

EALING CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Working to preserve and improve our Borough



Founded in 1967

President: Charles Mynors

www.ealingcivicsociety.org



Autumn 2016

From our Chairman

This newsletter comes with two important pieces of news about central Ealing: first the call-in by the Secretary of State of 9-42 The Broadway and second the purchase by St George of the cinema site – see below for more details. Charles Mynors' talk on the future of civic societies was timely given that next year is our 50th anniversary. Not everyone agreed with everything he said, particularly about the extent to which such societies are representative of their members. We hope that we stand apart in that respect but our 50th anniversary presents an opportunity for you, our members, to give us an idea of what you would like from your Society. Perhaps this would be new activities

which you would actively support. We're open to and would warmly welcome all suggestions so please contact any committee member [page 6] or send an email to info@ealingcivicsociety.org. We really would like to hear from you. I look forward to seeing you at our award ceremony on Tuesday 8 November.

Robert Gurd

Cinema site

Land Securities announced in early August that the former Empire cinema site, which was subject to a CPO hearing in 2015, had been acquired by St George, developers of the Dickens yard site behind the Town Hall. It is not yet clear what the implications of this sale, in particular on timing, will be. Some of us met representatives of St George shortly after the

announcement who indicated that they were well aware of the pressing need for a new cinema in the town centre and confirmed that it would still be delivered by Picturehouse. However, having only just acquired the site they would need to study all the implications of the contracts which they had inherited from Land Securities before they could start the scheme.

We suggested that it would be helpful to us some if the negative elements of the consented scheme, in particular loss of the YMCA building and the huge bulk of the facade overlooking Pitzhanger Manor, could be improved but we gained the impression that it is unlikely that more than cosmetic changes will be made to the

original scheme. Whether a new cinema can be delivered by 2018, 10 years after the start of demolition of the old Empire cinema, remains to be seen.

Gypsy corner developments

We have been very concerned about recent consented schemes at Gypsy Corner, Acton which have resulted in the approval of very tall, dense residential tower block developments in an area largely devoid of infrastructure such as schools, GP surgeries etc. The site is in the area of the new Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC) created by former Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, but Ealing has retained responsibility for planning issues even though OPDC is currently drawing up a neighbourhood plan for the wider area. Ealing, in



Artist's impression of Haven Place looking east

Coming Events

17/18 September Open House Weekend

Tuesday 8 November 7.30 Annual Award Ceremony, Queens Hall, Ealing Town Hall, Speaker: Rupa Huq MP

contrast, has permitted high-rise development to spring up at the whim of developers without any underlying masterplan. We have decided to seek call-in for the latest scheme, at 6 Portal Way, initially to the new Mayor and if necessary to the Secretary of State.



Manager's offices over the Primark store, prior to the Library's move to the redeveloped Perceval House site. This will be done at no cost to the Council by the owners of the Centre, British Land, which will be able to let the existing library space to a new occupier at much more advantageous rates than currently charged to the Council. It remains to be seen what would occupy the vacated space, which is likely to have a ground floor entrance rather like H&M does currently, but one possibility is an existing tenant of the Centre would relocate to an area larger than their current store permits.

Disposal of Ealing Town Hall

The Council's Cabinet recently announced that their preferred solution for redeveloping Ealing Town Hall was to grant a long lease to a company called Mastcraft Ltd which is owned by Indian multimillionaire Joginder Sanger. The intention would be to redevelop much of



the site into a hotel with the east end, containing the Council chamber and registrar's office, retained for civic use. Public rooms, including the Victoria Hall, at the west end would be eligible for community and other use with only limited undertakings about the future rates to be charged.

Mastcraft are a largely unknown quantity in terms of redeveloping listed buildings but they have carried out a similar redevelopment at the Courthouse Hotel, Shoreditch. Shortly after the Cabinet's decision, a new local community group, called Ealing Voice, successfully applied have the building registered as an Asset of Community Value. This gives them a period of six months to assemble and submit an alternative bid to that of Mastcraft.

Perceval House and the Central Library

The Council has also invited bids for the redevelopment of Perceval House, currently used as offices over five floors, built in the 1980s. The bids are expected to involve redevelopment of the whole site, including the car park to the north, to comprise housing – up to 50% of which would be affordable – a new library and customer reception area as well as offices for Council staff. In the meantime, the Council has also announced that the Central Library in Ealing Broadway Centre will move from its current location to a temporary location in the area formerly occupied by the Centre



