



40th year 1967 - 2007

Spring 2007 Newsletter

Ealing Civic Society Events 2007

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 24th April, 7.30 pm
Telfer Room, Ealing Town Hall
Speaker: representatives from Glenkerrin
(Arcadia redevelopment)

The ECS Annual Lecture

Tuesday 26th June, 7.30 pm
Liz Cantell Room, Ealing Town Hall
Speaker: Judith Hann

40th birthday events

(See inside)

The ECS Annual Award Ceremony

Tuesday 20th November, 7.30 pm
Liz Cantell Room, Ealing Town Hall
Speaker: Trevor Baylis

Chairman's Report

Bob Gurd welcomes readers to the latest issue of the newsletter:

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Society, founded in October 1967 on the back of opposition to the controversial Ealing town centre redevelopment scheme. It is impressive that the Society is still going strong 40 years later, but ironic that the same sort of issues are just as relevant today. The committee has discussed a number of commemorative events and other activities to mark the anniversary [see page 3]. We hope to have things firmed up by the next newsletter.

The key issues affecting central Ealing are the proposed redevelopments of *Dickens Yard* and the *Arcadia centre* which could come to a head at about the same time. Together they will have a significant impact upon our town centre and the retail offer it provides. St George has

discussed with us arrangements for consultation with local groups about the Dickens Yard site in preparation for a special weekend event which is due to take place later in the Spring. The event is intended to put some detail on the design of the redevelopment and, in particular, consider the possible uses to which the new buildings will be put, ranging from retail to housing and community.

Progress on the Arcadia site is less well advanced but it is already clear that there are potentially controversial features, particularly a tall residential block opposite Ealing Broadway station and a new interface with Haven Green achieved by rafting over of the railway line. We have stressed to the owners of the Arcadia site (Glenkerrin) the importance of working closely with St George about the links between the two sites on opposite sides of Springbridge Road. Also potentially important are the links with the station and sites to the south of the Uxbridge Road, in particular Ealing Broadway Centre. Unfortunately, redevelopment of the station site itself is greatly hampered by the continuing uncertainties over funding of Crossrail.

Outside Central Ealing, the developers of the *Southall Gasworks site* have gone back to the drawing board on the design, following an indication from Transco that the gasholders at the south end could be relocated elsewhere. This could have a major impact on the nature of the development, particularly access from the south, which was a major weakness of earlier schemes. But the developers still seem to be pressing ahead with plans for as many as 4500 new dwellings in an area which already has a deficiency of infrastructure and open spaces.

The Council has recently published a number of draft *conservation area character assessments*,

together with their associated management plans. These documents are available for viewing on the Council's website. By and large, they are pretty workmanlike but the real debate will arise when detailed proposals for management of the conservation areas are put forward. Unfortunately I spoke too soon in the last newsletter about progress on the Urban Design Panel. Owing to resource constraints and other problems, the panel has not yet been reconvened, and it is not now clear when it will be.

Discussions continue with TfL over the design of the *Hanger Lane bridges*. In the meantime, the neighbouring derelict houses in Hanger Lane have been demolished and preliminary landscaping work carried out on the site adjacent to Inglis Road. We are still concerned that the design of the bridges will be unimaginative, particularly in relation to landscaping and graffiti protection, but we can report that TfL has agreed to reinstate the crossing at its current approximate location near Inglis Road. We also suggested a 'green bridge' scheme which would have extended Ealing Common as far north as the Webb's site -- but this was not favourably received. We hope that any remaining issues can be resolved quickly so that the scheme can proceed without further delay.

On *street lighting*, the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) scheme underway in Ealing is still causing concern, particularly in conservation areas. Despite warnings from the Society before the PFI scheme was agreed, uncertainties continue over proposals in conservation areas in relation to the height of columns and the design of columns and lanterns in distributor roads. And, many residents in the Northfields area are concerned about losing their traditional Ealing gas columns (so-called George IV columns) which were converted to electricity in the 1960s. The council has consistently said that it is impossible to upgrade these to modern standards at affordable cost. A local group, *Save Ealing's Antique Lampposts* (SEAL) which was formed to try to preserve as many of them as possible has recently managed to achieve a temporary stay of execution of their replacement pending further discussions on their possible preservation. We support this campaign and consider that at the very least some examples should be retained around the Borough to mark

the fact that they have been a feature of our streetscape for a century. Indeed, the Council has done this in the past: there are some restored columns and lanterns in a 'pocket park' in Lynton Road in Acton, an idea we think could be repeated elsewhere.



