



## The Hammersmith Society

### Newsletter – August 2008

#### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**BBC TV Centre Tour** Saturday, 1 November 3.30pm. For details see below.

**Garden Opera in Ravenscourt Park.** Friday 12 September at 6.30pm. Performance of Don Pasquale by Gaetano Donizetti, Tickets are £25 from David Walton on 020 8748 5961.

**H&F Historic Buildings Group Annual Meeting.** 9th October at BBC Media Centre. Theme is 'White City: Past, Present and Future'

### THE HAMMERSMITH SOCIETY ENVIRONMENT AWARDS 2008

**T**he winner of the Society's the 2008 Environment Awards was announced and the Award presented at the AGM at the end of May to the Maggie's Cancer Care Centre in the Fulham Palace Road. This is the first Maggie's to be built in England. The lovely warm, friendly building was designed by Rogers Stirk Harbour and Partners, whose project architect Will Wimshurst and Bernie Bryne, Manager of the Maggie Centre attended the AGM to receive the Award. The Centre is an uplifting, non-institutional space where people with cancer, their family and friends can access the support they need.

Building on the passion for landscape architecture of Maggie's founder, Maggie Keswick Jencks, Maggie's London is surrounded by a specially designed garden and series of intimate internal courtyards by leading landscape designer Dan Pearson.

Other schemes that were shortlisted for the Hammersmith Society Award were:

- The new social housing scheme behind Shepherd's Bush Place
- New infill social housing by DuCane Housing Association in Ducane Road
- Sacred Heart and Larmenier Primary School, Brook Green
- Infill glass extension to the Chinese church (former synagogue), Brook Green

The Nancye Goulden Award (for smaller schemes) was made to Alma Place Studio - a design studio on a former scrap metal site just off the Harrow Road. The award was presented to Rania Georgopoulos, the Client/Owner accompanied by Graham Powell of Powell Architects.

A new award was also made for Conservation Projects which was given to St Andrej Bobola Church, the Polish Church in Greenside Road whose exterior has recently been restored and now

makes a significant contribution to the local area. Father Bronislaw Gostomski received the Award together with the Chairman of the church council, Artur Lozinski.

No award was made for the Jane Mercer Award for Co-operation, Collaboration and Consultation as the Committee did not feel there were appropriate schemes to which it could be given.

**Wooden Spoon Awards** were however given to schemes which have got it all wrong. They went to the lack of green landscaping at the new temporary bus station in Hammersmith Broadway, to the Council banners hanging from lamposts and cluttering up King Street, Hammersmith Broadway and Fulham Palace Road in contravention of the Council's own Streetsmart document which won the Hammersmith Society Award in 2006 - and for the 3rd time in recent years to the Thames Water roundabout in Shepherds Bush for the appalling quality and maintenance of its landscaping.

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### **Visit to BBC Television Centre – Saturday, 1 November at 3.30pm**

**W**e will visit the **BBC Television Centre**, while it is still a working building as the BBC are threatening to vacate, but which English Heritage has recommended it for Listing which will hopefully prevent its redevelopment! The tour will last between one and a half and two hours. You'll see into the studios, visit BBC News, play in their interactive studio and be shown around by what they promised are well-informed guides. Please note that Television Centre is a working building so no two tours are ever the same. There will be no charge but numbers are limited to 22. Bookings can be made to Melanie Whitlock She can be contacted **after 1st September** on 020 8743 1391 or by email to: [whitlockmelanie@hotmail.com](mailto:whitlockmelanie@hotmail.com)

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### **LATEST NEWS**

#### **Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2008-2018**

**T**he Council has published a draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy for the next ten years.

Your Committee has looked at this in detail and welcome the intention of the Council to improve the standards of maintenance and accessibility of all its parks to aim for Green Flag Awards for six flagship parks.

We supported the Council's vision for parks and open spaces and the recognition of the role that parks play in the health and well-being of residents.

