



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**

Autumn 2013

Chairman's Message

Empire cinema site

Land Securities have recently submitted an outline planning application and exchanged contracts with Ealing Council for the £100m redevelopment of the 'Ealing Filmworks' site.

We have welcomed in principle proposals for the regeneration of the site which has been derelict for far too long. However, we had some reservations about Land Securities' original proposals which we discussed with them over the summer. In summary these related to the following:



- no active uses behind the retained 1934 former cinema facade;
- too many eating and drinking establishments;
- no cultural facilities apart from cinema screens, a small gallery and an open-air performance space;
- too high a frontage on the southern perimeter affecting the setting of Pitzhanger Manor.

The outline planning application has addressed some of these issues:

- there would be a first floor space behind the retained facade that could be used for cultural and community use;
- more mixed uses would be introduced within the centre;
- the southern perimeter would be reduced in height and set back to some extent;

- the Walpole Picture Theatre facade would be incorporated into the Bond Street facade.

But some issues remain, in particular the loss of the locally listed YMCA building in Bond Street, the relationship of the southern perimeter with the existing Mattock Lane houses and the overall height of the development.

The Council has also published an updated supplementary planning document on their ideas for the site. Disappointingly, this still contains some factual errors despite our having pointed these out at the earlier consultation stage.

Arcadia plans

In our last newsletter we reported that Benson Elliot capital management had released plans to convert the Arcadia shopping centre to three large retail units. These plans were approved by the planning committee in June and work started at the end of September. We criticised some elements of the design at the planning committee meeting, in particular that of the corner feature with the clock which we felt unsympathetic to the character of the town centre. Around half of the planning committee agreed with our views but nevertheless it approved the plans. We subsequently met Benson Elliot's representatives to see whether we could persuade them to improve the clock feature and they agreed to take some ideas away including making the clockface more legible to read. It remains to be seen whether these ideas will be adopted.

Pitzhanger Manor

Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles' public lecture in June is covered in greater detail on page 3 of this newsletter but he briefly described the proposals for the restoration of Pitzhanger Manor. The most controversial element is the proposed demolition of the Eating Room extension designed by Charles Jones, the Borough engineer who saved the building and adapted it for use as a public library.

Sir Sherard explained that the Pitzhanger Manor Trust was initially strongly against demolition of the extension but various factors including the need to be able to cater for large events meant that the capacity of the Eating Room and extension would be insufficient to meet anticipated demand: a separate entertaining facility would need to be built in the Rose Garden.

Coming Events

ECS Annual Awards Ceremony Tuesday 19th November 7.30pm, The Queen's Hall, Ealing Town Hall.

Speaker: **Toby Young**, journalist, author and blogger.

Pitzhanger Manor Public Meeting: 17th October. Discuss the designs to go to the Heritage Lottery fund (Page 2)

The removal of the extension would also open up views from the first floor Drawing Room and enable restoration of the double-height conservatory at the rear of the Manor which was removed early in the 20th century. Your executive committee discussed the issue and the majority took the view that they could not agree with the proposal to demolish the Eating Room extension feeling that this was part of the evolving history of the building. The Trust's updated proposals are due to be announced at a public meeting in October (see box below).

Crossrail plans

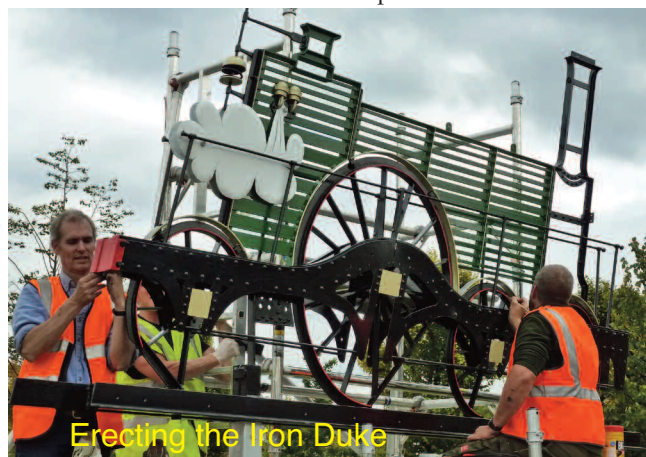
Provisional plans for Ealing Broadway Crossrail station have at last been revealed by Crossrail Ltd. Disappointingly, as expected, they contain proposals only for lifts and not the escalators that local residents were hoping for. We fear that lifts will be totally inadequate for the expected throughput of the station, particularly when developers see Ealing as a potential dormitory suburb for central London. The Crossrail website includes a journey time calculator which shows, for example, that it will take 14 minutes from Ealing Broadway to Tottenham Court Road once the project is complete. Crossrail will stretch from Maidenhead and Heathrow in the west, across to Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the east, connecting a total of 37 stations.

