



EALING CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Working to preserve and improve our Borough



40TH YEAR 1967 – 2007

President: Prof. Sir Peter Hall Vice president: Corinne Templer

www.ealingcivicsociety.org

The
Civic
Trust

Spring 2008

Ealing Civic Society Events 2008

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 29th April, 7.30 pm

Liz Cantell Room, Ealing Town Hall

Speaker: John Stewart, HACAN Clearskies, on plans for Heathrow expansion

The ECS Annual Lecture

Tuesday June 17th, 7.30 pm

Liz Cantell Room, Ealing Town Hall

Speaker: Our President, Sir Peter Hall: *A New Vision for Central Ealing*

The ECS Annual Award Ceremony

Mid-end November

Liz Cantell Room, Ealing Town Hall

Speaker: to be confirmed

Chairman's report

Bob Gurd welcomes readers to our first newsletter of 2008:

The biggest issue in Ealing has of course been Glenkerrin's proposal for redevelopment of the *Arcadia site*. Attention has focused on the 40-storey tower designed by Foster + Partners, but overall this is a high-density development with six other large blocks on this important central Ealing site. The Society has teamed up with *Save Ealing's Centre* in fighting the development and many of you will have attended the packed public meeting last November at which the developers attempted to defend their proposals in the face of, I have to say, a very sceptical audience - without too much success.

The Society has submitted a long list of objections (summarised in Judy Harris's article elsewhere in this issue). Glenkerrin produced

revised proposals in December in response to a critical report from CABE – The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (the government's advisor on architecture, urban design and public space). But the changes were relatively minor, involving an anti-clockwise rotation of the Foster tower by 25°, and switching around the blocks facing Haven Green together with other consequential modifications. CABE issued a further report in February making clear that the revised plans still did not meet their earlier objections; they said they could not support the application and advised the Council to reject the proposals. English Heritage also issued a scathing report just before Christmas, which again made a clear recommendation to the Council to reject the scheme (subsequently reinforced by a further comments on the revised plans).

More recently the Mayor of London made some very adverse comments about the proposed development, criticising not only the design and lack of affordable housing provided but also Ealing council's failure to produce a master plan for the town centre. The Mayor highlighted the failure to integrate the scheme with that for Dickens Yard and redevelopment of the station associated with the Crossrail scheme, as well as the absence of any associated bus interchange.

Finally, in an interview on the BBC's *Andrew Marr Show* (24 February) the Mayor reacted to a suggestion that London is going to be overwhelmed by very tall buildings. He said very clearly "...no there aren't going to be very large numbers of tall buildings..... we broadly made it quite clear to [Ealing] council this wouldn't be acceptable".

All this criticism, backed by vociferous reaction from many residents, has resulted in the Council deciding not to progress any further the application in its current form. The planning committee which was due to consider the application has been deferred until after new plans have been submitted (and further consultation undertaken).

However, the threat of the development has not gone away. Glenkerrin are unlikely to walk away from a site where they have assembled the great majority of the land involved. Save Ealing's Centre will continue to monitor developments closely, and you can keep up-to-date on latest news at their website www.saveealingcentre.com.

Now we have to turn our attention to the development proposals from St George for the *Dickens Yard* site behind the Town Hall. Unlike the Arcadia development, there has been extensive public consultation in which the Society has been involved (as well as many other central Ealing stakeholders). We have also had the benefit of a number of discussions with St George themselves over details of the proposed development. Its impact on Ealing would not be as great as that of the Arcadia development, but it is still a dense development with some tall buildings (up to ~14 storeys). We still have issues with a number of elements of the proposals, including lack of community provision, detailed design issues (in particular the front tower which has been dubbed the "helicopter landing pad" by our Vice president!), the retail strategy and interface with the Town Hall. St George have agreed to meet us and local residents' association at a special meeting – date to be confirmed following submission of their planning application. We will let you know the details via an e-mail briefing [see page 6] as soon as we have a date.

Of relevance to the Dickens Yard debate, the Council has commissioned a study on refurbishing/ redeveloping Ealing Town Hall – a Grade II listed building. The study considered a number of options, including replacing the central (least interesting architecturally) portion with an atrium behind the retained façade which would open up the building to the Dickens Yard development behind. We have been pressing the Council to consider as part of the scheme a proposal by the Cinema Organ Society (COS) to

install the former South Bank Wurlitzer in the Victoria Hall. As we have reported in previous newsletters, this would be a practical proposition since there was an organ in the Hall until the 1950s, and COS has confirmed that the Wurlitzer (in fact the former cinema organ at the Trocadero, Elephant & Castle) would fit into the space vacated. However, options for refurbishing the Town Hall are still being discussed and the outcome is likely to be affected by cost and the availability of 'section 106' funding from the Dickens Yard development.