#### ***Sport***

We noted the intention to open up parks for both formal and informal education and welcomed the proposal for 'closer working with schools... to encourage effective use of parks and playing pitches' and closer working...with schools to maximise the effective use of parks and playing pitches.

With the Olympics in 2012 and the Government's enthusiasm alongside them to encourage more people to participate in sport, this aspiration of the Council is welcomed. In particular we noted the intention to provide dedicated playing fields for a whole school year group...to assist with the transformation required in secondary education. However the present situation is that it is mainly schools in the private sector who use the parks for sport to any great extent because of the present charging policy. An enthusiasm for sport starts at primary school – secondary is too late. We

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have therefore urged the Council to enable all primary schools within reasonable reach of a park to have access to tennis courts, sports pitches and other appropriate areas during the school day at no charge in order to encourage more sport at a younger age. Primary school playgrounds in most cases are very limited in size and thus limit what sport can be offered on-site. We understand that it is the intention of the proposed new Academy in Goldhawk Road to have full access to the sports pitches in Ravenscourt Park four mornings a week in term time – therefore why should primary schools not have access in the afternoons when tennis courts and sports pitches are hardly used by the general public. Existing booking arrangements should of course continue for evenings and weekends to enable residents and sports groups to use the facilities.

### ***Play***

We noted that the provision of more exciting play opportunities is a priority for improvement for younger and older children. The younger age group are generally well catered for. It is essential that facilities are provided for the older ones as it is this age group which requires to be provided with sufficient activities to keep them out of trouble – urgent consideration therefore needs to be given to implementing the provision of good facilities for this age group.

### ***Events***

We are concerned to note that the provision of more organised entertainment and community events was suggested from the 1998 survey. The uproar over the recent licence application for Ravenscourt Park quite clearly demonstrated that residents do not want lots of organised events in this park. It is almost impossible to arrange such events without noise implications and they tend to take over major open areas of the park at the time when the park is most likely to be used by people who want to use it for their own personal pleasure. The draft strategy highlights that the results of consultation shows that the most common reasons for visiting open space are to walk or sit; peace and quiet are listed among the reasons people like a particular space. The present use of the park for organised events is quite thus demonstrated from this as being sufficient. There used to be a bandstand in Ravenscourt Park which hosted Sunday afternoon concerts during the summer, most of which caused considerable noise nuisance – we would not therefore wish to see such concerts reinstated to spoil the quiet enjoyment wanted by park users and local residents.

### ***Inappropriate development***

We support the intention to protect our open spaces from ‘inappropriate development’ There is no indication on what the Council consider this to be and suggest this should be spelt out to endorse UDP policies to protect them from development. In particular, the Council having recently set a precedent for memorials in Ravenscourt Park, it is hoped that this memorial can be relocated to a less sensitive site to ensure that further applications can be avoided.

### ***Friends Groups***

We welcome the encouragement of Friends Groups and hope that these can be established. We note the successful Friends of the Walled Garden in Ravenscourt Park who have played a significant part over recent years in improving the standard of that horticultural jewel in this park as have the Gardens Committee in St Peter’s Square, both of which have won the Hammersmith Society Nancye Goulden Award for their work.

We further welcome the establishment of a Steering Group for parks and open spaces and the recent restructuring within the Council to provide an open spaces and recreation department.

### ***New Open Space***

We welcome the possibility of providing new open space in recognition of the projected population growth and to improve the current ratio of open space per head of population. The original scheme proposed for the White City Opportunity Area included open space although we did have concerns that this would mainly be ‘hard’ landscaped. Green space, while requiring

more maintenance than hard landscaping, provides a much more relaxing space. We hope that a good sized open space will be provided in any new scheme for this Opportunity Area, especially if the emphasis is to be on housing.

We welcome all efforts to provide further public open space should the opportunity be provided in an already very developed borough. It is equally important that private open space is an essential requirement in any applications for new housing development and for schemes which include family housing (ie more than one bedroom) play space is also included as required by the Council's Planning Policy.

