



# EALING CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Working to preserve and improve our Borough



Founded in 1967

President: Prof. Sir Peter Hall Vice president: Corinne Templer

[www.ealingcivicsociety.org](http://www.ealingcivicsociety.org)

## Summer 2011

### Coming events

#### The ECS Annual Lecture

Tuesday 31st May, 7.30 pm

Queen's Hall, Ealing Town Hall

Speaker: **Sir Donald Insall** CBE: "Living Buildings and Architectural Conservation"

#### Fred Perry Plaque Unveiling

Thursday 16th June, Brentham Club (see page 3 for details)

#### ECS members' guided visit to Northala Fields

Saturday 25th June (See page 4 for details)

#### The ECS Annual Awards Ceremony

Tuesday 22nd November

Liz Cantell Room, Ealing Town Hall

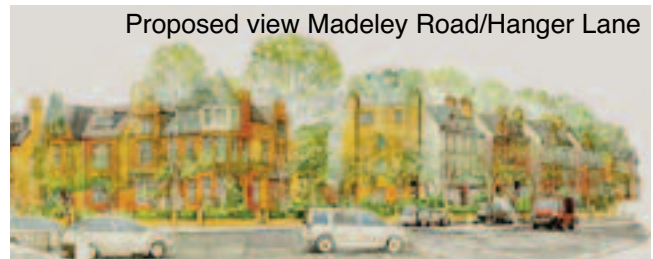
Speaker: **Torin Douglas**, Media Correspondent, BBC News

### Chairman's Message

Starting with the bad news: unfortunately we were unable to save **51 Drayton Green** from demolition despite last-minute attempts to seek its local listing. The full story is told elsewhere in this issue but we are determined to learn lessons from the episode. We are embarking upon a comprehensive local listing exercise and intend to launch this as part of our celebrations of Civic Day in June (see next page for more details).

There is not much better news on the **Empire Cinema** site in Uxbridge Road where, despite continued assurances from Empire Cinemas that they still intend to proceed with the development, there is no activity on the ground. However, the Council who have been trying hard to try to get some movement have taken the initiative and acquired the YMCA site in Bond Street, presumably to generate interest amongst other developers in the cinema site which is currently largely landlocked apart from the Uxbridge Road facade (which needs to be retained under any new plans). This could mean that the site would be developed by a third party with or without the involvement of Empire Cinemas. This long-running saga is clearly not going to be resolved quickly despite valiant efforts by local groups and residents to apply pressure upon Empire Cinemas to start their long-promised development.

There is happier news with the **Hanger Lane** houses application where a planning application has now been submitted by Genesis Housing Association for retention



of the two houses in Madeley Road (with rear extensions) and rebuilding of two houses in Hanger Lane behind façades which would be close replicas of the existing (together with a third storey). This is a great improvement on the original application which was strongly criticised by ourselves and local residents groups. However, the only controversial issue is the building of a new house in the garden of the corner house at 85 Madeley Road (which would itself be restored). A covenant protects this house and its garden from building anything other than a single family house and if a local resident wished to enforce this covenant it could result in long legal delays involving further deterioration of the existing houses which are either empty or in several cases virtually derelict. This would be to no one's benefit.

Consultation has just ended on the redevelopment of **Acton Town Hall** and neighbouring sites, including the swimming pool, library and the Priory Centre behind the Town Hall. The Town Hall and library are listed and therefore protected, but other buildings (apart from the swimming pool chimney) are not. The latest plans envisage the Council selling the library and its relocation into the Assembly Hall which would be considerably altered as a consequence.



Acton Town Hall

The old Town Hall would be sold off for a flats conversion by a private developer but uncertainty surrounds the first floor **Civic Rooms** including the former Acton Council Chamber. The library would be sold for retail/restaurant use. The swimming baths would be demolished and replaced by new pools and a community hub designed to include the Priory Centre uses. A new entrance would be created in the façade of the neighbouring King's Rooms which would be demolished behind the façade. We have commented on the proposals, particularly in relation to the loss of the library and proposed changes to the Assembly Hall and King's Rooms. We would prefer the Assembly Hall to be retained as a large space and more than just the façade of the Kings Rooms preserved.

As we reported in the last newsletter, **Westel House** (a Richard Seifert building built around the time of Centre Point in the 1960s) is subject to a planning application which would involve demolition and the building of three blocks: a nine-storey hotel, two tall residential blocks (up to 21 storeys compared with 16 of the existing) and a block of nine-storey affordable housing behind. In response to criticism the plans have since been amended to remove a couple of storeys from the rear of the tallest twin blocks and to change the fenestration. Despite these changes, we still think that the development is too high and overbearing upon the neighbouring area, in particular the town centre conservation area. Unfortunately, despite our best efforts the planning committee passed the application at its meeting in April. It is likely to be approved by the GLA and our only hope of getting the decision reversed is by appealing to the Secretary of State to call the application in.

