

## March 1998 Newsletter

Please note that the newsletters contain un-edited extracts which have not been updated

### **MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING CHAIRMAN (BOB GURD)**

Since I took over from Chuck Anthony in the late summer of 1997 there have been a number of major planning applications on which we have needed to comment, including those from Ealing Film Studios and the Guinness Brewery site. We remain open-minded about the studios: whilst regretting the loss of traditional film making on the site, we recognise that the arrival of the National Film and Television School would be a major asset to Ealing and assist in providing a new tourist attraction if the proposed museum of the film industry materialises. On the other hand, we would not like to see all the buildings disappear since the studios were the first purpose-built sound stages in Britain. There are also issues of access, traffic generation, and parking to be resolved satisfactorily. Similar issues arise out of the proposed Guinness development in Park Royal as well as the loss of open land. The Society has asked for the Guinness Brewery buildings (designed with assistance of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott) to be considered for spot-listing because we do not believe that sufficient effort has been made to re-use them as part of the proposed redevelopment plans.

The Executive Committee held a "brain-storming" meeting in December to review the Society's role after 30 years' existence. It noted a large number of achievements in 1997-8 including participation in many of the Borough's LA21 Groups, conservation area panels, and opposition to a number of licensed premises applications, including participation in hearings in court or before the Council. We also took part in the last Open House Days Event and are members of the Borough's tourist and town centre forums.

Yet we recognise that we need to extend our membership by attracting new and younger people, whilst continuing to focus upon the built environment and open space issues. We need to relaunch our publicity material and consider setting up a web site. We will also make ourselves more widely known by contacting schools, the Chamber of Commerce and joining Ealing Arts Council (we are already involved in the proposed arts centre for Ealing). We hope to improve our publicity by seeking to recruit a publicity officer from one of the organisations that provide assistance to voluntary groups. If we are successful, we hope that you will be hearing more about us in the coming year!

## **UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The Council has recently issued a response to objections and representations made last year to alterations in the UDP. The Society made a number of detailed comments and objected to the proposal to delete from future conservation area designation a number of roads in the Mount Park area, including Woodville Gardens, Corfton Road, Madeley Road and Westbury Road. We are pleased to report that the Council has now agreed to reinstate these roads for future consideration for inclusion in a conservation area. The Society will therefore be withdrawing its objection to the latest amendments to the plan.

## **LICENSED PREMISES**

The Town House (formerly The Feathers) applied in 1997 to increase its music and dancing licence capacity to 600, 350 on the ground and 250 on the mezzanine. The Council's Licensing Panel has allowed an increase of 200 to 550, as the applicants (Whitbread's) proposed a closing time of 1am instead of 2am, to operate on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The licensing magistrates have just rejected an application to extend the liquor licence to the mezzanine floor.

Broadway Boulevard's late entertainment, licence due for renewal on 1 April, runs to 6am except on Saturdays when it is until 10am the following morning. Early morning discharges from the club are a considerable disturbance to the neighbourhood, and unruly members seem to be being thrown onto the streets, where they are beyond the responsibility of the club. The Council's Licensing Panel, which attaches importance to the numbers objecting, will hear the case on a date yet to be decided. Members of the Society who wish to be present should contact Corinne Templer on 567-5353.

The Working Party on Drinking in Central Ealing continues to meet about twice a year. It was created largely as a result of the Society's pressure, and consists of magistrates, councillors, officers, the police consultative group, and Walpole residents. It has become a model of good practice to be followed by authorities all over the country who look to it for advice and information, especially where large pubs are concentrated in city centres. Its present concern is the expansion of existing premises and hours of operation, as well as the possibility of restaurants and takeaways becoming pubs without planning permission. Attempts are being made to encourage managers of licensed premises to take some responsibility for safer streets and communities by establishing a "responsible host scheme".

## **London Government**

by John Delafons

On 7 May 1998 Londoners will have the opportunity to decide by referendum whether they want a new London-wide authority to govern London, with an elected Assembly and an elected Mayor. The Society has not thought it necessary to take a view on these

proposals but they are obviously of interest to all residents. A little history may be useful.

Since 1986 when the Greater London Council was abolished, there has been no elected body covering the whole of London. Instead local government in London has been split between the 32 London Boroughs.

Despite a history going back to the Romans and beyond, London has had its own local authority for less than a hundred years (leaving aside the City of London - the Square Mile - which has had its own City Corporation since mediaeval times). During the first half of the nineteenth century, as London grew rapidly bigger and generated serious public health problems, the area was governed by the four counties (Middlesex, Surrey, Kent and Essex ) that reached to the walls of the City. Local magistrates and Watch Commissioners provided rudimentary law and order. There was not much in the way of local services, but the Poor Law Unions were responsible for the workhouses and infirmaries. Later in the century new London-wide bodies were set up: the Metropolitan Board of Works (which in its day did great work on London's roads, sewerage and water supply) in 1855; and the London School Board in 1870.

It was not until 1888 that the London County Council was created. It covered the same area as the Metropolitan Board of Works which it replaced and the London School Board which it replaced in 1904. Even when it was first formed the LCC did not cover all the built-up area of London, and Ealing was not part of it but remained in Middlesex. Ealing became an Urban District in 1894 and a Municipal Borough in 1901. It became part of the Greater London Council area when the GLC was set up in 1965. The Royal Commission whose recommendations led to the formation of the GLC proposed that old Ealing should become one of the 52 new London Boroughs, with no extension to its area. But the government decided to reduce the number of new boroughs to 32 and Ealing was combined with Southall MB and Acton MB (the Royal Commission had recommended that Southall should combine with Hayes and Harlington UDC; and Acton with Brentford and Chiswick MB).

Ealing tried repeatedly after 1901 to become an independent county borough (ie an "all purpose" authority) but these attempts were always unsuccessful. It was not until the GLC was abolished that Ealing, along with the other London Boroughs, achieved independence. That will have lasted only about fifteen years if a new London Authority is established. It is not yet clear to what extent the new London authority will impinge on the London Boroughs. The general intention is that it should not usurp the powers and functions of the Boroughs. But the new authority will no doubt think that it has to do something to justify its existence - and it will need watching.