9-42 The Broadway

This redevelopment covers part of the old Arcadia/Glenkerrin project which you may remember the Society and others defeated at a public inquiry eight years ago. New developers, Benson Elliot and Londonnewcastle, have now received planning consent from Ealing to demolish (with the exception of some facades) most of the properties from Morrisons up to the Carphone Warehouse corner and round to opposite the station; create a new pedestrian link with shops and flats through the wedge-shaped site; build an 18-storey residential tower in the middle of the site and create retail and around 180 flats in glass and steel. The Society is opposing on the grounds that the development would lose too many heritage assets and be out of character with the Town Centre and Haven Green conservation areas. We are joining with Save Ealing's Centre (SEC) to argue the case at a public inquiry to be held in May 2017. This has been triggered by the Secretary of State "calling in" this application: it's very unusual if not unprecedented for the Secretary of State to call in two applications on the same site. Historic England has strongly criticised Ealing's decision by pointing out that such an out of character proposal would so irreversibly damage the Town Centre Conservation area as to justify de-designation of the conservation area. This could have widespread implications for conservation areas all over the country and therefore will be a very important test case. Inevitably there will be costs entailed in our mounting a robust legal representation with our SEC partners. A financial appeal will be launched later in the year and, whilst the Society will be contributing from our funds, we urge our members to be generous in support of our attempts to save the character and heritage of central Ealing in the same way as we were successful with the earlier Glenkerrin campaign.

Corinne Templer

Ealing and Crossrail

John Goldsmith, Community Relations Manager for the western section of Crossrail, returned on 26 July to give us the latest on the future 'Elizabeth Line'. Over 60 Society members and others enjoyed his account of progress with what is Europe's largest infrastructure project. We saw some short videos before the talk: one outlined the construction of the new Acton "dive under" which enables freight trains moving between the mainline and the Acton freight yard to avoid conflicting with Crossrail trains. It is structurally complete now and should be in use from early 2017, and helping to avoid delays on the eastbound line. Another film gave us a preview of the consistent look of a Crossrail station plus some of the unique features of the central London stations associating them with their local areas. Without seeing the videos would you know, for example, that the Dean Street ticket hall has been inspired by local Soho nightlife or that the ceiling at Liverpool St resembles the pinstripe suits of local city workers? There will be 10 new stations plus major refurbishments of many others including five in the borough of Ealing. Some of the central stations, such as Canary Wharf, are nearly complete. Much of the spoil is going to Wallasea Island in Essex, an RSPB reserve and fascinating conservation and engineering project.

We heard in greater detail about the five local Crossrail stations all of which will see significant improvements. The new line will bring many benefits to people using these five stations: connectivity (we won't have to change trains to get to Canary Wharf or Liverpool St, for example), capacity (larger stations and trains), and greater reliability, thanks to improved signalling and other projects such as the Acton "dive under" and the Stockley flyover. Amongst the benefits to local stations will be lifts, platform extensions, new ticket halls and information systems. From Ealing Broadway we will be able to reach Paddington in seven minutes, Tottenham Court Road in 12 minutes, Liverpool Street in 18 minutes and Canary Wharf in 25 minutes. The line will be opening in stages: in May 2018 the TfL Rail service opens between Paddington (National Rail) and Heathrow Terminal 4, replacing the existing Heathrow Connect service; finally in December 2019 the Elizabeth Line will be fully open, extending to Reading and to Heathrow Terminal 4.

There is much interesting information, including videos and a quarterly video update of progress, on the Crossrail website (crossrail.co.uk). You can sign up to receive regular updates about your local station.

A temporary display at the London Transport Museum in Covent Garden is entitled *The Design Line: stations, art and public space on London's newest railway*.
Philippa Dolphin

Civic Day 2016: University of West London



As ECS's contribution to the Civic Voice's national Civic Day two guided tours were organised of the new buildings inside the University of West London. Some forty members and others attended the two tours. The tours were guided by 'Student ambassadors' who described what was new and took visitors' questions. This was not the easiest of assignments since some of the visitors were quite venerable and knew the university when it was Nobbuts Tech and were trying to locate the new build vis-a-vis the old – a bit of a tall order for the students, who were asked about times before they or even their parents were born.

The Library is more or less in the same location but the automatic book retrieval is very impressive. Students put their ID cards in a hole-in-the wall machine and take away not Coca-Cola or banknotes, but books. The bookshelves are also on power rollers and have a



failsafe system to make sure bookworms are not squashed when the shelves close up. By now this is ancient library technology I'm sure, but it wasn't in my time.

Civic Day falls in late June and out-of-term and so, even though the library and other services are available 24/7, regrettably no one was using them. The jaw-dropping Blast Radio studios and the Macintosh rooms were similarly uninhabited on this Saturday so we couldn't see them all fired up. But not quite, music classes for the community were in full swing – and one corner of the Pillars Restaurant (once the Mary King Room) where our group tour signed off was hosting a group of students learning how to mix cocktails. We were generously invited to partake in the results of their efforts.

Tony Williams.