### ***Grand Union Canal***

A very underused green corridor is the Grand Union Canal part of which runs through the north of the Borough and is a Conservation Area. We would hope the Council will wish to improve the landscaping, removal of graffiti etc to make it more attractive for pedestrians and thus encourage greater use of this very special area.

### **Memorial in Ravenscourt Park**

**Y**our committee well understands ( and supports) why the local Polish community wish to have a memorial placed in Hammersmith in recognition of the work of Giles Hart (who was killed in the 7/7 London bombings) and of Solidarity (indeed one of our committee members had been an active member of the Polish Solidarity Campaign in Britain) but surely some more suitable site could have been found than a very open and visible position in Ravenscourt Park.

We not opposed to memorials *per se* and indeed we have for several years been lobbying for an appropriately placed statue to be erected to honour former resident, William Morris. What we objected to when planning permission was applied for is the unsuitability of putting any memorial in Ravenscourt Park, the appalling precedent that has now been set for other similar applications, and our view that no structures should be added to the parks, and nothing green be taken away.

Now that the memorial has been erected, we are yet more concerned as it is very prominent, in a very inappropriate location and appallingly ugly – a blot on the landscape. We have had many of our members – and non-members – contact us with their horror at the appearance of this ‘alien meteorite’ as it was described by the author of ‘ Pole to Pole’ in an issue of the Gazette.

This Borough is one of the most deprived London Boroughs in terms of open space and its own planning policy is not to permit development on open space (see UDP policy EN22). The memorial certainly does not meet the criteria in this policy.

### **Shepherds Bush Green and Westfield Shopping Centre**

**T**he Hammersmith Society has been actively involved through its representation on the stakeholder group looking at the exciting £3 million plans for improvements to Shepherds Bush Green designed by award winning landscape architects Whitelaw Turkington. We particularly liked the wide boulevards round the perimeter, the inclusion of a café, and play and sports space for all ages of young people.

However we are concerned at the lack of green landscaping around the new Westfield Shopping Centre. At a meeting with Westfields we expressed our views that we had hoped to see more tree planting so that Wood Lane could once more live up to its name and more ‘greenery’ in front of the new Shepherds Bush Central Line station. In particular we were concerned that an area of the

green corridor along the railway line at Shepherds Bush which the UDP required to be improved is to be destroyed through amendments to the scheme for the new Shopping Centre. Steps must be taken to ensure there is no further loss to this or any other green corridor – in particular now this precedent has been set.

### **Olympia ‘Aparthotel’**

**O**lympia are seeking to build an ‘apart-hotel’ on the vacant corner site on Hammersmith Road/Lyons Place. With the H&F Historic Buildings Group, we had a pre-application consultation with the developers and architects but are extremely disappointed how little the scheme put forward as a planning application has taken account of our concerns. We believe that the buildings proposed are too large and bulky being substantially larger than any of the neighbouring buildings, and will be over dominant in relation to the Listed Olympia. The elevational treatment is unsatisfactory : the strong horizontal fin banding is discordant and conflicts with the nature of occupancy consisting of individual 'apartments' which will tend to form a chequerboard pattern. The design is not in keeping with the Conservation Area, nor does it sufficiently respect the Olympia buildings. The application was deferred at its original consideration by the Planning Applications Committee. We hope it will be refused when it is before the committee again in early September.

### **Allied Carpets Site**

**W**e understand that further amendments are being made to the scheme for this site which was shown at a public exhibition in the spring. We wait to see the result.

### **282-288 Goldhawk Road**

**F**ive potential developers/housing associations put forward proposals to redevelop this site for a mixture of affordable and market housing plus a block of ‘supported housing. None of the schemes did we consider entirely satisfactory and we await the Council’s decision as to whether and who they will appoint as its ‘development partner’ for this site.

