

- Community facilities

Ref 165

Ref. 01

01097/1/001

MR MARK SILVERMAN
PLANNING DEPT

30th March 2014

I am a resident of Borehamwood and also a committee member of the Elstree & Borehamwood Resident Association.

We have a secondary school Hertswood; it's over two sites and is also home to the Ark Theatre, Which has been funded by The Borough, Town Council and Borehamwood tax payers 2.4 Million? Pounds.

The school has now changed to an Academy and is now Hertswood Academy, the land was owned And given by Hertfordshire County Council, now the school is selling one of its sites, the one with The Ark Theatre on it.

The chair of governors Mr Graham Taylor has said it will build about 300 homes on the site.

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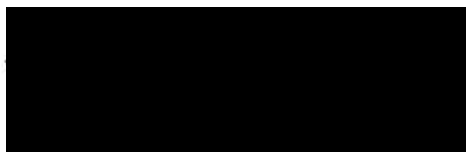
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The 2-4 Million back from the sale of the land and 106 development money would pay for the new theatre and something from the studios.



Friday
20.12.13

55p where sold

BOREHAMWOOD & ELSTREE

TIMES

www.borehamwoodtimes.co.uk

Petition launched to save Ark theatre

by RUTH HALKON

ruth.halkon@london.newsquest.co.uk

Campaigners are seeking support to prevent the temporary closure of a theatre at the heart of the community.

Hertswood Academy, which is split over two sites, plans to sell off its Thrift Farm Lane site, which houses the Ark Theatre, for housing and then build a new school and theatre on its Cowley Hill site.

But Elstree and Borehamwood Residents Association has launched a petition asking Hertswood Academy and Hertsmere Borough Council to stop demolition of the venue until a replacement is up and running.

The petition also asks the school and the council to consider building the new theatre in the centre of Borehamwood.

Lawrence Stack has gathered nearly 200 signatures since Tuesday from a stall outside 96 Shenley Road.

The Croxdale Road resident has attended almost every show the theatre has put on this season and is himself donning a Santa suit to be involved in its pantomime.

He said: "I am passionate about saving the Ark. If it closes down, even for a few years, there will be a huge gap left in the town."

"We were promised a theatre 20 years ago. It is wrong they should knock down the Ark Theatre after it has only been open since 2009."

"The Cowley Hill site would be totally unsuitable for a theatre. There is little parking and it is miles away from the town centre and the station."

Mr Stack said the theatre was built on land owned by the public and the council until the school gained



Lawrence Stack with his petition against Hertswood Academy's plans for a new theatre, inset

Artist's impression by Cumming Anderson Architects

academy status, and the public should therefore have a say in where a replacement should be built.

He added selling the Thrift Farm Lane site would earn the school £35million and a new school would cost £25m to build.

"Why can't they give us £3.5m needed to build a theatre in the centre of the town that the whole community can access?"

"People who come up to me to sign the petition say they don't use the theatre at the moment because it is so out of the way and poorly advertised. It would be even worse on the new site."

"Instead the theatre should be built in the town

centre, on the site of the old library, where it is easily seen and so can attract bigger names."

Hertswood Academy headteacher Peter Gillett said: "Last month, following the publication of our plans to build a wonderful new school for current and future generations of Borehamwood residents, we invited comments through our website."

"Some of the responses indicate a concern about closing the Ark Theatre while a new theatre is built on our lower site as part of the new academy. The academy has responded to all the comments made on these and other issues."

"We have not yet seen the petition but will, of course, give it due consideration if it is sent to us."

Copies of the petition can be found at Barnados and the museum in Shenley Road and in Meryfield Primary School.