As we went to press, we learnt that Ireland's National Asset Management Company (NAMA - the so-called Irish 'bad' bank) had sought that administrators should be appointed for Irish developer Glenkerrin's UK properties, including the Arcadia site in Ealing. This means that the site will be placed on the market, possibly at a below market value price. We will of course keep a close eye on developments which could give rise to new plans emerging for the site, including Villiers House over the station which has been vacant for some years.

## 51 Drayton Green

We have just witnessed the loss of a unique building in Ealing. This is the former hostel for "fallen women" at 51 Drayton Green, West Ealing which was built at the end of the 19th century. It has lain derelict for around 10 years and the site is now owned by the Notting Hill Housing Trust which wants to redevelop it for housing. We recognised some years ago that the building was of potential architectural, social and historic interest and

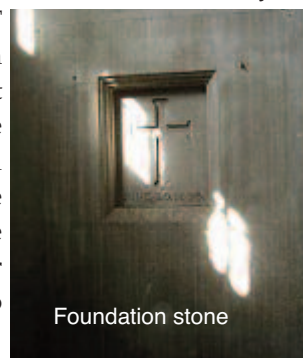
sought its statutory listing. This was unfortunately rejected last year and we and West Ealing Neighbours requested



Ealing Council to add the building to its local list in May 2010. Whilst this would not have provided any statutory protection for the building it would have

indicated to the Trust that the Council expected any development to take account of the value of the building as a heritage asset and ideally incorporate some elements of it in redevelopment of the site, if only the façade.

In the meantime, the Trust's planning application for redeveloping the site to include a five-storey block overlooking Drayton Green was withdrawn following strong criticism from local residents and others. However, the Council was slow to act and only put our request for local listing to the planning committee in February this year which then deferred a decision until its March meeting to enable the members to visit the site. At its March meeting, the committee decided to recommend to the regulatory committee, which would be responsible for taking a decision, not to add the building to the local list despite a favourable recommendation from the conservation officer. This sent entirely the wrong message to NHHT which has proceeded with demolition even though it has no consent for a suitable replacement. The only small consolation is that we have managed to arrange salvage of the foundation stone for future incorporation into any development.



Delays in assessing the building for local listing seem to have been a contributory factor and lessons must be learned from this sad outcome. Although the reasons for the planning committee's decision are not entirely clear, one of the problems seems to be a lack of clarity over the procedure and timing of decisions on the local listing of buildings between the periodic reviews under the local development framework process. But it cannot be right for buildings to be left vulnerable in the intervening period and we have called upon the Council's regulatory committee to take action to enable fast-track "spot" local listing to prevent this sort of irreparable loss of our heritage assets recurring.



## Civic Day: Saturday 25th June



Civic Voice (the successor to the now closed Civic Trust) is promoting the idea of a nationwide Civic Day (actually a week beginning 25th June) for civic societies to publicise themselves and their activities. We have decided to take advantage of this initiative by holding a walk and talk event at Northala Fields starting at the new Visitor Centre (see page 4 for details). To coincide with the week-long activities we will also be launching an initiative to invite members of the public to suggest buildings in the Borough which they think should be locally listed. This follows the unfortunate demolition of 51 Drayton Green.

*Robert Gurd*

## Annual General Meeting

The AGM on 5th April 2011 was notable for its use of technology, none of which broke down on the night. Robert Gurd began his power point presentation with an update on developments in the **town centre** and the recent loss of **St Helena's** home. He went on to note that the Council had already committed significant funding to the restoration of **Walpole Park and Pitzhanger Manor** but needed matched funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the projects to go ahead. We should soon know whether the second round bid on the Park and first round bid on the house have been successful. In relation to the **Local Development Framework** he pointed out that Ealing's own strategic framework was running well behind that of many other local authorities. The second round of consultation on core strategy and development sites was completed in the autumn of 2010 and public examination was expected this autumn. However, the process could be affected by the Government's localism agenda and the significant changes envisaged for planning. Although the Planning Bill was currently going through Parliament there was uncertainty about what it would mean for local people. The Government had indicated that local neighbourhoods would be able to bid for funds to develop their own local neighbourhood plans which, if agreed at a referendum, could replace current local plans provided they did not conflict with the overall strategic plan.

He ended with the customary thanks to the committee and gave special thanks to those members standing down this year: Greg Birdseye who had brought about great improvements to the newsletter, Christine Gratus who had significantly enhanced communication with members through regular e-mail updates and Michael Mina who had done a lot to spread the word about the Society in the north-east of the Borough. He also welcomed Tony Williams and Duncan Cameron who had kindly volunteered respectively to take over

from Greg as editor of the newsletter and from Christine for the e-mail news updates (if you wish to receive these and don't already please contact [info@ealingcivicsociety.org](mailto:info@ealingcivicsociety.org)).