### **62-64 Glenthorne Road**

**T**he 1960s office building previously occupied by Phillips is likely to be demolished and replaced with a housing scheme of flats if plans go ahead based on an exhibition of proposals held in June. Your committee’s immediate comment on the scheme shown to us at that time is that the building had a very boring elevation onto Glenthorne Road and a more interesting and better design would have been preferable. We also questioned as to whether they were not trying to fit too many flats onto the site – a not unusual problem!

### **VW Garage Site King Street**

**T**he VW sales garage at the junction of King Street and Goldhawk Road is being sold by the present owners for likely re-development for, as usual, housing! Representatives of the Society, Historic Buildings Group and St Peter’s Residents Association have had meetings with two prospective purchasers and their architects. We shall wait to see what transpires.

## **Lyric Square**

**L**yrice Square hums with activity when the sun shines on Thursdays and now sometimes on Saturdays but it is sad that the vegetable and meat traders have largely gone from the weekly so-called 'farmers market' because they were not selling enough to justify travelling in from the countryside. We are left with traders largely meeting the office workers lunchtime needs. Another reason for getting back to having proper more local fruit and vegetable market stalls six days a week

## **Post Office Closures**

**S**ince the last newsletter, a major campaign was run by many local groups, individuals and the Council against the closure of many local post offices branches. This was partially successful and resulted in those in Kings Parade, Askew Road, Shepherds Bush Road and Kenyon Street being saved. There is also talk of opening one in the Barons Court Library. Meanwhile Royal Mail are threatening changes in their Delivery Offices and the possible closure of the one in Silver Road, W12. One alternative venue for collection of letters and parcels may be from the Askew Road Library. It seems that the Vencourt Place delivery office is unaffected.

## **London Festival of Architecture**

**T**he Society was involved with the recent Festival events in the Hammersmith area during June and July.

A number of local architectural practices collaborated as part of a Hammersmith West London hub to look at fresh ideas for dealing with the problems imposed by the flyover and the A4 Great West Road cutting through Hammersmith, and its effects on the local community and the connections to the river. During a One Day workshop held last month, five sites directly affected by the A4 were looked at (and which could quite easily be implemented) together with a broader study of possible longer term solutions. The initial presentation of ideas took place in the Town Hall, and this was followed by an exhibition of the proposals and reception at the Information Centre on the Broadway.

The broader study concluded that the ultimate goal should be to sink the road into a tunnel between the end of the flyover and the Hogarth Roundabout. This would enable all the cut off streets to be re-instated between King Street and the river. It was accepted this is ambitious but then so was the original concept of cutting a swathe through this area back in the 1950s. Large open roads have been recently tunnelled in a number of places around the world including Boston and Paris. In the UK, major roads are being tunnelled in Croyden and St Helier in Jersey.

At a recent committee meeting, it was agreed to adopt the ideas as policy. Now we need to persuade the Council to follow suit.

Hammersmith Society President, Hans Haelein and Vice Chairman, Tom Ryland were both actively involved on behalf of their respective architectural practices.

## **Thames – Riverbank**

**E**veryone was appalled earlier in the year when a stretch of trees were felled which were growing on the revetments, the stone-pitched bank at the water's edge, on the Barnes side of the river. We were informed that this was due to safety concerns. Following pressure, in particular from the West London River Group, we were subsequently assured that this was only a trial which will be used in the work the Port of London Authority are planning with other owners of riverside land and other relevant organisations to develop a longer-term plan for the management of the revetment wall and towpath on the Surrey side of the river. We are told it is

likely that it will include sympathetic 'compensation' planting of trees on the landside of the towpath.

### **Thames Sewer**

**A** considerable number of streets in Hammersmith have suffered flooding from overloaded sewers in recent summers - in particular Askew Road, Cathnor Road, Cobbold Road, Boscombe Road, Ellingham Road, Hammersmith Grove, Cambridge Grove, Upper Mall, Hammersmith Terrace to name but a few and the Hammersmith Society has previously welcomed the news that the government will provide funding for a Tunnel being built under the Thames to resolve the problem and of raw sewage going into the river.