Locally listed buildings

The Council has recently published a revised list of locally listed buildings for consultation. The original list consisted of nearly 1200 entries and a further 280 entries were proposed for inclusion. The proposed revised list reduces this total by around one half partly as a result of removing many locally listed buildings in conservation areas with the Council arguing that conservation area status give sufficient protection and that local designations such as building of facade or group value would give similar protection. We are not convinced that such protection would be sufficient particularly if conservation status were removed in the future. The consultation period was originally due to close in the middle of September but is expected to be extended to the middle of October; the results of the process are not expected to be known until later in the year or early next. In the meantime, all the locally listed buildings may be seen by looking at the 'local gems' map on our website.

Iron Duke to be unveiled by Boris

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, will be unveiling the Iron Duke sculpture on Hanger Lane (pictured) on Thursday 14 November between 10 am and 2 pm. The exact time will be



Erecting the Iron Duke

finalised nearer the date. There will be a reception at the clubhouse, Ealing Village, afterwards for invited guests. More information will be available on our website nearer the time. The Iron Duke was one of the first broad gauge locomotives to run on the Brunel Great Western Railway mainline from London to the West Country which passes underneath the Hanger Lane bridges carrying the North Circular Road which have recently been renewed by TfL. Ealing Civic Society was involved in the design of the bridges and in particular the parapet of the bridge nearest the art deco Grade II listed Ealing Village.

Local landmark clock to be restored

The landmark clock at 7 The Mall has been a feature of the town centre for over 100 years. It was originally an advertisement marking the presence of a clockmaker in the clock shop below and served a practical use in an era when not everyone had a watch to tell the time. The original clockwork movement is still in place in a cupboard in the upper part of the shop behind a wall with a spindle to the clockfaces mounted in the elaborate bracketed structure on the wall itself. The



weights operating the movement fall into the basement below the shop. The clock had been working reliably subject to regular annual maintenance until the 'Real'

IRA bomb severely damaged it in 2001. The clock was patched up but it really needed a major overhaul, the cost of which was beyond the resources of the owner Dick Bedrossian. In any case, following the conversion of the offices above the shop he felt that the new tenants would not wish to be bothered by the need to wind the clock weekly let alone by the noise of the ticking of the movement! As a result, he decided to convert it to a digital movement whilst leaving the original movement in place. This movement contributed to the building being listed Grade II. The owner asked the Society to assist in finding a company that would be prepared to carry out the work and if possible to fund it. On the recommendation of a previous award-winner, the Clock Gallery in Ealing, the Society found Smith's of Derby, which does a lot of work on public clocks.

A Message from Ealing Council

Following the public consultation in July and August on the plans to restore the history of Pitzhanger Manor, the Council plans to host an informal evening event displaying the project's updated plans.

We would like to invite you and your members to attend on Thursday 17th October at Pitzhanger Manor House between 6.30 and 8.30 pm.

Places are limited. If you would like to join us please reserve a place by emailing pmgwalpole@ealing.gov.uk or contact Claire Cooke, Outreach Officer on 020 8826 9458 asap.

A number of grant bodies proved unable to assist with funding but the cost of the work has been generously jointly met by the owner of the building and Paddy Power, the lessee of the shop below. In the meantime, the clock above the Arcadia centre is looking for a new home: if anyone is aware of a museum looking for an electronic clock and chiming mechanism with twenty bells please let the chairman know.

Finally I look forward to seeing you at the **Award Ceremony on Tuesday 19th November** when Toby Young will be the guest of honour.

Robert Gurd

100 Years of Ealing Grammar School

For the last hundred years an architectural feature of Ealing Green has been the frontage of a building which is best known as Ealing Grammar School for Boys, but which was built as Ealing County School for Boys. When this opened in 1913 it was the first publicly funded secondary school in Ealing, all the existing ones, like Ealing College, being private. At this period Ealing Borough Council was responsible for primary schooling, but secondary education remained the responsibility of Middlesex County Council. These new buildings were designed by H.G. Crothall, the Council's architect, in an 18th Century neo-classical style. Its exterior is clad in red brick with stone dressings. It has become an accepted part of the townscape of Ealing, and sits between Pitzhanger Manor and another eighteenth century house St Marys, which for many years has been used by the GPO and British Telecom.