For once, we have some good news to report on the conservation front. The leader of the Council, Jason Stacey, recently reported that nearly £0.5m would be found to refurbish Ealing's traditional gas lighting columns [see Spring 2007 newsletter for more details]. We have to thank *Save Ealing's Antique Lampposts* (SEAL) for this success.



One of the original gas lighting columns (now with a modern light attachment).

The Society was very pleased to be associated with this initiative, which demonstrates that local people with local knowledge can bring about change with a well-researched and persistent

campaign. A lot of work needs to be done before the plans reach fruition, not least because most of the columns have not been touched, even painted, for at least 20 years (although the one shown here is one of a number in South Ealing that have recently been very attractively improved, on the initiative of local residents).

The Council's announcement was linked with the formation of a 'heritage quarter' in the south Ealing/Northfields area with, at its heart, the Grade I listed Pitzhanger Manor, which itself would receive a grant of £2.8m for much needed refurbishment, together with £0.3m to improve facilities in Walpole and Lammas parks. Also announced was a grant of £2m towards restoration of the Grade II listed Hanwell Community Centre, which is on the English Heritage *Properties at Risk* register.

In another development, the long-running saga of the design of the replacement *Hanger Lane bridges* on the North Circular Road has now reached a satisfactory conclusion. You may recall that we, and local residents' groups, have been in discussion with TfL about the scheme for over five years. We were most concerned about the unimaginative 'engineered' design that was emerging. We have now managed to persuade TfL to introduce more landscaping, to create a more colourful design of the parapets (picking up the red, white and green colours to be found in the neighbouring Ealing Village) and, most significantly of all, to find £10,000 for public art in the vicinity of the old retained bridges which will be part of the landscaped area. We hope to be involved in a public competition - to be run by Ealing Arts and Leisure - to choose a design in time for the completion of the bridge works, expected in 2011 (building work is due to start in autumn 2008).

Finally, I look forward to seeing you at our Annual General Meeting on 29 April. Our AGM speaker will be John Stewart of HACAN – the *Heathrow Association for Control of Aircraft Noise*. John will update us on the campaign against the proposals for expansion and changes to operating procedures at Heathrow.

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Coming events

You will see from the box on page 1 that we are working up our usual events programme for

2008. In addition, though, the committee has been considering a number of other ideas for events/meetings which might be of interest to members, and which could provide a social focus for the Society. Several ideas stand out at the moment:

1. A guided visit in the summer to the new Northala Fields leisure site next to the A40 which is now open to the public (although not quite ready for its official opening).
2. A joint meeting with the 'University of the Third Age'. U3A meets on Thursday mornings at Ealing Town Hall and has a number of speakers/ topics which might be of interest to ECS members, including one on Boston Manor in September and another on Georgian garden squares in November.
3. A discussion meeting on a topic of interest, perhaps over a morning cup of coffee in a local café, or even someone's home (depending on numbers of course!).

We would be very interested in feedback from Newsletter readers on these possibilities, or indeed any other ideas for the sort of events members might think would be of interest. You can now send us your ideas via e-mail to membership@ealingcivicsociety.org.

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Comments on recent planning applications

Judy Harris summarises the responses the Society has made in the last month or so:

Comments from the Society have covered a wide range of types of development, varying from the high profile Arcadia development by Glenkerrin which has occupied much time and effort, to yet another proposed advertising hoarding on Western Avenue.

Our formal response on the Arcadia Centre proposals commented on many aspects, including:

- The excessive height and bulk of the 'Leaf' tower which will impact on all the surrounding conservation areas and on almost the whole of West London;
- A lack of any transport interchange with Ealing Broadway Station, either for buses or pedestrians;
- a poor shopping precinct environment because of draughts from the Leaf, steps and lifts making things difficult for prams and disabled or elderly people, and above all the permanent shade on the central

- precinct for much of the year from the 6-storey proposed building to the South, alongside The Broadway;
- the scale and design of the whole development, especially the finger blocks, is out of keeping with the established suburban character;
 - a lack of shoppers' car parking which will increase pressure on parking in residential streets and encourage people to shop elsewhere,
 - pressure on Town Centre facilities by the large number of residents in 700 flats, such as on Haven Green open space, and for doctors, schools, places of assembly and even rush hour transport; and
 - disappointing sustainability proposals in a building that will consume so much energy in both construction and maintenance.