However your committee and many members are extremely concerned at the prospect of a huge 30 metre hole being dug in Furnivall Gardens as a means of pumping out the spoil from the river for the construction of the tunnel. And in particular that this hole is likely to adversely affect Furnivall Gardens for an estimated eight years! It will also have a very adverse effect on the Pier and nearby exceptional Listed Buildings.

Hammersmith and Fulham as a Borough statistically has one of the lowest levels of open space. Furnivall Gardens is a very special and much used area of open space in our Borough and the Hammersmith Society has already objected to plans to reduce the area available for both residents and those who work in the Borough to enjoy its riverside amenities by the proposed bridge across the A4 as part of the Town Hall Regeneration Project.

The hole and all that would inevitably go with it would effectively make Furnivall Gardens unusable by residents and workers for years to come - and what would happen to the Thames Path which goes through these Gardens, which is much used by walkers, joggers, runners and cyclists?

We understand that the area of open space of Homefields in Chiswick to the south of the A4 had been identified as where the spoil would be extracted from the river - and there have been few objections to this plan from local residents and amenity societies. We shall be raising all these issues with Thames Water and asking them to explain why this potential change has been proposed. Is it cost saving? What other options have been considered? They must be persuaded to go back to their original plans.

### **Town Hall CarPark Site**

**T**he Council with Grainger/Helical Bar, their development partner for this regeneration project held a meeting for local stakeholders in April. We are informed that there will be further news and a further meeting on this project in September. Meanwhile Tesco's property arm, St James's Investments, have been refused planning permission to turn the cinema site, which they own, into two floors of shopping. They have appealed against none determination of a decision by the Planning Applications Committee for their alternative scheme for shopping plus 75 residential units above and basement parking. Your Committee has objected to these proposals on the grounds of too much shopping in this area and adverse effect on road infrastructure to support such shopping.

### **Children's Centre at Flora Gardens School**

**T**he Council is proposing to build a Children's Centre within the Flora Gardens Primary School site to be positioned at the important junction between Dalling Road and Glenthorne Road, under some very beautiful mature trees and adjacent to the School entrance and a charming two-storey brick terrace. It will be highly visible. Your Committee,

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while supporting the proposal for this Centre in principle is very concerned that the proposed building design has made no attempt to respond to its important visual context. On the contrary, the building appears to have been designed in a vacuum, and its origins have more to do with 'system building' and a limited budget than a piece of architecture. We have made the point that excellent design is in itself no more expensive than poor design and we have asked the Council to think again before they grant themselves planning permission for this scheme.

We were further concerned that to make way for this Centre some mature trees on the site were felled ahead of planning permission being granted.

### **Janet Adegoke Site**

**I**t is always gratifying when one is able to influence improvements in a scheme! The Committee felt the original proposals for a medical centre, shops and flats on the former leisure centre site quite inappropriate and, worst of us, encroached into Wormholt Park. Fortunately a decision on the planning application were deferred ahead of the Council elections in 2006 and we were consulted by both the architects and developers on revised proposals. These only affect the park through a 'land swop' and there is now a much improved design for the interior and exterior of the building itself.. This new scheme has now been granted planning permission and been supported by the Mayor of London.

### **News by email**

**F**rom time to time we communicate with members by email. Please therefore make sure we have your email address (if you have one) to ensure you don't miss out on the latest news. Please let our Hon Secretary, Melanie Whitlock, have your email address at [whitlockmelanie@hotmail.com](mailto:whitlockmelanie@hotmail.com)

### **Membership**

**W**e welcome new members to the Society – but look forward to increasing our membership still further. The more members, the more our strength. Do tell your friends and neighbours – and ask us to send them a leaflet or point them in the direction of our website.

### **Subscriptions**

**H**ave you already paid your subscription for 2008?. If you pay annually by cheque and have not yet done so please 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)

Thank you to those who pay by standing order as it makes our Hon Treasurer's job so much easier!

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