

Raising the roof in Mayfair

DEVELOPER George Hammer, who wants to convert St Mark's Church in Mayfair into a health spa, said in June the church was in such bad shape that "there are lumps of plaster falling from the ceilings...the only way to hold a church service inside would be if all the congregation wore hard hats."

So I am surprised to learn that on Sunday he used the venue, on which he has a long lease from the Diocese of London, as part of London Fashion Week. The catwalk show was made possible because Hammer removed the pews some weeks ago, ostensibly to "polish the woodwork" of the Grade I listed building.

Outraged objectors hope to use this event at a five-day public inquiry into Hammer's conversion plans, due to

start on 7 October.

Their campaign to return the building to use as a church has this week gained the support of the 630-school Montessori movement. Chief executive Philip Bujack has accused the Diocese of London of "deplorable" behaviour in leasing a Mayfair church for 112-years to a business venture.

Bujack, whose national and international offices are in the former Church Room adjoining St Mark's, has submitted his statement to the inquiry inspector.

"We deplore the Diocese for allowing this focal point for families, children and the community to be lost," Bujack's statement says. And the plaster failing to fall on the heads of the Size Zero models? A miracle, surely.

ALASTAIR Campbell doesn't like to name drop. Oh no. Talking about a blister he sustained in the Great North Run, Tony Blair's former spin doctor blogs: "By the time I was on the train home, so bad was my limp as I made repeated trips to the toilet, having drunk nine 330 centilitre bottles of water since the run, that Sting,

in the same carriage after having officially started the race several hours earlier, came over to inquire. "I had been studiously ignoring him on the grounds that a real celeb like him must get fed up of people trying to talk to him, but we ended up having a good chat. Nice bloke. New album sounds interesting."