One of the George IV lamp-posts in Lynton Rd, Acton

Finally, I look forward to seeing you at the Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 24 April (7:30 p.m.) at which we will have a presentation on the proposed Arcadia redevelopment, by representatives from Glenkerrin.

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Ealing in 1967

As part of the build up for our 40th anniversary programme Paul Fitzmaurice looks back to what Ealing was like when our Society began:

Looking back to 1967, many parallels can be drawn with 2007. Ealing - like much of London - was experiencing a building boom, with an increasing number of proposed developments. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the centre of Ealing itself. Along the Uxbridge Road west of New Broadway, the large Victorian villas had begun to be replaced in the early 1960s by a series of office blocks, referred to at the time as 'Ealing's Golden Gateway'.

The original villas along the Uxbridge Road had been built as homes for the more affluent of Ealing's middle classes in the mid-19th century, but most had already been converted to business use after the first war. They were perhaps of no great merit architecturally and of course not really suited to commercial use. To use the parlance of the times they were 'Victorian monstrosities' which had to be swept away. Today only the building occupied by Prince Evans at no. 77 remains as a reminder of what the road once looked like.

In 1967 two of the largest blocks in the town centre were completed. One of these, the 15-storey GPO building on the corner of Craven Road (now called Westel House), was designed by Richard Seifert who had been responsible for the notorious Centre Point tower in the West End (to which the Ealing block bears a resemblance). Meanwhile, over Ealing Broadway mainline station, the 10-storey Villiers House had been built for occupation by the BBC. This led to the closure of the separate District Line entrance to the station – a decision which still blights the Haven Green area today.

This building boom wasn't confined to commercial developments. In the Castlebar area, many houses built on the higher ground for typically prosperous large Victorian families began to make way for modern blocks and the ubiquitous 'town houses'. All the houses in what had been Ealing's first planned development by Henry de Bruno Austin in Kent Gardens were demolished to make way for the estate round Templewood, built by Haymills. One of Ealing's largest houses, the Grange, was razed and its extensive grounds between Castlebar Hill and St Stephens Road were redeveloped by Wates, although the attractive ornamental lake was retained.



The Grange in the early 1960s

Unlike much of the public housing of the period, many of these developments are considered of good design. But there was concern about how easily they fitted into the late Victorian/Edwardian style of housing infrastructure that characterises Ealing. By 1967 complaints to the local papers were being regularly made by residents about the wanton and unnecessary destruction of good quality housing.

New development proposals came with increasing rapidity and the claims became ever more grandiose, such as: '*Ealing poised on the brink of the Moon age to become London's number one borough...*' and '*...the Ealing of the future will have a touch of Paris*'. To alleviate traffic congestion along the Uxbridge Road various ideas were being mooted to provide relief roads. Some of the more modest housing in the area between the Broadway and the Grove was being demolished in anticipation of this but it was not until 1968 that the detailed official plans became known and the prolonged debate as to the future of the Broadway centre was to begin.

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Celebrating our 40th year

*The Executive Committee has been discussing a number of projects to celebrate the 40th anniversary. The details of the proposals and costings have still to be finalised, but here **Mike Tiley** outlines the ideas so far:*

ECS website (www.ealingcivicsociety.org)

We have been talking to a number of web providers about redesigning our website, which is now rather dated as well as being cumbersome to maintain. An improved website should be much more informative and we hope look more attractive to potential members.

Updating our publicity leaflet

We are also planning to update our publicity/recruitment leaflet to reflect the new style of the website.

Tree planting

As a long-lasting contribution to the amenity of Ealing we would like to plant some trees on Ealing Common to replace some of those lost to the Horse Chestnut disease. The society has a recent bequest from the late husband of one of our members for that purpose. In addition, in memory of another recent generous benefactor to ECS [Janet Millar – see Winter 2005 newsletter], we are considering the possibility of replacing the large Cedar tree which had to be

removed from the garden behind Pitzhanger Manor.

