



EALING CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Working to preserve and improve our Borough



Founded in 1967

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

www.ealingcivicsociety.org

Member of

**CIVIC
VOICE**

Summer 2012

Chairman's message

Arcadia, Dickens Yard and Cinema sites

We understand that an investment company called Benson Elliot Capital Management has been given the right of first refusal to purchase the Arcadia site as single entity. According to their website, Benson Elliot own office, retail, hotel and residential assets in continental Europe and in Milton Keynes and Edinburgh in the UK. Nothing is known about their intentions in Ealing but it is understood that they have a large property developer, Stanhope plc, as their partner. Although we had discussions at the end of last year with a couple of developers potentially interested in this site, Stanhope was not one of them so their intentions are also unknown at present.



Meanwhile, work on the Dickens Yard site continues apace. The first phase is due to be completed later this year and will consist of 220 flats (of around 700 in all) of which 70 will be affordable housing for elderly residents. Our worst fears about this development have been confirmed having seen it now taking shape. The elevation from Longfield Avenue dwarfs the neighbouring Grade II listed Town Hall just as we (and English Heritage) predicted it would. Also, there have been contentious proposals to change the elevations of the shops on to Longfield Avenue (approved) and the locally listed former fire station frontage (see page 4).

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There is not much more to report on the ex-Empire cinema which was largely demolished late 2008/early 2009 and the site has been empty apart from the supported facade ever since. Repeated promises by Empire cinemas have not been kept despite their receiving planning permission at the end of last year for a slightly revised scheme (20 screens as opposed to 17). They appear to have no intention of doing anything soon and the Council seem to have their hands tied over taking any action (in particular compulsory purchase) in the short term. So nothing is likely to happen this year unless there is a miracle. The loss of a serviceable, albeit run-down cinema was totally unnecessary. This could be serving the population of Ealing today if it had been retained.

Pitzhanger Manor and Walpole Park

Ealing Council has already committed significant funding to restoration of Walpole Park and Pitzhanger Manor but it needs matched funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the project to go ahead. The Park is running on a faster track than the House and the second round bid last year on the Park was successful. We have recently heard that the first round bid on the house and gallery has been successful at the third attempt. Detailed plans on proposals for changes to the House and Gallery will be presented for consultation later in the year.

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Coming events

The ECS Annual Lecture: Sir Peter Hall: Wednesday 6th June, 7.30 pm Liz Cantell Room, Ealing Town Hall, Speaker: Sir Peter Hall, (see page 3)

Unveiling of Fred Perry Blue Plaque, Friday, 15th June, 10.30 a.m, 223 Pitzhanger Lane, Ealing W5 1RG

Civic Day: Gunnersbury Park Walk Saturday, 23rd June (see page 2)

Three Plaques Walk: Acton Saturday 11th August (see page 3)

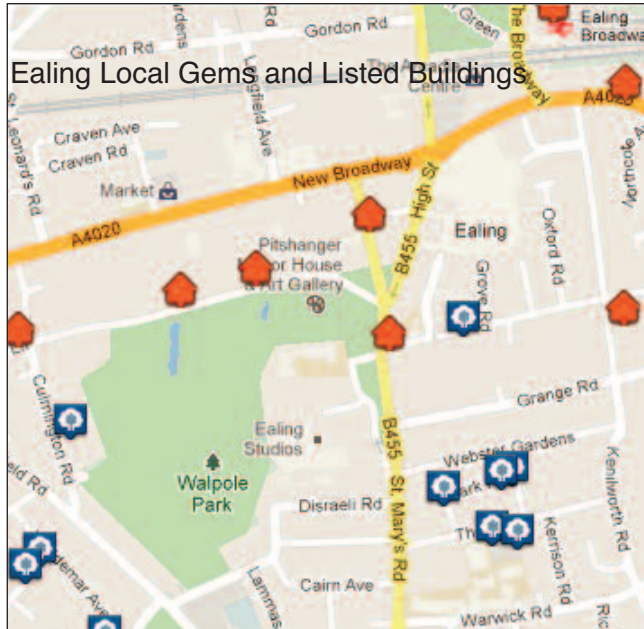
London Open House Day: Saturday/Sunday, 22/23rd September

The ECS Annual Awards Ceremony: Tuesday 27th November, The Queen's Hall, Ealing Town Hall
Guest Speaker: **Tony Palmer**, film, theatre and opera director.

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Local gems project

As part of the Civic Day initiative last year we initiated the "local gems" exercise which invited nominations for new locally listed buildings. On the back of this, University College London have developed a new scheme for viewing locally listed buildings online in which we have been involved. This is the so-called 'Mapping for Change' project



Blue = Local Gems Orange = Locally Listed Buildings

which is due to go live later this year. The screen shot above gives a flavour of the scheme. Incidentally, there will be a further round of consultation on local listing later this year as part of the LDF process and there will be an opportunity to put forward new buildings at the same time. Loss of these "local gems" will only be adequately protected when approved by the Council. One nominated shop front has already been lost.