The building of the new school required the demolition of a country house, The Hall. This plain but attractive three-storey five-bay house had been home to Rt Hon Spencer Walpole, a career politician who was Home Secretary in more than one government, who also owned the next door house, Pitzhanger Manor, in which his unmarried sisters-in-law lived. Spencer Walpole died in 1898 and from 1901 the house became the home of Ealing Technical Institute. The new school cost a total of £16,525 including the fittings. When first opened in 1913 the school had accommodation for 330 boys with thirteen classrooms as well as laboratories, and a suite of arts and crafts rooms. The school was opened with the usual civic pomp by W. Regester JP, the Chairman of MCC.

In 1948 it was proposed to create a room within the school as a memorial to those from the school who had died during the recent war. This resulted in the Ealonian Room, a place set apart from the rest of the school. In the words of the then headmaster, A. Sainsbury Hicks, "One final touch to the room was given by the erection of a low curve-fronted platform on the SE corner. This houses a Bechstein grand piano – the first luxury acquisition after the war". It was to be used by the Sixth Form for quiet reflection, reading and music.

The last major development of the Grammar School occurred in the 1960s. A need was identified for additional Sixth Form accommodation in a school which had been designed for 400 boys but now had 650. So at the 1960 Speech Day headmaster A. Sainsbury Hicks launched an appeal for a school hall of a larger size than the existing one in the original building. The cost of the building would have been £45,000 and compromises had to be made to reduce the cost to £39,000. The foundation stone laying for the new building took place on 13 September 1964 and the guest was Sir Kenneth Clark. Although the new hall provided better facilities for school productions, the building itself was not very distinguished.

With the restructuring of secondary education in Ealing, the Grammar School became Ealing Green High School in 1974. Its continuance in this guise was shortlived and in 1992, the school was taken over by the new Ealing Tertiary College. In January 2002, Hammersmith and West London College merged with Ealing Tertiary College to form Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College and the school became its Ealing campus. The college has invested heavily in buildings at the back of the site, and has refurbished the interior of the older ones. A fire in 2002 caused damage to the roof, but could be repaired.



Despite all the changes, from the Green the College's main building still presents much the same appearance as the County Boys' school did, 100 years ago.

Peter Hounsell (Ealing Grammar School 1960-67)

Ealing Civic Society John Delafons Lecture

Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles opened his "Salute to the Suburbs" talk by commending the late John Delafons who gives his name to this series of ECS annual lectures. He knew of the former Vice-Chairman of the Civic Society from the *Crossman Diaries* where he was described as a "Rolls Royce among public servants". Fittingly his widow Sheila was in the audience.

Sir Sherard then took up his main theme and began by describing his personal journey from a poky 1802 town house flat conversion in Piccadilly, via Fulham (too "suburban" for his granny), Sevenoaks, the "ultimate dormitory town", and ultimately Ealing, where he lives now. "The suburb remains the ideal place to live. Not all of us want to live in the Barbican."

Describing himself as a "classical charlatan" he conducted us from the oracle at Delphi over the strictures of the mediaeval City of London against suburbs, via mid-19th century Middlesex still providing hay and grass for London's horses, to the coming of the railways, the tramways and underground, and Ealing today with its problems and promise.

His view is optimistic, concluding with a poetic celebration of our corner of a very English county, Middlesex.

You can find the full transcript of Sir Sherard's thoughtful and witty presentation together with the poem inviting us "over market gardens tidy," to "Taverns for the bona fide" by following the link on the ECS website. www.ealingcivicsociety.org.

Tony Williams

Do we have your email address?

To receive regular communications from ECS on matters of interest and news updates please ensure we have your email address. Just click on the box on our website or email info@ealingcivicsociety.org with your name and preferred email address.

Planning Issues

A revised proposal has been submitted for **The Oaks Shopping Centre** in the High Street, Acton and the adjoining car park in Churchfield Rd for the redevelopment of the shopping centre. Ealing Civic Society objected to this revised application because of the highly detrimental impact of such a massive overdevelopment.