Letter to the Editor

Our Life Member Leonard Lean (who commutes in from Milton Keynes to attend our lectures) has sent us his detailed considerations about the pre-history of Crossrail planning with suggestions on how it could have been implemented earlier and better. These make absorbing reading and while space precludes printing in the newsletter contact me via info@ealingcivicsociety.org and I can email a photocopy to interested readers.

THE LOST HOUSES OF EALING 2

Ealing Grove House

Confusingly, Ealing Grove House stood nowhere near today's 'The Grove' road or 'The Grove' pub but further down Ealing Green in St Mary's Road near the university.



Described as 'a three-storeyed classical mansion of nine bays with a pedimented central projection set among trees' it was one of the largest

houses ever built in Ealing. Its grounds stretched all the way back to Ealing Common and it is probable that today's road 'The Park' was named after the attractive parkland that surrounded the house.

It had a number of illustrious owners including the Duke of Argyll, the Duke of Marlborough, and the Earl of Oxford. Another, Richard Savage, the Earl Rivers scandalised Ealing society by installing his mistress Elizabeth Colleton there. Despite their notoriety it seems Elizabeth was popular among the villagers, for when she died there was a long funeral procession up to St Mary's Church Perivale where she was buried.

The grave has occasioned another of the great Ealing myths. Local lore has it that when she died (1721) she cried out "If there be a just God then trees shall grow out of my grave". After a few years cracks began to appear in the grave chest, the lid opened and three young elms began to sprout from the grave. The grave known as 'the Maidens Tomb' was eventually restored and can be seen today in the churchyard still with a tree growing immediately by the side of it.

The last owner of the house was Charles Wyatt the distinguished architect who became very wealthy working for the East India Company after he had been commissioned to build the new Government House in Calcutta. However Ealing Grove's days were numbered and in 1815 Wyatt held an auction of the house's contents attended by such luminaries as Sir John Soane and John Quincy Adams, later to be US president.

After Wyatt's death in 1819 the Ealing Grove estate began to be sold off piecemeal in plots of land. The plot of land on which the house stood was bought by a local builder James Strudwick, who demolished it and built the three attractive houses which today front onto St Mary's Road – Ness House, Acacia House and Park House – the last of which Strudwick himself lived in.

Today these three houses are themselves Grade II listed but there is no indication of Ealing Grove House's existence except that in the gardens there are one or two remnants of the illustrious house which once stood there.

Paul Fitzmaurice



Neighbourhood Forum

August is often thought of as a holiday period, when nothing happens – apart from the start of the odd war or two. This year, a few matters have moved on during the month, in local as well as national developments.

In the world of planning Ealing Council approved the application from a local group, Ealing Voice, to list Ealing Town Hall as an Asset of Community Value, and the Central Ealing Neighbourhood Forum completed its Neighbourhood Plan which has now been submitted to Ealing Council for the next stage of its tortuous progress into becoming part of the statutory Ealing Local Plan.

The Council now has to submit the draft Plan to a further six-week public consultation, and appoint an external Examiner to conduct a public examination. When this is complete, and any necessary changes made, the Plan will be put to a local referendum. The timing for this is uncertain, but the Forum is pressing the Council for at least an outline schedule against which we can plan.

At the same time, the Forum has learnt that the introduction in Ealing of the new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – the charge on developers to help towards satisfying the need created by their new developments for community facilities - has been deferred again, but may be approved by the end of this year. These matters are linked, because when both CIL and the Neighbourhood Plan are in force, 25% of CIL payments are allocated as the 'neighbourhood portion', to be used to match priorities expressed by local communities, including priorities set out in the plan.

Tony Miller

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 16 September.

The 2016 award ceremony will be held on Tuesday 8 November at 7:30 PM in Ealing Town Hall. The presenter of the awards will be Rupa Huq, MP for Ealing Central & Acton, who has kindly agreed to step in for Stephen Pound MP who has been called away on official business on that day.

Planning Issues

Ealing Civic Society comments on planning applications submitted from across the borough, many of which are for properties situated within or close to 'conservation areas'. Such areas are designated by the local planning authority to be of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Ealing Council describes its 29 conservation areas as, "a rich assortment of nineteenth and early twentieth century residential development, treasured open spaces, industrial and transport heritage and remnants of ancient villages". Here is a sample of planning applications within conservation areas to which Ealing Civic Society has responded in recent months.

Mill Hill Park

We objected to an application for 57 Mill Hill Road which included raising the height and altering the roof pitch of the property to create a mansard roof. We considered the mansard roof to be of poor design and its proposed height would not have met planning guidelines which, in our view, would have rendered it inappropriately visible.

Hanwell Village Green

Crossways, 134 Church Road, Hanwell is a Grade II listed house which has been derelict for many years. We objected to an application to extend the main house and to construct two four bedroom houses in the garden. We thought the development in the garden would be detrimental to the setting of the listed building and render the size of the plot inadequate for its scale and importance.