Robert Gurd, Chairman

The Annual General Meeting

Chairman Robert Gurd welcomed 70 or so ECS members and guests who attended the AGM on 24th April at Ealing Town Hall and opened by reviewing the activities in which the society was involved in the past year:

- the changes to Acton Town Hall, particularly to the Library, the swimming pool and Council Chamber
- progress in funding Walpole Park improvements and Pitshanger Manor
- HLF funding for Gunnersbury Park and Grounds
- Hanger Lane bridges scheme which is now finished apart from an art installation in the autumn of 2012
- ECS Awards: highly commended: 24 Mount Pleasant Road; commended: Northala Park Visitors Centre
- Plaques: to Fred Perry and Winnie-the-Pooh
- Civic Day 2011 - a guided tour of Northala Park
- New Listings: West Acton and Perivale Stations, the

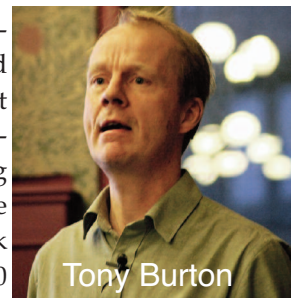
- Glaxo Offices, Greenford (all Grade II)
- London Development Framework and the Localism Act.
- Neighbourhood Planning: Ealing and West Ealing are "front runners" (see page 3)
- The ECS website is now in the capable hands of Philippa Dolphin.

You can read about these activities in more detail in past editions of this newsletter and on the ECS website.

Before giving the floor to our invited speaker, our Treasurer, Robin Roads, went through the accounts and the current members of the ECS Executive Committee were confirmed in office.

Tony Burton, until recently the Director of Civic Voice, was the main speaker at our AGM. Ealing Civic Society is a member of Civic Voice which was established in 2009 following the closure of the Civic Trust. It acts as an umbrella organisation for countrywide civic societies and also some residents' associations and other bodies sharing similar aims.

Tony gave us an extensive, lively and motivating talk titled *Rebooting the Civic Movement* about the role of civic societies in localism and planning, a key issue for us at the moment, with the Government currently introducing major planning reforms. He gave many examples of work done by the more than 300 civic societies which are members of Civic Voice: action on street clutter (including the proliferation of broadband boxes), campaigns to combat the decline of the high street, the erection of plaques, tree planting and lobbying on transport and licensing issues.



Tony Burton

Tony Williams

A Walk in the Park: Gunnersbury House and Gardens

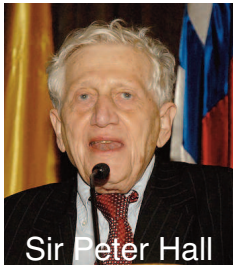
This will start at 2.30 p.m, Saturday, 23rd June, in the Terrace Room of the small mansion. This will be led by Jan Anderson and Bridget Gregory of Ealing Council.



Gunnersbury House

Ealing Civic Society Annual Lecture

Sir Peter Hall's talk on Tuesday 6th June is entitled *Ealing in the Second Reign of King Boris*. Sir Peter is an English town planner, urbanist and geographer. He is the Bartlett Professor of Planning and Regeneration at University College London and President of both the Town and Country Planning Association and the Regional Studies Association. Internationally renowned for his studies and writings on the economic, demographic, cultural and management issues that face cities around the globe he has been for many years a planning and regeneration adviser to successive UK governments. Sir Peter is considered by many to be the father of the industrial enterprise zone concept, adopted by countries worldwide to develop industry in disadvantaged areas. He is also, of course, the President of the Ealing Civic Society.



Neighbourhood Planning Comes Closer

Neighbourhood Planning for Ealing edged forward on 5th April with the coming into force of parts of the Localism Act which empower communities to plan for the places where they live or work. The government has allocated £40,000 to help set up Neighbourhood Forums for Ealing and West Ealing centres to create local plans. A Neighbourhood Forum must be a properly constituted open membership body, with at least 21 members drawn from the local community. It can plan for its neighbourhood either generally or through "development orders" (a localised form of permitted development). A general Neighbourhood Plan allows communities to set local land use policies. It must be in line with the Council's "core" strategy, national planning policies and other law, but otherwise can set a vision for the future.

Such plans have to be checked by an independent examiner to see certain basic standards are met. The council then must organise a referendum to ensure more than 50% of the community supports them. If approved, they then carry legal force. Decision-makers (mainly the Planning Committee) must take them into account when considering local planning applications, so this marks a potential real shift in power. The Society is actively involved as a member of Save Ealing's Centre in establishing the two neighbourhood forums and we will keep members informed of progress in both town centres.

Plaques update

We are considering the possibility of erecting a plaque for the ballerina Dame Margot Fonteyn (1919-1991) at one of her two childhood homes in Ealing: 44 Waldeck Road W13 (1921-1924) or 3 Elm Grove Road W5 (1925-1927). Other possible plaque candidates are John Comp-

ton, the cathedral church and cinema organ builder at 37 Audley Road W5 and Thomas Merton, the author and Cistercian monk at 18 Carlton Road W5.