Also in the central shopping area, the scheme to redevelop the part of Ealing Broadway Centre facing onto The Broadway is causing considerable concern. The care taken over the original design, to achieve a modern structure that reflected the character of the previous Edwardian shopping parades, led to Ealing Broadway Centre being 'locally listed'. The loss of much of the existing facade and raising the roof by another two storeys would destroy much of this character.

On other related matters, the Town Centre study by Tibbalds which is expected to set the context for development of individual sites [see the special 40th anniversary newsletter of last August] has been shown to councillors and should be available to the public within a few weeks.

Elsewhere in the borough we have objected to the overdevelopment of two sites in Southall for flats and car parking, one on the site of Featherstone School where some attractive buildings survive, and the other on the former council depot near Adelaide dock on the Grand Union Canal. Southall lacks public open space by current standards, and these two sites will have little private garden or play space. The flats, in a large slab block near the Canal Conservation Area will form a most unattractive vista.

Finally, the Society has also objected to the proposed increase in capacity at Heathrow (for

which the consultation ended on 17 February). Before that deadline, Christine Gratus circulated a strongly-worded e-mail to Society members (i.e. to those members for whom we have an e-mail address – see page 6):

“You may not know about the consultation on these plans - that's because Ealing was deliberately omitted from the areas consulted on the grounds that we don't suffer enough from the noise pollution.

There are powerful environmental, economic, safety and quality of life arguments against expansion – and at the local level, it will have a substantial adverse effect on Ealing:

- *planes taking off will increase from 437,000 to over 700,000 a year;*
- *there will be no more half days of peace when flight paths change at 3.00 p.m. - the existing runways will be used all the time instead of alternately as they are now;*
- *with a third runway, several parts of the borough not already affected will be under the direct flight path, with planes every 90 seconds”.*

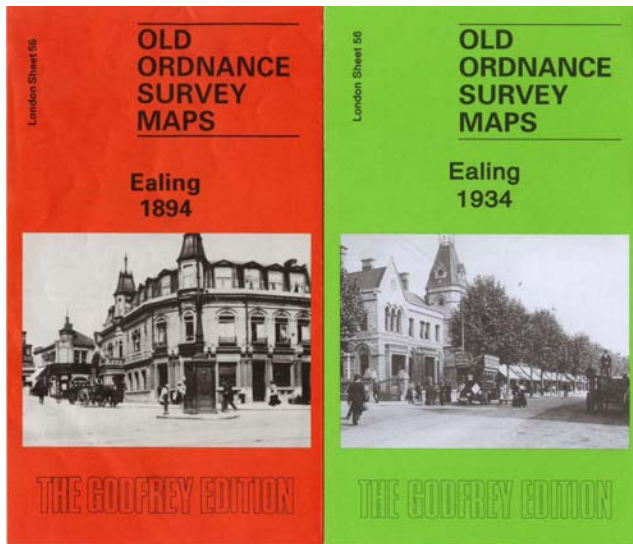
We hope as many members as possible reinforced this message in a consultation response to the Department for Transport before the deadline.

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New (old) maps of our area

Many readers may be familiar with the 'Godfrey Edition' reproductions of old Ordnance Survey maps. Over 2000 titles have been issued in this series of OS maps of towns throughout Britain and Ireland. The maps are taken from the original 25” to the mile map and reproduced at about 15 inches to the mile.

Ealing and surrounding areas have been well covered in recent years, and further editions are now being made available, including a version of Ealing in 1934, published this January, to complement the earlier 1894 reprint. They cover the same area – approximately a mile by a mile and a half, stretching from Church Road in Hanwell eastward to Ealing Broadway and Windsor Road; and from Cleveland Road and Castlebar Hill southward to Webster Gardens and Rathgar Avenue.



Copies of OS maps of the mid-1930s have also recently been published for other local areas:

- South Ealing
- South Acton + Gunnersbury Park
- Ealing Common + West Acton
- Park Royal + Hanger Hill
- Chiswick + West Hammersmith

as well as many others further afield. In each case the new map complements an earlier edition, enabling exploration of how the areas have changed across the years.

