



The Hammersmith Society

Newsletter – February 2007

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Behind-the-Scenes Visit to Fulham Palace Monday, 26 March

Visits to Emery Walker's House, 7 Hammersmith Terrace. The last Arts & Crafts Interior on Saturdays, 28 April and 16 June. See below.

AGM – in May – date to be confirmed

Perivale to Brentford Canal Trip Details later for a September trip

THE HAMMERSMITH SOCIETY ENVIRONMENT AWARDS 2007

It is already time to start thinking about your nominations for the 2007 Environment Awards. Nominations will need to be submitted by mid-April. The nomination forms and closing date will be announced in the next newsletter. To remind members : there is the main Award, the Nancye Goulden Award for smaller-scale improvements in Hammersmith, the Jane Mercer Award for co-operation, collaboration and consultation, as well as, of course, the wooden spoons for things that should not be happening in our area.

The winners will be announced at the AGM. Further details of the AGM in the next newsletter.

Visits to Emery Walker's House, 7 Hammersmith Terrace, The Last Arts & Crafts Interior

Saturday, 10.30 am 28 April and 12noon on Saturday, 16 June

Emery Walker was a great friend of William Morris and the house was furnished by him in Arts & Crafts style has been kept almost entirely as it was when he lived there from 1903 to 1933. Only very small groups of 8 can visit at any one time and we have thus booked for two separate dates in the hopes that members can go on one or other of them. Tickets are £11 and bookings should be made with Melanie Whitlock 020 8743 1391, Email: whitlockmelanie@hotmail.com (and thereafter a cheque payable to the Hammersmith Society with an sae to her at 38 Ashchurch Grove, W12 8BU.

Visit to Fulham Palace

Monday, 26 March at 6.30pm

We have been fortunate to be able to arrange a 'behind the scenes' tour of the newly restored Fulham Palace with the curator. The tour will take about one and a half hours and we will see both the stately rooms which house an intriguing museum, the gallery and the upstairs rooms.

We will finish with a glass of wine in the Palace's graceful drawing room which is now a café-bar and which overlooks the botanic gardens. Numbers will be limited to 20. Tickets are £5 to include wine and bookings should be made with Melanie Whitlock 020 8743 1391, Email: whitlockmelanie@hotmail.com (and thereafter a cheque payable to the Hammersmith Society with an sae to her at 38 Ashchurch Grove, W12 8BU).

LATEST NEWS

Allied Carpets Site, Goldhawk Road and 7 Stars Corner Improvements

Most members will probably already know that the Inspector at the public inquiry upheld the Council's decision to refuse planning consent for the developers proposed scheme for a ten storey block on the Allied Carpets site. This was a great relief to both the Council and all local residents. What the developers decide to do next is so far not known!

The Council has put forward proposals to improve the road and pavement layouts at the 7 Stars Corner. In general terms the HamSoc committee feel that the aim of the proposals is worthwhile and supported what is being proposed. However we felt that the scheme should be broadened to provide environmental improvements to the whole Starch Green area

The committee felt there is a major omission in the proposals is the provision of pedestrian crossings at the points where pedestrians really do want to cross: between Allied Carpets and the south side of Goldhawk Road, and at the Paddenswick Road junction with Goldhawk Road. Even five minutes spent watching the road at these points will show several people making a risky crossing because they are the obvious places to cross. We strongly suggested the Council addresses this problem, as it is one of the basic safety issues of the junction.

The pavements around the junctions are in a deplorable state and make for a poor environment for pedestrians. For wheelchair users, the situation is still worse: the pavement running along Goldhawk Road in front of the Seven Stars and the American Car Company is a welter of different levels and vehicle access points. We asked for an improvement of the pavements on this side in particular, consistent with the Council's "Streetsmart" standards for paving.

The Council is also suggesting some tree planting which we want them to put in place soon.

Liaison with the Council

With the Fulham Society and the Hammersmith & Fulham Historic Buildings Group, a regular twice a year meeting has been established with the Leader of the Council and the Deputies for Environment and Regeneration to discuss 'issues of the moment'. This is an extremely useful development which enables the amenity societies to have early discussion with Councillors on a range of issues.

Regular meetings have also been held over the years between the Assistant Director for the Environment (Highways) and representatives of the Hammersmith Society and the Historic Buildings Group. A new Assistant Director Graeme Swinburne has recently been appointed - a joint appointment with the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea dividing his time between the two Boroughs. A first meeting has recently been held with him when many issues relating to highway and pavement improvements and maintenance were discussed. K&C have made some interesting streetscape improvements and we are encouraging our Council to continue with its StreetSmart improvements (won our Environment Awards 2006) in this Borough.

Additional powers for the Mayor

Despite the submission made by the London Forum of Civic & Amenity Societies (endorsed by the Hammersmith Society) objecting to the proposal that some Local Authority roles and some of those of the Government Office for London be transferred to

the Mayor, which all 32 London Boroughs also objected to, the Government has published a Bill which is currently being considered in Parliament to extend the Mayor's powers.

