



Summer 2006 Newsletter

Ealing Civic Society Events 2006 Annual Lecture



Trams in Ealing?

Thursday 29th June, 7.30 pm
Telfer Room, Ealing Town Hall
Prof Malcolm Buchanan,

Director – Colin Buchanan and Partners, London

Annual Award Ceremony

Thursday 19th October, 7.30 pm
Ealing Town Hall

Chairman's Report

Welcome to the Summer 2006 newsletter. This covers the society's activities and current issues, including the implications of a new council administration, Dickens Yard, the Cineworld cinema and Pitzhanger Manor.

We very much hope that you will be able to attend the annual lecture, which is being given by Malcolm Buchanan, son of the famous Colin Buchanan (author of "*Traffic in Towns*"). Professor Buchanan is a director of Colin Buchanan and Partners, one of the UK's leading independent consultancies covering transport, traffic, planning and economics. He began his transport career in the GLC, where he worked on roads, buses and rail. He transferred to consultancy in 1974 and has worked throughout the UK and worldwide on transport and planning problems. He successfully opposed the Strathclyde Tram on behalf of the Glasgow bus operators, but is currently looking seriously at the possible introduction of trams in a major

Chinese city. He has lived in Ealing for more than thirty years. We look forward to a fascinating talk about the problems of transport in Ealing, particularly road transport. This is particularly apt now we have a new Conservative administration which has set its face against the tram project.

What does the new administration mean for us? It is obviously too soon to say but judging from their manifesto (how many of us read the party manifestos before voting I wonder?) they will be strong on green credentials in line with David Cameron's approach as new party leader ("vote blue to go green"). In particular, they have pledged an increase in the environment budget by at least £1.5m for each year of their four-year term. Whilst ECS is and always has been a non-party political society, we look forward to working with the new administration in its efforts to protect and enhance the Borough's environment, but will not be afraid to voice constructive criticism where we feel it is due.

Elsewhere in this issue, you can read more about what St George had to say about the Dickens Yard development proposals at our AGM in April. What struck me was that they were at least prepared to listen to ideas from people like us, and we will be having further discussions with them covering areas of importance to people in Ealing such as design, car parking, cultural facilities, quality of housing and retail facilities. We are also interested in improving the links with neighbouring areas, in particular the Arcadia site to the east which is due to be redeveloped with a new access to the station (although plans are much less advanced than for Dickens Yard).

As for the Cineworld cinema, this has now become part of the Empire Cinema chain and rebranding is expected to take place shortly. We are very keen to ensure that some short-term improvements take place to the building, which

has become very run down because of the uncertainties over redevelopment and more recently ownership following the takeover of UGC by Cineworld.

On Pitzhanger Manor, work on the conservation plan for the Manor and the gardens continues. Members of the Society's executive committee are looking forward to a meeting later this summer with the consultants, Donald Insall Associates, to discuss their emerging ideas. If you would like to input into this process please let me have your thoughts in the next few weeks (e-mail black.gurd@virgin.net).

I look forward to seeing many of you at the annual lecture on 29 June (starting at the earlier time of 7:30 pm).

Robert Gurd, Chairman

The AGM

The AGM on 25 April was well attended. The Chairman gave a brief resume of the year's main activities, highlighting:

- the operation of the Council's new Licensing Policy;
- the new Award Scheme for schools;
- new commemorative plaques;
- the work of Ealing Centre partnership including the BID (Business Improvement District) scheme for Ealing Town Centre;
- a meeting between the Executive Committee and the Council Chief Executive and [then] Council Leader; and
- a brainstorming session on the future of the Society which would be celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2007. One idea which the Executive is particularly keen on is a DVD chronicling 40 years of change in Ealing.

The Chairman thanked Adrian Cook who was standing down from the Executive Committee. All the other existing members were elected en bloc. The Treasurer, Huw Foxall, reported that although we had balances of over £15,000 most of this was due to the Janet Millar bequest, which it had been agreed should not be used on 'day to day' expenses. Otherwise, expenditure had exceeded income for the year. The AGM therefore agreed a modest increase in annual subscription rates (which had not been changed for over ten years).

The AGM was followed by a presentation on the current state of play of the major redevelopment proposals for the Dickens Yard site and the land to the rear of Ealing Town Hall. (The presentation was not part of the Council's formal public consultation.)



Dickens Yard redevelopment (St George scheme)

Brendon Walsh, Head of Business Development, LB Ealing, said that 19 expressions of interest by developers had been reduced to a shortlist of four, and following interviews, the Council had selected the proposals submitted by St George, a development company operating exclusively in Greater London, as preferred developer. As part of the selection, St George was required by the Council to improve its design in various ways, and the architects, John Thompson & Partners, had worked very hard since then.

Details of the scheme were then explained by St George's Regeneration Director, Charmaine Young, and Land Director, Malcolm Wood. St George is part of the Berkeley Group and has grown from developing small mixed-use schemes to major projects, including the conversion of Putney Wharf to mixed uses, the Charter Quay development in Kingston-upon-Thames and a major project in Hendon.

For the Dickens Yard redevelopment, which was mainly for retail and housing, the quality of overall management was felt to be critical. St George had commissioned a cultural audit of Ealing town centre which had identified a surprising lack of quality shops bearing in mind

the affluence of the surrounding residential areas.

Dickens Yard would include around 28 high quality shops ranging from 500 to 2300 square feet in size which should help to regenerate the surrounding town centre, as had been the case with the Kingston development. The aim was to avoid creating a 'clone town' and to restore some of the distinctiveness of Ealing which had lost its former individual and specialist shops. St George would be talking to independent retailers in other towns to attract them to Dickens Yard. A good quality bookshop was one identified need.

