

EALING CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Working to preserve and improve our Borough



Founded in 1967

President: Charles Mynors

www.ealingcivicsociety.org

Member of

CIVIC
VOICE

Autumn 2015

From our Chairman

Cinema CPO

The compulsory purchase order (CPO) hearing for the Empire cinema site and neighbouring properties concluded in May. The result was not known at the time of writing but there have been reports that the inspector has now submitted his report to the Secretary of State. Timing can be uncertain at this stage and ministers' decisions can be subject to all sorts of delays. However, the result is expected in early autumn.

9-42 The Broadway

A planning application has now been submitted for the second phase of the Arcadia site for redevelopment. You may recall that the architects gave a presentation at the AGM in April. The designs we saw then have only been changed in minor respects to meet further criticisms in relation to the "Carphone Warehouse corner" and the tall blocks opposite the Town House apartments: the corner has been rounded off and small adjustments have been made to the upper storeys of the neighbouring 9-storey blocks. The 18-storey block overlooking Haven Green would remain unchanged from the earlier proposals. Consultation is expected to continue until at least mid-September. Since this is a major development impacting the centre of Ealing please look at the plans which are available via the link on our website. The Society will be considering them in its Environment Committee after the summer break.

Spreading the word

In a new departure for us, we have inserted an advertisement in the Ealing Arts + Leisure diary of events which is published bimonthly starting in the August/September edition. This will be followed up by a regular reminder. We hope that this will bring some new members in its wake but we encourage you to spread the word about us and the good work we do and encourage your friends and neighbours to join us!

I look forward to seeing you at the Awards Ceremony on 24th November (see box below for details).

Robert Gurd

Crossrail update

Some of you may have seen the recent excellent BBCtv programmes about the Crossrail tunnelling project in the centre of London. Nearer to home, below is an update on the station designs in our area:

Acton Mainline: designs for the station are still awaited but are expected to include new footbridges and lifts. Work should commence in mid-2016.

Ealing Broadway: work is expected to start on the approved scheme later this year.

West Ealing: a planning application has been approved by Ealing Council for a new glass box design in Manor Road. We originally questioned



why the station should be so far along the road and asked for a pedestrian link to the south to facilitate access from West Ealing Town centre. Preparatory work has already started in the area on a new bay platform for Greenford branch trains which will terminate here when Crossrail starts.

Coming Events

19-20 September Open House Weekend

Tuesday 24 November 7.30 Annual Award Ceremony, Queens Hall, Ealing Town Hall, Speaker: Lorraine Heggessey, television producer and executive

Planning Issues

Ealing Civic Society comments on planning applications submitted from across the borough. There has been a proliferation of applications along the Western Avenue and its close vicinity this year, most notably in East Acton ward, a few of which we described in our summer newsletter.

Land bound by Kathleen Avenue, Allan Way, Court Way, Park View and Western Avenue

The land which is on the edge of Western Avenue has been released by Transport for London (TfL) following abolition of the road-widening scheme in 1997. The application is for a development of 51 residential units, comprising 23 houses up to 3 storeys high and 28 flats up to 4 storeys high, spread over three sites. We have no objection to the proposed massing or design. In addition, we welcome the planned retention of an improved green corridor helping to screen the housing from the Western Avenue and provide an enhanced cycle lane.

Junction of Horn Lane and Western Avenue

The site is also released TfL land on the edge of Western Avenue. The proposal is to build a six-storey 100-bedroom hotel and 72 flats within two blocks of 3, 4 and 6 storeys. We objected stating that this would be overdevelopment with inadequate amenity space and no contribution to the public realm. It would be overbearing and out of character with the form and grain of the surrounding 1930's houses. While revisions to the original scheme were made in response to initial public consultation, such as a reduction in height from 7 to 6 storeys and the inclusion of measures to avoid risk of overlooking from the hotel, planning permission was granted recently subject to a legal agreement and conditions. The Council considered that the layout, scale, height and appearance of the planned buildings is satisfactory as are the separation distances between the hotel and flats, thus safeguarding living conditions for surrounding residents in terms of light, outlook and privacy. This view is not shared by local residents!

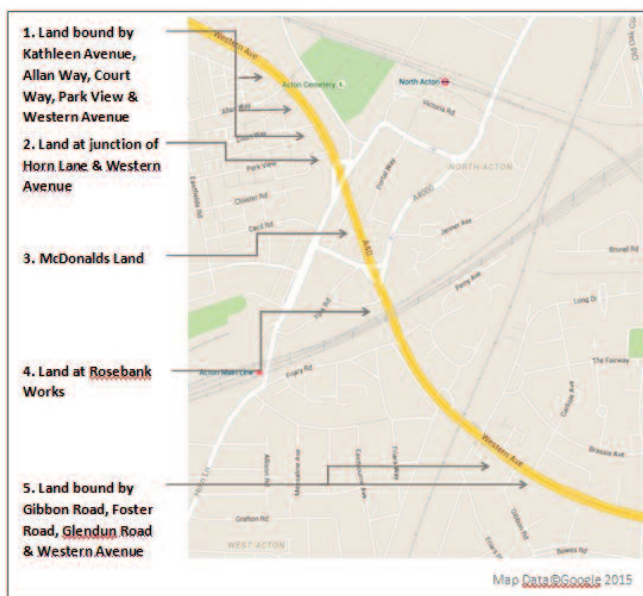
McDonalds Land at Junction of Leamington Park and Western Avenue