More details are available on the Godfrey website at www.alangodfreymaps.co.uk. A special series of local history talks on *Mapping the 1930's* is in preparation, to be held in May and June at Ealing's libraries.

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The 2007 ECS Architectural Award

*The Society's annual award ceremony took place in Ealing Town Hall last November. Here, **Greg Birdseye** provides the headlines for members who could not get there on the night.*

The panel of judges consisted of well known local architects John Hummerston, Jan Bienkowski, and Franklyn Nevard. The shortlist this year covered a wide range of buildings, including a health facility and several educational buildings:

- 'The Street' – an extension to student facilities at Thames Valley University in St Mary's Road, Ealing;
- Cloister Road Surgery in North Acton;
- The rebuilt Acton High School and Centre for Media Arts, Gunnersbury Lane;
- The new West London Academy in Northolt;

- A housing development at 353 Uxbridge Road, Acton;
- The refurbishment of Ealing Council's offices at Perceval House, Uxbridge Road;
- The Horizons Centre in Cherington Road, Hanwell – a drop-in centre for young people coming out of local authority care.

The judging panel carried out visits to each of the sites and assessed them 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 Cloister Road Surgery. The panel scored the development highly against the criteria and was particularly impressed with the internal planning, use of materials and lighting, and the good use of external landscaping.



The Cloister Road Surgery, winner of the Society's 'highly commended' award.

Commendations were also given to Thames Valley University and the Horizons Centre. The 'people's award' - the result of the *Ealing Gazette's* telephone vote - was given to the new block at Mount Carmel School in Ealing (although this was not available for viewing by the Society's judging panel, and will be considered for the 2008 award).

John Hummerston gave an interesting talk and slide show on the shortlisted entries before the presentation of certificates by guest of honour, Trevor Baylis OBE, inventor of the wind-up radio. Trevor, who was brought up in Southall, gave an entertaining talk on his career and work. He felt that encouragement should be given to

young people to foster the spirit of invention, and in particular to girls as well as boys.

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Are our e-mail bulletins reaching you?

If you want the very latest news about the developments at Dickens Yard and the Arcadia Centre, please make sure we have an up-to-date e-mail address for you. The easiest way to do this is to send an e-mail to us at membership@ealingcivicsociety.org from the address you want us to use.

There have been two mail outs so far and if you have been expecting to receive them but have been disappointed it may be that we have an old or incorrect address for you - there were several bounce-backs from the last two mailings. Just send us your address again and we'll update the records.

If you're not on e-mail or would prefer not to receive these bulletins, don't worry – the Newsletter will still be coming by post as usual.

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Membership leaflets – thanks for your help

And, finally, thank you to all those members who have been helping to distribute membership leaflets around their streets. We have had a steady trickle of new members as a result, every one of which helps make the Society's voice stronger in our wish to represent people who share similar views about the best way forward for Ealing.

If you can help by distributing leaflets in your own area, please contact us by email at membership@ealingcivicsociety.org or call Christine Gratus on 020 8579 0902. If just 10 people take 10 leaflets each, another 100 people will know about the Civic Society. Just tell us how many leaflets you would like and let us know which road you could leaflet - so that we don't have duplication of effort, and we'll make sure you get the leaflets you need. All help is greatly appreciated.

**Reading this and not a member?
Why not join us?
Phone 020 8567 4682 or see our website
www.ealingcivicsociety.org**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**The 2008 AGM will be held in the Liz Cantell Room, Ealing Town Hall
7.30 pm, Tuesday 29th April 2008**

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Chairman's Report for 2007
3. Adoption of the Chairman's Report
4. Treasurer's Report for 2007
5. Adoption of the Treasurer's Report
6. Appointment of Auditors
7. Election of Officers:
Currently:

Chairman – Bob Gurd	Vice-Chairman – vacant
Secretary – Judy Harris	Treasurer – Huw Foxall
Membership – Deirdre McClellan/Christine Gratus	Newsletter Editor – Greg Birdseye
8. Election of other Committee Members:
Currently - Jim McLaughlin, Tony Miller, Mary Sergeant, Corinne Templer, Mike Tiley, Paul Fitzmaurice, Margaret Gold.
Jim McLaughlin has announced his intention to stand down from the committee. 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. Talk by John Stewart of HACAN Clearskies.