The high-rise NE block may have been reduced to the height of 9/10 storeys but is part of a long, high building bordering the cemetery which would shade the open space, visually dominate this historic asset and create cold draughts preventing its use as a sitting-out area over much of the year. The text claims that existing trees would screen the frontage but they are unlikely to grow to nine storeys and screen views across the cemetery; the deciduous trees would be bare in winter. The High Street to the south of the site is a conservation area and the impact of the overdevelopment with high flats would harm it and the centre of Acton as a whole. The low-rise development of Hoopers Mews would provide inadequate light and outlook. The flats along Churchfield Rd would overshadow existing property along the north side. Some parking is provided but with more retail floorspace and a large number of flats it is likely to be inadequate.

The development would be totally unsuitable for children due to lack of Public Open Space and the limited amenity space would be noisy because it is close to flat windows. The small play area provided at ground level with public access along alleyways is wholly inadequate for a scheme in an area of open space deficiency. The metallic oak tree decoration of the Churchfield Rd frontage would be retained albeit reduced in extent and the top storeys of tall buildings replaced by glass which would create glare.

Site of Red Lion in Greenford:

We objected strongly to a proposal for an unattractive building to replace the Red Lion which was an important landmark in the centre of Greenford by 44 flats and 24 parking spaces. The surrounding buildings are on a domestic scale with pitched roofs or form part of attractive 1930s low-rise shopping frontages. The proposal presents a very bleak aspect to what is otherwise a pleasant shopping street. The bulk and massing of the building is inappropriate for such a prominent site: a landmark should not be taller than its surroundings and should be a building of recognisable architectural excellence. In the draft Development Sites DPD the opposite corner is included for a maximum redevelopment of four storeys. This proposal would rise to five storeys, which is too high.

Judy Harris

Ealing Civic Society is on Facebook and Twitter

Tony Williams (Newsletter Editor) 2 Nicholas Gardens, W5 5HY(8567 6941)

Contributors: Robert Gurd, Judy Harris, Philippa Dolphin, Peter Hounsell, Robin Roads, Mike Tiley and Tony Williams.

Photos: Moira Black, Peter Hounsell, Robert Gurd.

Printed by Pollyprint www.pollyprint.co.uk

Plaque News

Rowan Williams, (Lord Williams of Oystermouth, former Archbishop of Canterbury) has kindly agreed to unveil our next plaque for Thomas Merton at 18 Carlton Road W5 on Wednesday 7th May 2014 in the afternoon. The draft wording for the plaque is:

THOMAS MERTON 1915-1968

Author, priest and Trappist monk lived here 1927-1926

Other plaques currently under consideration are for:

- Dr Edith Whetnall who specialised in the treatment of deaf children
- James Hadley Chase, author of crime novels
- Dusty Springfield who was a popular singer
- Ralph Downes, an organist and organ designer, in particular of the Royal Festival Hall organ

Mike Tiley

Gunnersbury update

In the early summer AlphaPlus, owners of the Falcons School, withdrew from discussions with Ealing and Hounslow Councils to take over the Small Mansion. They had been the preferred bidders. The future of the Small Mansion, a listed building desperately in need of restoration, is once again uncertain.

In August a small exhibition on the history of the Park was put on in the café by the heritage consultants, Purcell. Members of the project team talked about the project and heard comments from Park users about their memories of the Park and their views on the Conservation Management Plan.

Initial investigations have been carried out in the park by archaeologists from Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA), particularly identifying the line of the 17th century garden walls and the WW2 gun emplacements. The MOLA team also held three public events during the summer: an archaeology Open Day, Geophysics in the Park, to demonstrate how and why a geophysical survey is conducted, and Dig in the Park, an opportunity to find out what archeologists have discovered below ground. Finally, a hydrologist has begun investigating water courses and water features past and present, and Redman Design have begun work on the interpretation scheme for museum and park.

To learn more join the Friends of Gunnersbury or see their website <http://gunnersburyfriends.org/>

Philippa Dolphin

Gift Aid Changes

This year, due to new rules brought in by HMRC, we can no longer rely on the Gift Aid declaration you may have provided in the past. The new form required by HMRC is available on our website and it would be much appreciated if you would download it, complete it and send it to me.

The gift aid claim is an important part of the Society's income so where I do not have a form I will be writing to members enclosing one with an SAE. If you have received such a letter already please read the form carefully and, assuming you are eligible, complete it and return it to me.

Gift Aid forms, and subscriptions if paying by cheque (in favour of Ealing Civic Society), should be sent to: Robin Roads, Hon Treasurer, Ealing Civic Society 2 North Lodge, Ealing Green, London, W5 5QU