The application is for a vacant site at the junction of Leamington Park and Western Avenue proposing a two-storey free standing restaurant building with an associated drive-through, as well as vehicle access, car parking and landscaping, including outdoor seating area. It was submitted to the Council in November 2014 when planning permission was refused (but remains subject to appeal). This was because of its proposed access arrangements onto the Western Avenue which

would be likely to compromise the confirmed 'Cycle Superhighway' running along the edge of the road. Since then, the application has been revised to provide for vehicular access and egress from Leamington Park. As a result, it has been approved subject to a legal agreement and appropriate conditions. We remain concerned, however, about the proposed associated installation of a freestanding 12m high totem sign advertising the restaurant which we consider to be over dominant and too tall in the green corridor.

Land at Rosebank Works, bound by York Road, Rosebank Way and the railway

The site is landlocked brownfield and is near Acton Main Line Station on a narrow strip along the railway line close to the Western Avenue. There is established housing to the north with the railway lying to the south. A public exhibition presented an initial proposal for 37 residential dwellings comprising a mix of apartments and housing. The developer states that the concept is for a linear park with a green public amenity space that



meanders between blocks with walls of existing industrial units retained and used as boundary to provide privacy for the adjacent existing housing. In principle, at this stage, we don't object to the design which we consider unremarkable but not overbearing. However, we query the stated retention of the industrial unit walls. While these walls remain in place, this part of the proposal would not impact on the houses they face, but filling in some of the window openings, as is suggested, would render the walls featureless. In addition, while preventing overlooking, this approach to the walls would seem to limit opportunities for light to reach the development.

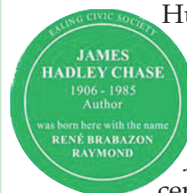
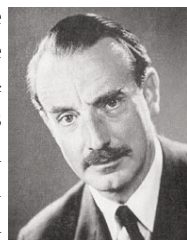
Land bound by Gibbon Road, Foster Road, Glendun Road and Western Avenue

This is further land released by TfL along the Western Avenue and the application is from the same developer as that for the site bound by Kathleen Avenue, Allan Way, Court Way and Park View. However, it is for a bigger scheme of 129 residential units comprising 14 houses up to 3 storeys high and 115 flats up to 5 storeys high – together with associated access roads, parking, amenity space and landscaping. Again, in principle, we have no objection to the proposal. However, we consider that the 'blocky' design and largely unrelieved brickwork outlined for this development make the overall effect appear over-dominant on the street scene. We consider the design could be improved with some differentiation in materials, such as render or tiling, to the facades to introduce variety.

Jo Winters

Two new Civic Society plaques

There were two unveilings of new ECS green plaques this year. The unveiling of the plaque to the thriller writer James Hadley Chase took place on Friday 15 May at 4 Woodfield Avenue W5, and was attended by the Mayor and by Rupa



Huq the newly elected MP for Central Ealing and Acton. James Hadley Chase was the author of *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* which enjoyed a certain notoriety. He wrote some 90 titles,

50 of which were made into films.

The next unveiling on Friday 22 May at 8 Castlebar Hill W5 was of a plaque to Dr Edith Whetnall FRCS the Consultant Audiologist. The event was also attended by the Mayor and by Steve Pound MP and Rupa Huq MP.

Professor Alan Gillett OBE was at the plaque unveiling and delighted in reminding about his memories as a boy in WWII when this was his home.



The Hollywood actor Spencer Tracy whose son was profoundly deaf was present at the opening in 1951. His wife had founded the John Tracy Clinic which had been visited by Edith Whetnall, and its mother-child therapy provided a model for the Castlebar Hill

Hostel for deaf children and their parents. *Tony Williams and Mike Tiley*

Civic Day 2015: Southall Manor



Three years ago the Southall Manor Grounds were entered for and won the landscape section of the Civic Society Awards scheme and our panel of judges and entourage were able to walk around and admire the work that had been put into them. At that time we regretted not being given access to the Manor House itself where work was in still in progress.

But on June 20th 2015, thanks to the Civic Day, our members were able to look around the house itself and see what progress has been made. The chief Council architect Gavin Leonard gave thirty-three of our members an interesting account of the history of the house. Jan Anderson, a Council landscape architect



was on hand to take us round the Grounds and local historian Jonathan Oates walked us over to the nearby Dominion Centre to have a look at the Martinware Collection, some of which is displayed in the library there.

