

'Inflatable' sports centre is a 'fantastic proposal'

AN "inflatable" sports centre is to be erected in Queen's Crescent after winning planning approval on Thursday night, writes Pavan Amara.

The plan – which is a joint project between the

Français Bilingue de Londres school in Holmes Road and Queen's Crescent Community Association – will be based on a standard six-court sports hall, and used by the school and public.

The centre will be built to the rear of the community association's Weedington Road building, and called "inflatable" because the design is that of an air dome that will be permanently inflated.

The French school felt it had insufficient space for PE lessons. The planning application cited the location as useful because of "low levels of physical activity locally". The school will use the sports centre on week

days and rarely at weekends, leaving those times for public use. In the council chamber councillors viewed a £1,000 model of what the building would look like. Cllr Matt Sanders, a Liberal Democrat in

Haverstock ward, said the centre was a "fantastic proposal". He added: "We need this, and I am confident Queen's Crescent Community Association will be able to confidently manage any objections."

Son pays tribute to the founder of the country's first Chinese medicinal clinic

by TOM FOOT

TRIBUTES have been paid to a Chinese professor who founded the first Chinese medicinal clinic in the country after he died from sudden heart failure.

Professor Man Fong Mei, 67 – also known as Benny Mei – was determined to bring Eastern and Western medicine together. Those who admired his work included Princess Diana. Professor Mei opened the Acu Medic centre in Euston, which then moved to its prominent site in Camden Town, with this ambition in mind.

He held many influential roles in his field and wrote dozens of published papers while also finding time for poetry, physics and philosophy.

His son, Don, 39, said

he lived by the mantra of "positivity, positivity, positivity", adding: "He was a man who loved to be inspired and loved to inspire other people – that was his great passion. East and West integration was his big vision – not only in medicine, but in culture and ideas. "He was all about integrating and doing it with a smile."

Don said his father had told him how a tragedy he witnessed as a boy had inspired him to live his life to a full. "He once told me that he was



playing football in China and he saw one of his friends go and get a ball and was electrocuted [on a fence] and died. "He said that was a

pivotal moment in his life. He decided he needed to live his life with as much positivity."

Professor Mei, who lived with his wife Monica in Golders Green, died of on January 8 in Bangkok while introducing Western doctors to the East.

Born in a small village in Taishan, Guangdong, in China in 1946, Professor Mei moved to London to study physics aged 16.

In 1972, he founded a health centre and bookshop in Eversholt Street. The business moved in 1982 to its place in Camden High Street, where it has grown into one of Europe premier establishments for integrated medicine.

Acu Medic, the first integrative Chinese medicine clinic in this country, has treated more than 50,000 patients.

Professor Mei is credited with revolutionising

modern Chinese medicine through his invention of the world's first disposable acupuncture needle and designing the first range of micro-processors for electro-acupuncture.

Together with Beijing University of Chinese Medicine, he established the Chinese Medical Institute and Register (CMIR) in 1994 and served as chairman of the Chinese Medical Council (CMC).

He later worked on a steering group for the Department of Health, reporting on the regulation of Chinese medicine, acupuncture and herbal medicine in this country. In an

interview in the *New Journal* in 2005, he said: "The NHS and the CMC can work together. The only way to move forward is if Western safety standards are kept, but the Chinese expertise and philosophy must be maintained."

Don said: "The amount that people's perception of Chinese medicine has changed, and how the public demand has grown, is testament to his success. There has been a paradigm shift – people understand that Chinese medicine is not just an alternative."

"So many Western doctors trained by us and him are moving forward with their own clinics and practices. He died quite young, but he felt like his life's ambition had been achieved."

Among his many poems, available online, is one about Hampstead Heath. It goes: "Time stood still on Hampstead Heath. This moment of pure magic. No tension. No stress."

Don will be making a speech about his father at a special celebration of his life in the Acu Medic clinic on February 1. The speech will be followed by a traditional Chinese lion dance, which aims to sweep away bad fortune and unpleasant things from previous year.

Left: Professor Man Fong Mei; above: AcuMedic's 2011 New Year's celebration

Professor who brought East and West together

Peeps

The week in local politics

Toujours la politesse

WHO said chivalry is dead? Peeps is happy to find it alive and well in Hampstead and Kilburn. Look in the *New Journal's* letters pages and you'll find Chris Percy "incredulous" about some of the comments made by Conservative council election candidate Edward De Mesquita in last week (see page 10). There he notes how few female Tory MPs have come through under David Cameron. Ever so bashfully, he makes no mention of the fact that his wife is Labour's parliamentary runner Tulip Siddiq.

● WELCOME back Sian Berry to Camden as the Greens try to go forth in Highgate in May's elections. She helped the party win three seats there back in 2006. In doing so, her long blonde hair was treated by some hacks as something wholly exotic.

Former Conservative leader Piers Wauchop's choice of descriptions in his book on Camden's political history did not scrape much further than "highly photogenic". And then there was the profile in the *Indy on Sunday*, which described her as "pure environmental viagra". "Hashtag everydaysexism" perhaps, in today's online parlance.

● PEEPS has advised scientists before to examine the properties of Labour councillor Mike Katz's rhino-thick skin. De-selected in Kilburn ahead of the elections, he was shut out of the parliamentary selection contest there and then missed out on Brent Central. On Tuesday, he was passed over again by his own party as it filled the vacant local election slate slot in Regent's Park. Local campaigner Nadia Shah got the nod.

● PM David Cameron was pleased with himself after his joke-a-thon speech among the self-important lobby scribes gathered at the Westminster Correspondents' Dinner last week. "On canvassing with Boris Johnson in a south Hampstead suburb and this very attractive, relatively middle-aged woman came to door and said: 'Boris, good to see you. You are father of one of my children.' And the white hair stood up on end..." He rambled on some more to a punchline about the "relatively middle-aged woman" – whatever that means – being Boris's kid's maths teacher. Ba-doom-tish.

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Have your say on West Hampstead's future

THERE'S an opportunity on Monday to have a say in the future of West Hampstead at a public meeting about the local area plan.

The Fortune Green and

West Hampstead Neighbourhood Development Forum is in its final consultation phase for the draft plan.

Residents can attend a meeting at West

Hampstead Library at 7.30pm to discuss the future of housing, transport, amenities, development and the environment of the surrounding area.