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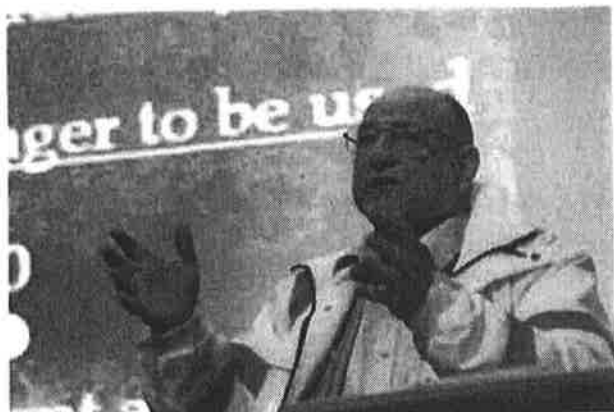
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By Ruth Halkon Reporter

5.42pm Thursday 9th January 2014 News

11/01/2014



Borehamwood Times: Lawrence Stack

The future of a theatre set to be demolished as part of a school's redevelopment plans was the subject of passionate debate at a residents' association meeting.

More than 75 people gathered at The Ark Theatre in Thrift Farm Lane in Borehamwood for a public meeting of the Elstree and Borehamwood Residents Association.

A petition organised by the association to save the theatre from being demolished and rebuilt in 2016 has already gained more than 500 signatures and the future of The Ark was at the top of the agenda.

Committee member Lawrence Stack, who masterminded the petition, asked the school why it could not give some of the money from the sale of the Thrift Farm Lane site to build a theatre in the centre of the town.

He said: "The Ark was built with £2.4million of public money. We were

promised a community theatre for the town 20 years ago and there's more than enough money from the sale to build something like the Willits Theatre in Potters Bar, but the school wants all the cake itself."

Another resident said he worried about the effect the loss of the theatre on the community.

He said: "We were promised a big new civic hall when the old one was knocked down. The community in Borehamwood imploded and it took a long time to be rebuilt. The theatre is only just beginning to attract new audiences. I'm worried when this place disappears, the community won't recover."

Other members of the public called the theatre "fantastic" and wondered why it could not be left where it is until a new one was built.

Chairman of Governors for Hertswood Academy Graham Taylor said he understood the "support" of residents for the theatre and their "angst" but there was no choice but to demolish and rebuild it on the other site.

He said: "Our school is falling apart, the flat roofs leak, the buildings are crumbling, it's not good for the kids. It would cost £10million to renovate both sites and there's no way of getting that money. The children of this town deserve an excellent school and the only way to do that is to sell one site to a private buyer."

He said the school was the reason the theatre was there in the first place, and the school was committed to rebuilding it.

He said: "Without us there would be no theatre in Borehamwood. Four years ago we had our school hall converted and agreed it could be used by the community as well.

"The theatre makes a loss, it costs between £70,000 and £80,000 a year just to keep the doors open. Our parents say 'Why are you spending the equivalent of three teachers on keeping this?'

"It is not true that we are filling our pockets. All the money we earn from the sale of the Thrift Farm Lane site will be ploughed directly into the new school."

He said if the people of the town wanted their own theatre to be built in the centre of the town they would have to speak to the council, though he did not know where the money would come from.

Mr Taylor added: "I am more than happy to meet with the residents' association and the borough and county councils to address people's concerns and see how we might address them."

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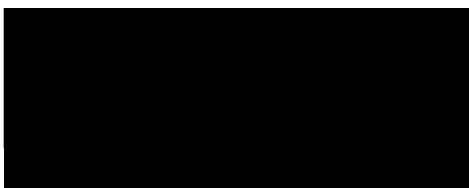
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Arklets impression by Cumming Anderton Architects

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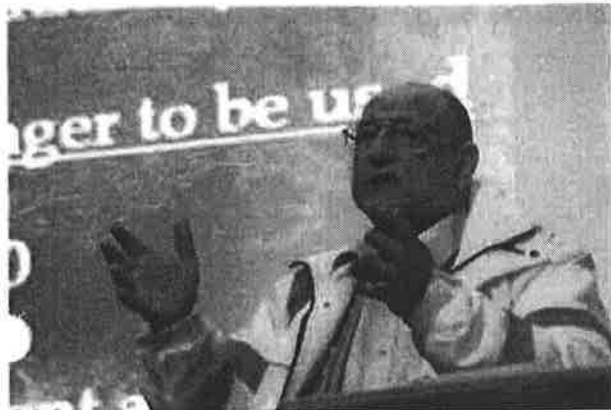
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Borehamwood



By Ruth Hulton Reporter

Borehamwood Times 11/01/2014 10:29:14 AM News



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