornsey Town Hall and Red Gables sit together on Haringey's Death Row, waiting to be flogged for a top price. Where next? Nowhere is safe from their merciless greed.

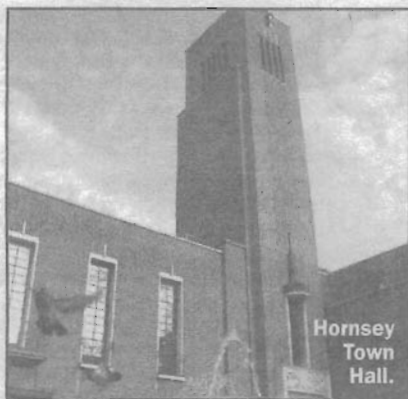
The Friends of Red Gables deserve all the support we can give them as they fight to save this centre and remember that Crouch End For People is still going strong.

They continue to work with The Hornsey Town Hall Trust to secure a better future for the town hall. They still need everyone's involvement if they are to succeed.

But Hornsey Town Hall could soon be in the clutches of a developer and by the summer Haringey must reveal how much of the site will be given up for flats and how little will be left for the community.

It seems absurd that Haringey is now advertising for local people with appropriate skills to come forward and join their 'community partnership' when The Hornsey Town Hall Trust, who represented an overwhelming majority of the community, offered all the skills, imagination and expertise that any council could want.

Their skills were worth far more than Haringey could ever afford to pay but were



rejected, without regard.

This could be the ideal opportunity for the Hornsey Town Hall Trustees to make a valuable contribution to the project but somehow I don't imagine the council will be interested. If anything, they will actively exclude the trustees because they have an opposing vision to their own.

Certainly, the only community partnership Haringey Council is willing to create is one involving those who collude with their money-making priorities – leaving our town hall to stand as a shadow of the vision that might have been.

SALLY KENDALL
Glasslyn Road, N8

In setting up yet another body, a community partnership, Haringey is making the same mistakes: like the town hall advisory panel, it lacks an independent chair, and council run trusts have been shown to be a liability at Alexandra Palace.

We do not need yet another body, populated by a yet more council appointees, to confirm the handing over to a developer of what should remain a community asset.

Nor do we want high density flats, either the luxury ones that the developer will sell, or the 'for key workers but with no parking' ones that Haringey is promoting as part of the deal.

What really offends is that council executive member Richard Milner, in his letter of March 18, makes no mention of the positive contribution of a huge number of local people, culminating in the exciting and important proposals put forward before Christmas.

Has the council bothered to even read them? Surely, given the strength of local feeling, an explanation of precisely what is wrong with the work of such an illustrious team, paid for entirely by local people, is long overdue?

Could the council instead not genuinely listen to the views of the local people?

VICKY GILBERT
Drylands Road, N8

Fate of Wood Green landmark serves as timely warning

CROUCH End for People has consistently opposed the council's proposed sale of the Hornsey Town Hall site to 'a preferred developer'. You only have to look to Wood Green over the past few weeks to see why.

The council's property service department has demolished Wood Green's oldest building, the Congregational Church, to pave the way for a massive development of flats.

Given the high density now allowed by Haringey's new Unitary Development Plan of 700 habitable rooms per hectare, the way is paved for the developers to submit a

scheme of two blocks of six and nine stories apiece, and this has understandably shocked Wood Green residents.

What is to stop a similar development at the rear of the Town Hall? The area of the car park is about the same (0.25 hectares), but the overall site is much larger at 1.29 hectares. The developer could erect two bulky 10-storey blocks (the same height as the town hall tower) with the council's blessing.

There is a simple way to avoid going down this route. The Hornsey Town Hall Trust, using the funds donated by countless local people, have prepared a detailed busi-

ness plan showing how the whole site can be put to sustainable use whilst preserving all the public amenities that this fine building was endowed with.

This plan can be found on the trust's website (www.hornseytownhall.org). Richard Milner told the executive in December that the plan would be looked at along with other bids for the site, yet this was not minuted by Haringey. This spring will see tireless campaigning and a further public meeting to back our bid.

SARAH MONTGOMERY
Oakfield Court, Haslemere Road, N8