Uxbridge Road Tram v Crossrail

The Mayor continues to press ahead with the universally unpopular proposal to build a tram which may well cost up to £1 billion along the Uxbridge Road. The Council recently held a Summit of all interested parties, at which the Hammersmith Society was represented, to try and persuade the Mayor to drop this scheme. Senior Councillors from all three Boroughs through which the tram would run were present and all were opposed to the scheme and will be working together to put forward alternatives for transport improvements for this corridor. Andrew Slaughter, MP, whose constituency covers much of the route, was also present and believed that, while there needed to be investment in transport on the Uxbridge Road, the tram was not the answer. Many people at the meeting also raised the devastating effect the scheme will have on local businesses on the Uxbridge Road – particularly in Shepherds Bush.

A new business case for the tram is likely to be published towards the middle of 2007, but with only six weeks' allowed for consultation responses.

In any event the tram would be unlikely to be completed before Crossrail which it is now believed there is the political will to build. The two schemes cover much the same route and are likely to be completed within a couple of years of each other so the tram may quickly become a white elephant! We made the plea at the meeting that there should be a Willesden Junction interchange between Crossrail and the West London Line which we believe would have great benefits. We are glad to see that others are beginning to suggest this interchange too so perhaps we are winning!

Hammersmith Embankment

As reported in previous newsletters a revised scheme to redevelop this site has been under discussion with its new owners. A new planning application has recently been granted with welcome improvements and planning conditions when compared with previous ones. However we are still concerned with the height, mass and proximity to the river of the buildings and fear they will dominate the river and have an unfavourable impact on views from the river and its opposite bank. We would like to see the original master plan being followed.

The river is a key part of Hammersmith's identity as a borough. Few London boroughs have a town centre by the river. We thus encourage and welcome every opportunity to increase facilities that are appropriate for increasing use and understanding of the river. The current scheme for the site includes a boathouse and associated pontoon. The West London River Group have additionally asked for mooring for small boats which HamSoc would support.

An issue which we took up is the light spill from the undirected lights within the offices. The present phase 1 buildings already cause nuisance simply because lights are left on although there has been some improvement with the recent change of ownership. Through the design of the building and the arrangements of the internal light fittings, the problem of light spill from the huge glazed area being proposed for this next phase of the redevelopment could be addressed. We asked for a planning condition that lights be turned off at night or good blinds fitted – the former preferable to meet climate change challenges.

We continue to be opposed to Frank Banfield Park being in effect annexed as a 'landscaped entrance' to the offices. It is and should remain a separate local public park with its own identity.

Members might be interested in the history of this site, a historic part of the riverside. Excavations have revealed that it is on the site of a Saxon village, part of which was discovered in 1988 at the time of the phase 1 excavations and part in 2001 and 2005 at the time of investigations relating to the earlier phase 2 planning consent. Hammersmith Embankment is the

site of Brandenburg House, the great house on the riverside originally built by Sir Nicholas Crisp in 17th century, and later lived in by and named after the Margravine of Brandenburg-Anspach. As well as the house, the Margravine had a private theatre next to the house. Parr's Ditch, the historic boundary between the parishes of Hammersmith and Fulham, ran through the site and flowed into the river through a culvert which can be seen in old pictures. It still flows into the river today near the upstream boundary of the site. The house became the home of Queen Caroline, estranged wife of George IV. Finally the site became an industrial area with factories for Lyons and the Distillers Company.

We would like to see an informative display about the saxon discoveries somewhere on the site. We hope that the long history of this site can be recognised perhaps through a publication or an information board where Parr's Ditch flows into the river and maybe a record of the old names of the Riverside houses and wharves set as a tile in the paving.

Lyric Square Market

The Committee continues to press Councillors to re-introduce market stalls (six were planned for in the design scheme for the new square). How much livelier the square looks on Farmers' Market day – and the Council allowed a daily market in the pre-Christmas period.

Beadon Road Carpark

The present site of the NCP carpark at the junction of Hammersmith Grove and Beadon Road has been a potential development site for a long time with various schemes being proposed but not progressed. We have asked the Council to prepare a development brief for the site before yet another scheme is put forward.

Council Housing Estate Management

One matter that has recently been brought to the committee's attention is that the new arms-length management of the Council's housing estates by ALMOs seem to be so independent of the Council – or anyone else – that they are taking actions without any consultation which are detrimental to adjoining properties to the estates. One particular problem has been in the grounds of the Kelmscott Estate on Askew Road where trees have been cut down which had formed a good buffer between the estate and the very closely adjoining houses in Ashchurch Grove. Similar occurrences have happened in Fulham; if you know of any others in Hammersmith do let us know as we are lobbying the Council to give clearer guidelines to ALMOs regarding neighbour consultations and how to be better neighbours.

St Paul's Church Hammersmith

Stop press news! A new application has been submitted by St Paul's Church for an extension on the west side of the Church. The Committee will be considering whether this new application meets the objections that were made to the original scheme that was proposed and for which planning permission was turned down.

News by email

In order to access this service please advise our Hon Secretary, Melanie Whitlock, of your email address at whitlockmelanie@hotmail.com if you have not already done so.

Membership

Subscriptions for 2007 are now due. Thank you to those who pay by standing order as it makes our Hon Treasurer's job so much easier! If you pay annually by cheque could you send yours made payable to the Hammersmith Society to Julian Hillman, 19 Flanchford Road, London, W12 9ND. Subscription rates are:

£15 for organizations - £6 for families or couples - £5 for individuals - £3 concessions

(seniors, students, unwaged)