The housing development would comprise high level courtyards above the shops, as had been done in Putney, and ground level walkways would lead behind the town hall to the refurbished 19th century stables and former fire station on Longfield Avenue. The proposed Town Square adjacent to the Church of Christ the Saviour could be used for seasonal events to bring vitality to the area, with a multi-use community hall adjacent to Christchurch School. Underground servicing to the shops was a requirement of the Council, leaving the pedestrian squares and walkways free of vehicles.

The speakers then fielded a barrage of questions, comments and concerns: a better pedestrian link to Springbridge Road/car park/Haven Green was essential; the housing development was 30% more dense than originally proposed, and blocks of an average 9 storeys (up to 12 or 13 storeys in places) were out of scale; attracting specialist shops would be difficult if rents were prohibitively expensive; the development should be properly integrated with the tired and underused town hall which should be upgraded as Ealing's long-awaited multi-arts complex; access to the Town Square by coaches taking children from Christchurch School to their playing fields was undesirable and would undermine its character; how would the design of the new development reflect Ealing's unique character?

The Chairman summed up the discussion by warning that Dickens Yard should not end up as 'Anytown, Anywhere'. The architects for the Ealing Broadway Centre had gone out of their way to try to mirror Ealing's character, working with Ealing Civic Society and residents'

associations to achieve a development of red brick vernacular rather than the originally proposed concrete covered concrete shopping centre and offices which would have probably been pulled down by now. He reminded the developers that 'Ealing people haven't gone away - we are still here!'

John Templeton

Ealing Central Library

Members may be aware of the quite radical plans for refurbishment of the Central Library. Rather overlooked is the extent of changes proposed for the well regarded local history section. It will now become integrated into the Reference section, and the area presently provided will be substantially reduced. This will mean more limited access to local history material, and the specialist local history staff will not necessarily be available for consultation. Although it is proposed to digitise some of the local history material for internet access, this seems to be poor compensation for the overall reduction in service.

Paul Fitzmaurice

Recent Planning Applications and Appeals

The Society has continued to monitor and comment on significant planning applications. We objected to the replacement building proposed for *27 South Ealing Rd* because it was out of scale and out of proportion with adjoining property. The proposal has been refused by the Council.

We have also objected to a proposal in the industrial area at *Trumpers Way/St Margarets Road, Hanwell* for 4 blocks of 155 flats of 4- to 8-storeys, with some business use and service/shop units. The site, which overlooks the Brent River Park and Canal, is too small for the scale of development proposed.

A recent application in *The Mall W5* is a resubmission of a proposal to replace Candy House with retail use on the ground floor, offices on part of the first floor and flats on floors 1-5. The Society objected to the previous application which was rejected. We feel that this new proposal is still out of character with the conservation area, and although the existing building is of little architectural quality, the proposed one would not improve the situation.

The applicants for demolition of four linked

properties on the site of the former council children's home at *82-85 Mattock Lane W5*, with replacement by one 3-storey block and two 4-storey blocks for 33 flats, have appealed to the Secretary of State. A public inquiry will be held.

Finally, applicants for a proposal to restore *Twyford Abbey NW10* and convert to 29 apartments and build 288 new residential units have appealed against the Council's non-determination.

Judy Harris

Subscriptions

As reported earlier, the recent AGM approved an increase in members' subscriptions to come into effect **from 1 January 2007**. These will be:

- **households** - £8 (£7 if paid by standing order);
- **corporate members** – £16 (£14 if paid by standing order).

Membership

The membership year will in future run from 1 January (rather than 1 April as at present). We will be issuing a revised standing order form in the autumn. For all membership queries and enquiries please contact the Membership Secretary, Paul Fitzmaurice, 18 Elers Road London W13 9QD. (Tel: 020 8567 3024).

Nominate an entry for the Ealing Civic Society Award 2006

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 purpose of the Society's award is to stimulate interest among the people of Ealing in development and conservation projects, and to enable them to recognise and reward new buildings, refurbishments or restorations which make a positive contribution to the amenity of Ealing and its townscape. The Society aims to encourage a high standard of architecture, design and fitness for purpose in buildings and other projects throughout the borough.



Ravenor Primary School (commendation – 2005)

Awards will be made for schemes that enhance the environment by good design, landscaping, or service to the community of other kinds. Fitness for purpose and flexibility in meeting changing needs are especially relevant. So too are the demonstration of energy efficiency, good pedestrian access, anti-pollution measures and the re-use of materials.

Please look carefully around your area in Ealing to see if there are any developments which you think should be entered for the award. Further details and application forms will be available on our website or from the ECS Secretary, Judy Harris (details below).

2006/07 Executive Committee

The following members were elected to the Executive Committee at the AGM:
Chairman: Robert Gurd, 60 Beaufort Rd W5 3EA (020 8998 4417)
Treasurer: Huw Foxall, 27 Regal Close W5 2SB
Secretary: Judy Harris, 72 The Knoll W13 8HY (020 8997 8824)
Publicity Officer: Michael Tiley, 30 Devonshire Road W5 4TP
Newsletter Editor: Margaret Gold, 24 Lyncroft Gardens W13 9PU
Membership Secretary: Paul Fitzmaurice, 18 Elers Road, W13 9QD (020 8567 9024)
Corinne Templer, 20 Mattock Lane W5 5BH
John Templeton, 5 Helena Road W5 2RA
Tony Miller, 6 Winscombe Crescent W5 1AZ
Mary Sergeant, 10 Eaton Rise W5 2ER
Greg Birdseye, 9 Dell Way, W13 8JH
Ann Chapman, 15 Lammas Park Road, W5 5JD.