Mike Tiley

The Three Plaques Walk

Saturday 11th August

ECS members are invited to join in the walk led by the Acton History Group. This takes in plaques to Waitrose, Winnie-the-Pooh and Richard Titmuss. Tour the sites of three historic plaques in Twyford Avenue and Uxbridge Road. Tea afterwards at St Martin's Church, Hale Gardens. Meet David Bays of the AHG outside St. Mary's Church, The Mount, at 2.30pm. Please let David Bays (020 8992 0287) know if you are going to attend, so numbers for tea can be assessed.

ECS Award Scheme

Help promote good design in the borough by nominating attractive new or renovated buildings and landscape schemes in your part of the Borough.

Entries for our award scheme are needed by 30th September. Nominations should have been completed in the last two years and in use for at least six months. The consent of the owner is required. Entry forms can be downloaded from the ECS website (or by telephoning the Secretary on 020 8997 8824). Please include some photos, plans and elevations to assist the committee in selecting entries to be visited by the judges. The best will be selected from each of three categories: Landscaping, Renovation of a building or structure and a New Building for the judges to visit. The judges assess entries against a range of criteria: design; fitness for purpose; flexibility to meet changing needs; value for money; sustainability including energy efficiency and re-use of materials.

This year's award evening will take place at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 27th November in the Queen's Hall Room, with guest speaker Tony Palmer. Two nominations have been received already, so now is the time to submit your nomination.

Judy Harris

Subscriptions for 2012

Subscription rates increased on 1st January 2012 to £10 by standing order (£12 by cheque or cash).

If you pay by standing order and it is due between now and 31.12.12 please ensure the amount is altered to £10.

If you pay by cheque and haven't already done so please pay as soon as possible to avoid a reminder having to be sent to you later in the year. Your cheque for £12 payable to Ealing Civic Society should be sent to: Robin Roads, Hon Treasurer, Ealing Civic Society, 2 North Lodge, Ealing Green, London W5 5QU.

If you have any questions on your subscription please e-mail: Robin@robinroads.co.uk or Tel: 8579 5910.

Planning Issues

Christchurch Junior School

Parts of the school buildings in Springbridge Road W5 are being rebuilt to accommodate an expanded junior school to provide for the increase in birth rate and residential building in the area.

We were concerned that the loss of the Victorian/Edwardian single storey classrooms and house could only be justified by providing a quality design that contributes to an appropriate setting for the Grade II* Christ the Saviour.

Unlike previous extensions the design of the proposed 4-storey block bears little relation to the existing buildings, and the proposed balustrade of the 4th floor play area would dominate the existing adjacent tower which is a characteristic part of the school. The classrooms linked by long balconies seem to offer health and safety risks especially as they would be wet when it rained on a SW wind.

The balustrades dominate the elevations and their detail as originally designed would be totally out of character with the existing buildings.

We agree with the Town Centre Conservation Panel that further consideration is needed. Children need plenty of space to play but a roof-top play area is not ideal and open balustrades could prove dangerous.

Acton Magistrates Court, Winchester Street, W3

This proposal for eight flats retains the historic building and the superintendent's house on the site, but we were concerned that the scheme is an overdevelopment because of the lack of amenity space. The elevations and materials of a proposed extension would be out of keeping with the street scene.

St Bernards Secure Unit, Southall

The proposed 80-bed medium secure unit would create prison-like views from Ealing Hospital wards, Meadow House Hospice and FitzHerbert Walk in the Brent River Park. The western elevation of the proposed unit has a semi-industrial façade and roof line which would have an unacceptable impact on the older listed buildings and other adjoining buildings. The high security fencing of the unit would have a most unattractive impact on the Metropolitan Open Land. We have sought a softening of the environmental impact on these historic assets and areas of adjoining public access.

Former Fire Station Dickens Yard

We objected strongly to this proposal to build a conservatory on the forecourt of the locally listed fire station and to the redesign of the conservatory at the rear which is already permitted. The character of the former

The Summer 2012 ECS Newsletter was edited by Tony Williams. Writers were Robert Gurd, Judy Harris, Tony Miller, Mike Tiley, Tony Williams. Photo of Tony Burton: Tom Doran
Printer: Pollyprint, 263 Northfield Avenue, W5 4UA

fire station would be harmed by the loss of the forecourt and doors which should be replaced after their restoration.

Colonial Drive, South Acton: 33 affordable and 91 private flats

We have objected to this proposal for residential blocks of 6-8 storeys to replace the low-rise industrial buildings that are part of the South Acton Major Employment Location in the UDP and a locally significant industrial site identified in the maps with the Core Strategy.

We are concerned that the overdevelopment of this site for flats would have an unacceptable impact on the adjoining Gunnersbury Triangle Local Nature Reserve which is a Site of Metropolitan Importance. The London Plan and UDP require strong protection from development proposals for such sites.

Building 6-8 storey flats on the boundary would not protect the site as required by these policies because it would prevent free movement of species including birds and bats. The impact of intrusive light and noise late into evenings from a wall of windows 6-8 storeys high at the boundary with the reserve would be likely to reduce the quality of habitat for a range of species.

Judy Harris

Reading this and not a member?

Why not join us?

Phone **020 8567 4682**

or visit our website

www.ealingcivicsociety.org

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