ECS Treasurer Robin Roads led us through the financial situation, reminding us why the subscription should be raised. The legacies received in previous years were ringfenced for special purposes and are not to be touched for day-to-day needs. We were running a deficit and this had to be addressed by recruiting more members and increasing the membership fee. The members attending the AGM approved the report and the subscription increase, with one dissenting voice.

The accomplished local speaker, Peter Hounsell, spoke about "The changing face of Ealing: a fifty year retrospect 1960 – 2010." He gave a fascinating account of changes to familiar scenes over the years. A single-storey Safeways on the Broadway? That can't be... hang on a minute... it was there for a while before the Town Centre was rebuilt... now I remember...

The audience were rapt.

*Tony Williams*

## The Society's website

We have recently taken over the maintenance of our website. We are grateful to the web designers Lawrence and Beavan who created the site for us and added updates for the first two years of its life. Taking over the site means we can update it more rapidly and regularly with new stories. Let us know if you would like us to link from our site to a local residents' group or other organisation of interest to other members. Over the next few months those of you who receive email updates about Civic Society events and other items of interest will notice closer links with new stories on our website.

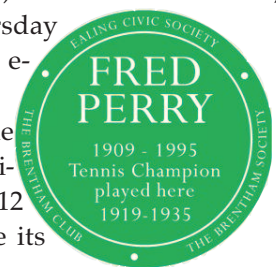
*Philippa Dolphin*

## Plaques

We have received a design for Fred Perry's green ECS plaque which is to be unveiled hopefully by a famous tennis player (as yet unnamed) at the Brentham Club, Meadvale Road W5 on Thursday 16th June at 6.30p.m. ECS will e-mail details to members.

On Saturday 14th May, the Brentham Club is having its official Centenary Day to launch 12 months of events to celebrate its Centenary year.

*Mike Tiley*



## Planning Issues

### 20-24 Haven Green W5

This application is for a new dental surgery in the back gardens of the Victorian cottages on Haven Green which are currently being used as a Dental Surgery. A new access would be created from Mount Park Road and the existing cottages would become three houses. Council officers have said the application is acceptable in principle despite the fact that it breaches the Council's own backland policies and the conservation area management plan. It includes the loss of the gardens and trees which make an important contribution to the Mount Park Conservation area and the amenity of the Haven Green Cottages, proposing a development that would be out of character with the street scene. Advice in PPS3 (government guidance on housing developments) redesignates gardens as "greenfield" sites. Commercial sites and buildings are available in the Town Centre and we think that new ones should not be allowed to spoil the historic assets of these two adjoining conservation areas.

### Tennyson House Hanwell

This would replace a commercial building with a block of eight flats in Tennyson Rd leading to overdevelopment of the site, offering no private amenity space and impact the adjacent site which is a green corridor / children's play area. The design has not taken into account that this plot overshadows an area of open space deficiency.

### 46-54 Beresford Rd Southall

This proposal involves the demolition of four suburban houses and replacement by a 2/3-storey care home with a single-storey bungalow at the rear; the proposal also provides six car spaces and communal facilities. Once again this would overdevelop a site, taking light from an adjoining house and providing difficult car access to the rear. The communal areas would be very remote from the residents.

*Judy Harris*

### Spot your local gems!

Nominate your favourite building in the Borough for possible local listing. It can be of any age or design but you should explain why you like it and give any historical associations. See our website shortly for more details.

The Summer 2011 edition of the ECS Newsletter was edited and laid out in QuarkXpress by Tony Williams. Writers were Robert Gurd, Philippa Dolphin, Judy Harris, Mike Tiley, Jen Henley and Tony Williams. Photograph of 51 Drayton Green Foundation stone courtesy of *English Heritage*; Northala Fields, 51 Drayton Green: *Robert Gurd*; Hanger Lane Houses: *Genesis Housing Association*

## Northala Fields Walk and Talk

Saturday 25th June 2011

Celebrate Civic Day by joining us for a Walk and Talk in Northala Fields.

Bring a picnic or buy refreshments from the café in the new visitors'



centre, then join us for tours of the Park (starting from the Visitors' Centre) from 2:30 p.m. Optional talk at the visitors' centre at 2 p.m (limited availability).

Email [info@ealingcivicsociety.org](mailto:info@ealingcivicsociety.org) to book your place on the tours or talk.

Check the Civic Society website nearer the time for more details.

## Go Green Go email

If you opt in to receive only an email version of our newsletter you will not only feel good but you will also make your subscription fee go further.

Contact **Deirdre McLellan** 8567 4682

## Reading this and not a member?

Why not join us?

Phone **020 8567 4682**

or see our website

**[www.ealingcivicsociety.org](http://www.ealingcivicsociety.org)**

## 2011/12 Executive Committee

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