Exhibition of ECS activities in the past 40 years

We are planning to put together a 40th Anniversary Exhibition in the autumn, hopefully in one of the rooms of the Pitzhanger Manor Gallery, to coincide with a small reception and a public lecture about the changing face of Ealing and ECS's contribution over the period. If any member has any interesting materials (by way of memories, documentation, photos, etc.) which you think may be of interest please contact Paul Fitzmaurice (020 8567 3024).

A new 'Open House' walk for Central Ealing

A new walk and leaflet is being prepared in time for the next 'Open House' week-end in September.

A postcard for Ealing

Currently, the only postcard available for visitors to send home is many years old and not at all attractive. So we are planning for a new multi-view postcard with the words '*EALING Queen of the Suburbs*' for sale in newsagents, bookshops and gift shops in Ealing.

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Licensing update

Licensing issues continue to be a matter of much concern to the Society, particularly in relation to late-night drinking. Jim McLaughlin outlines the latest developments:

With the establishment of the night-time economy, a significant proportion of which depends upon alcohol sales, Central Ealing after dark has become a no-go area for many residents. It has also lost variety in both the quality and the diversity of retail activity. The Society continues to seek ways to limit the progression of these problems. Following the May 2006 election, new councillors have had to become familiar with the licensing procedure, and licensing hearings have been delayed. Possibly because, in part, of the very considerable problems with the Licensing Act 2003 and, in part, the fear of subsequent appeals, the licensing committees have been allowing some extension of the hours for the sale of alcohol when variations of existing licenses have been sought, and have even granted new licences.

For its part, Ealing Civic Society has lodged objections to all applications to extend the hours of trading in the Central Ealing Zone, and in

sensitive areas outside the zone. Subsequently we have put the case for restraint at the hearings before the licensing subcommittees. It is unfortunate that we have to do so but it is our understanding that current legislation leaves local government no choice but to grant all applications - even where a special area policy is in force - unless objections have been received. It is only when an objection has been lodged that the matter can be considered by a committee of elected councillors.

The fact that the licence applies to the premises itself is a further problem. Should an applicant - whose activities appear to enhance the amenities of Ealing - be granted a licence but subsequently cease to trade, the same premises can be taken on by an operator whose activities might be far less desirable. The separation of licensing and planning is a further problem, and we have opposed planning applications which seek the enlargement of licensed premises.

On the positive side, an area of Central Ealing has now been declared a Controlled Drinking Zone. This enables the police to arrest individuals who continue to drink in public areas when asked not to do so. Those arrested face fines of up to £500. Further, a review of the terms of *The Town House* licence, requested by the Metropolitan Police, was heard on the 5th February. The Licensing Committee decided to suspend the licence for a period of two weeks and to limit closing time for licensable activities to midnight on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. A variety of conditions regulating procedure within the premises were also imposed. While this is a welcome indication of police surveillance the word is that the applicant has appealed and we will have to wait to see how the courts respond to the police initiative.

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The 2006 ECS Architectural Award

One of the Society's annual highlights is the award for architectural merit to outstanding new buildings in the borough. Greg Birdseye describes the outcome of the 2006 competition:

The annual award ceremony took place in Ealing Town Hall last autumn. The panel of judges consisted of Janet Anderson, who has long-standing connections with Ealing; Gavin Leonard, Ealing Council's Chief Architect; and Jan Bienkowski, a well-known local architect.

At the presentation ceremony Gavin Leonard gave a brief presentation of the shortlisted entries:

- a house renovation/extension at 2 Castlebar Road, Ealing
- restoration of Woodlands Park, Acton
- a house extension in 43 Mount Park Crescent, Ealing
- the new William Mudge Block at Twyford School in Acton
- Elthorne Park children's playground, Hanwell
- the Nail Houses, Chapel Road, West Ealing
- the new media centre at Hammersmith and West London College, Ealing Green.

In contrast to previous years, the Society encouraged entries from landscaping schemes as well as building developments.

The panel carried out visits to the sites and assessed each against a series of criteria (contribution to landscape, design, fitness for purpose, and other factors such as energy efficiency and re-use of materials). After much deliberation the Society's 'Highly Commended' award was given to 2 Castlebar Road.