The purpose of the tour was to inform us about work in progress, which is essentially not restoring but repairing the fabric of the building, making it safe (asbestos has been removed) and keeping it warm and dry. For the most part it is not equipped with old artefacts or furniture and no attempt is being made to restore it to its original state. That said, the history of the house in its many incarnations is fascinating enough even seen in

only its bare bones as at present.



Two artefacts that are on display are replicas of a buddha figure set into an outside wall – the originals are in safe-keeping until Southall Manor is rendered thief-proof. Most interesting perhaps was the attic where we were led up four at a time and could touch the original 16th century hand-hewn oak

timbers. Gavin has let us have the notes and appendices he used for his talk and tour. You can download these from our website.

The brickwork of the existing manor is worth a closer look. The supply of skilled bricklayers took a great knock in the First World War when so many were killed, and slapdash bricklaying became the norm, but not in Southall Manor where the unassuming back walls still show quality and pride

Tony Williams.

The Lost Houses of Ealing

Castle Hill House



This photo taken 100 years ago looking northwards up Castlebar Road looks very different from today but the road is still

recognisable. On the left is the turning to St Stephens Road and the wall on the right remains, although the distinguished archway and Regency style house are no longer there. What was this house and what happened to it?

Castle Hill House occupying ten acres of land was built in 1790 and was one of many impressive houses in the Castlebar area during the Georgian era. This area became particularly fashionable when Edward, Duke of Kent came to live at the confusingly named Castle Hill Lodge further up on Castlebar Hill. In fact Castle Hill House's most famous resident was General Sir Frederick Wetherall who was the Duke's aide-de-camp and who had the unenviable task of trying to dispose of Castle Hill Lodge when the Duke's profligacy caused him to go into exile.

When the Benedictine community came to Ealing at the end of the 19th century they acquired the house and its lands and built Ealing Abbey further along Charlbury Grove and later St Benedicts School. The house itself was then used as a convent and later as a men's club and a youth club. However, in the war the house suffered damage from a nearby bomb and afterwards became hedged in by nearby buildings. Described as being in 'tired splendour', in 1973 the decision was taken to demolish it which, despite local protests led by the Civic Society, went ahead leaving just the wall as a memory of a very different age.

Paul Fitzmaurice

As an aside, Edward, the Duke of Kent became the father of the future Queen Victoria. His many debts which had been passed on to his widow were later paid off by Victoria out of her monthly income. Prince Edward had spent many years in Canada – and is said to have given it its name – as well as Prince Edward Island and lots of 'Kents' dotted about. Even Ealing could bask in the glory and Castle Hill spawned Castle Hill Drive in Halifax, Nova Scotia because of the royal connection.

Tony Williams

John Delafons Lecture

Michael Hebbert, Professor of Town Planning at UCL, gave a wonderfully entertaining lecture on 2 June in memory of Sir Peter Hall, our President until he died last year. When he was six Peter was able to draw the tube network in crayon. After he died TfL named a new Surface stock train the "Professor Sir Peter Hall" in recognition of his contribution to London's transport infrastructure. Dr Hebbert talked about Sir Peter's many role models: writers, strategists, iconoclasts, academics who contribute to real world issues and policies. He published a large number of books and articles from the 1960s onwards and influenced policy in cities around the world, including here in Ealing. He was a brilliant teacher, being actively engaged in helping students until a few weeks before his death.

Philippa Dolphin

Walpole Park wins Civic Voice

Commendation

On 17th July Emma Allen, the Walpole Park Manager, and

Vivienne Cane-Honeysett, Chair of Walpole Friends, accepted the Highly Commended Public Realm Design Award

from Gryff Rhys Jones, the President of Civic Voice. The judges were particularly looking for projects where the public was involved and were impressed by the hard work of the Friends group, together with the design of the park and the resultant increase in usage. More details on www.walpolefriends.org.



Civic Society Awards call for entries

Each year Ealing Civic Society makes awards to recognise and encourage building and environmental projects that make a noteworthy contribution to the community in the London Borough of Ealing. The winners receive a certificate and may display a Society plaque commemorating the award. The judges can also award certificates for 'highly commended' and 'commended' entries. The application form for the Award is available from the ECS website. The deadline for entries this year is 22nd September.

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Contributors: Robert Gurd, Mike Tiley, Paul Fitzmaurice, Philippa Dolphin, Jo Winters, Tony Williams.

Photos: Southall Manor House: Ealing Council, PD, TW; Castle Hill House: PF, James Hadley Chase: JHC, Michael Hebbert: PD, West Ealing Station: Crossrail. Planning Map: Data©Google 2015. Printed by Pollyprint www.pollyprint.co.uk