Ealing Town Centre

The decision is still pending on extending 33-57 New Broadway and its conversion from a language school to mixed commercial floor space and 52 residential units. We objected to the application because it involved additional storeys to the rear of the building which we considered would negatively affect the setting of the Grade II listed Ealing Town Hall. The storeys would also be visible both within and from the conservation area. We were disappointed that the Council granted two applications to which we objected for the display of double-sided digital *illuminated bus shelter signs*. We believe the advert at the first bus shelter at 34 The Broadway will contribute to obstruction already caused by passengers on this narrow and extremely busy section of pavement and block helpful sight lines. The second bus shelter at 2-4 New Broadway is located outside Christ the Saviour Church. Such an advert would impact negatively on the setting of this building.

Jo Winters

Open House Weekend 2016

Open House was started in 1992 to promote public awareness and appreciation of the capital's building design and architecture and open up London's splendid buildings to the general public who don't otherwise have access.

Buildings in Ealing have featured regularly in this programme and this year's offering includes thirteen buildings and one walk.

I can mention two new properties in Ealing to visit: Heath Lodge, 3 Church Road, W7 OBB, tours on the hour Sat/Sun 10 a.m. to 5 p.m."An example of how site limitations can create opportunity and uniqueness"

Norwood Hall, Khalsa Primary School, Southall UB2 4LA Sat 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sun 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. "A John Soane House with arts and craft details."

Full details of all the properties around London that can be visited are available at the website:

<http://www.openhouselondon.org.uk>

Young Blood Wanted

The backbone of the Civic Society and like groups is invariably made up of silver-headed citizens who faithfully attend meetings, care about the fabric of our Borough and join in our efforts to protect it. But we are all getting older and the baton is waiting to be passed on.

Not that younger citizens do not care – they often care as much as we do – but they have more pressing commitments: work, family, travel, and other engagements and the temptation is for them to say that we are doing a good job, and leave us to get on with it.

Some younger people, but not as many as we would want, do attend the various meetings we and other groups hold and they do speak up and raise questions.

Why not gently take them to one side and suggest that they sign up and maybe even volunteer to join the committee. No need for pressure or a heavy-handed appeal to their civic consciousness, a light touch might do it.

As members you have shown your own willingness to get involved, and you are well qualified to encourage younger feet to step forward. Your individual initiative could be the clincher!

Gunnersbury Large Mansion

The refurbishment of the large mansion at Gunnersbury is now progressing well and on target for completion



around November 2017 when the museum will re-open. The outside masonry has been cleaned and repaired and the roof is being relaid with new Welsh slate. Work on the interior is well underway. Partition walls have been removed, original paintwork and damask

have been revealed on walls, and many aspects of the original 1802 mansion are being uncovered. On Sunday 18 September, as part of Open House Weekend, you will be able to see for yourself if you pre-book an architect-led tour to explore the restoration. You can book via gunnersburylearning@ealing.gov.uk. Tours are at 11am and 1pm.

Philippa Dolphin



Large mansion staircase revealed

Historic England app

In July we were approached by Historic England to help them update a walk which they had found on our website. This was originally devised in the 1970s by a former member of the Executive Committee, John Foster White. The walk is centred around Ealing and goes as far north as Brentham and as far south as St Mary's Church. It has now reappeared in a form for use on smartphones as a new "app". You can download the app on your phone and take it with you when you walk around the area. We are delighted that this piece of history has been updated in time for our 50th anniversary next year and is being made more widely available. John, an eminent local historian, whom some of you may remember, would have been delighted!

Find it by searching for "Walk History" in the Android or Apple App Store.

Civic Society Half-century

Can you believe it? How should we celebrate in 2017? Dance the night away? And where? We are eager to hear your ideas. Send them to info@ealingcivicsociety.org

From our Treasurer

While settling into my new role as Treasurer and meeting our members, I have been looking at our membership list and checking for overdue subscription payments. Here is a reminder about how to pay your subscription:

If you pay your subscription by **cash** or **cheque**, early payment will save you from receiving a reminder from us. The amount due for the year is £12.00.

You may make the payment by **online bank transfer**.

Our bank account details are

Ealing Civic Society Lloyds Bank

Sort Code 30 92 82 Account Number 02420491.

Please use your surname as the reference for the payment. Or you may send your cheque made payable to Ealing Civic Society to:

Josette Bishop

Treasurer Ealing Civic Society

8 Castlebar Hill Ealing W5 1TD

Members who pay by **standing order** pay £2.00 less, i.e. £10.00. Please download the form from our website if you would prefer to set up a standing order and post it to Josette.

If you are not sure when you made your last membership subscription payment then please email Josette at josettebishop@btinternet.com

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