The rear extension of 2 Castlebar Road

The panel scored the development highly against the criteria and was particularly impressed with the scheme architect's work in conjunction with the Council's conservation officer to ensure a harmonious blend between the restoration of the original house (built over 100 years ago and in a very dilapidated state) and the modern extension added to the rear.

Commendations were given to the Woodlands Park restoration and the Mount Park Crescent house extension. The 'People's Award' - the result of the Ealing Gazette's phone vote, was given to the new block at Twyford School. The presentations were made by the guest of honour, Sir Pritpal Singh, headteacher of Drayton Manor School.



Presentation of the 'Highly Commended' award by Sir Pritpal Singh, to Stephen Dover and Iona Stern of 2 Castlebar Rd.

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Planning matters

*Planning and building control are also ongoing concerns in the Society's aims of conserving and improving the environment in Ealing. Our planning expert, **Judy Harris** describes the latest developments:*

The Society has commented on a number of planning applications in recent months:

- In *Acton*, the *Goldsmiths Almshouses* (which are statutory listed buildings) are being updated. We have objected to some of the proposed changes as they are out of character.
- On the *South Acton estate*, allotments are to be lost to a high building, and those remaining adjacent to the flats will be shaded and windy so that they will be difficult to cultivate. Some replacement plots are to be provided, but at the expense of existing trees and amenity space.
- In *Southall* a 15m monopole aerial would be replaced by an artificial 20m cypress tree on part of the *Osterley Park* Heritage and Metropolitan Open Land. This seems totally out of character.
- On the south side of *New Broadway in Ealing Town Centre*, an extra storey is proposed on the block of shops and flats between Bond Street and the Cinema. This

would inevitably over-shadow the footpaths and cafe tables on the opposite side of the road, and the impact of the current decorative turrets would be lost with the addition of a mansard roof.

A meeting has been held with the developers of Westel House [mentioned by Paul Fitzmaurice above] which is to be converted to offices, with a ground floor cafe and a major 10-storey rear extension of houses and flats. We expressed a number of concerns at the meeting: possible loss of winter sunshine for existing houses at the rear; overdevelopment; lack of amenity space for the flats; the design - especially the effect of coloured glass proposed for the frontage; and the narrow space to be left for the landscaped boulevard along the Uxbridge Rd.

The proposed development has now moved to a planning application, and detailed formal comments will be made when more information about the design and overshadowing becomes available. Watch this space!

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Membership

Please could all members check whether they have put their new standing order arrangements into effect for this year, or if they prefer to pay directly, send the appropriate cheque to Paul Fitzmaurice, 18 Elers Road W13 9QD. (Individuals/ households - £8.00, associations - £16.00)

Paul has been Membership Secretary for several years and he now wishes to relinquish his role. If any member is prepared to undertake all or part of this work (which would not necessarily require being a member of the committee) would they in the first instance contact Paul (020 8567 3024) to discuss what this entails.

We also have other vacancies on the executive committee. If any member would like to become more involved do please discuss the possibility with Bob Gurd (020 8998 4417).

**Reading this and not a member?
Why not join us?
Phone 020 8567 3024, or see our website
www.ealingcivicsociety.org**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**The 2007 AGM will be held in the Telfer Room, Ealing Town Hall
7.30 pm, Tuesday 24th April 2007**

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Chairman's Report for 2006
3. Adoption of the Chairman's Report
4. Treasurer's Report for 2006
5. Adoption of the Treasurer's Report
6. Appointment of Auditors
7. Election of Officers:

Currently:

Chairman – Bob Gurd

Secretary – Judy Harris

Membership Secretary – Paul Fitzmaurice

Vice-Chairman – vacant

Treasurer – Huw Foxall

Newsletter Editor – Greg Birdseye

8. Election of other Committee Members:

Currently - Jim McLaughlin, Tony Miller, Mary Sergeant, Corinne Templer, John Templeton, Mike Tiley, Paul Fitzmaurice.

In accordance with the constitution, further nominations for election to the Executive Committee may be made by members of the Society. They must be submitted in writing to the Secretary at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting, supported by a seconder (also a member of the Society). The consent of the nominee must first have been obtained. If the nominations exceed the number of vacancies, a ballot shall take place.

9. Motions and any other business submitted to the Chairman in writing prior to the meeting.
10. Presentation on the proposed Arcadia redevelopment, by representatives from Glenkerrin.