



The Hammersmith Society

Newsletter – February 2009

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Meeting for Residents' Associations : Tuesday, 17 March at Grove Neighbourhood Centre

Creative Learning for Young People at the Lyric : Talk on Tuesday 24 March

AAGM and Presentation of Environment Awards : 20 May -Maggie's Centre

WORKING TOGETHER - MEETING WITH RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

The next meeting of this useful forum organised every year by The Hammersmith Society is scheduled for Tuesday, 17 March starting at 7pm and to be held at the Grove Neighbourhood Centre – one of the issues to be discussed will be how to help residents comment or object to planning applications and ensuring that planning gain (Section 106) money is spent and on the right things.

CREATIVE LEARNING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE LYRIC THEATRE - A Talk for members

The Creative Learning department at the Lyric Hammersmith runs one of the UK's largest programmes of projects and programmes for young people. The department works with a wide variety of young people from across West London using theatre and other art-forms to have a positive impact on their lives. James Blackman and David Baker, Co-Directors of Creative Learning will talk to us about the very interesting work of the department and answer your questions. Do join us and bring your friends. 7pm in the Creative Learning Studio : Tuesday 24 March.

THE HAMMERSMITH SOCIETY ENVIRONMENT AWARDS 2009

It is already time to start thinking about your nominations for the 2009 Environment Awards. Nominations will need to be submitted by early May. 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, a Conservation Project award and 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 to be held on Wednesday 20 May at the Maggie's Centre in Fulham Palace Road, winner of the 2008 Environment Award.

We plan at the AGM also to have speakers and a debate on the ethical and design issues which should be considered in making development planning decisions. Jon Allen, of Enquiry by Design has agreed to speak and other speakers have been invited. It will hopefully be a useful and stimulating debate so do put the date in your diary now.

LATEST NEWS

THAMES SEWER

A considerable amount of 'steam' has been created by the proposal by Thames Water to meet EU river cleanliness targets by building a 'super sewer' under the Thames and we have tried to provide a balanced view to our members.

Those of you with email addresses will know we had a meeting with Thames Water in the autumn and were given a presentation on the proposed scheme. This was followed by a public meeting at Hammersmith Town Hall when assurances were given that Ravenscourt Park was highly unlikely to be a contender for the huge main access shaft (25m diameter) and that Furnival Gardens is likely to be too small for this main access shaft.

Thames Water have recently given details of the places they wish to dig exploratory bore holes and we have welcomed the fact that these at present do not include Furnival Gardens, even though one of the CSOs (Combined Sewage Overflows) is already in Furnival Gardens (where Hammersmith Creek enters the river). We have nevertheless decided it would be sensible at this early stage to flag up to Thames Water some points we think essential to include in project planning for this particular location in case one of the permanent access shafts (a smaller shaft of 4-5 metres diameter, involving – it is said - 18months - 2 years of excavation) is to be located here.

Historic Character of the Site and Listed Buildings Furnival Gardens is the site of Hammersmith Creek, a crowded area of working docks and jetties up to the late 1940s, and covered and filled in 1951. It is part of the Mall Conservation Area and it is surrounded by a cluster of listed buildings which are the oldest in Hammersmith. Bounding the upriver side of Furnival Gardens is Sussex House, built in 1726, listed Grade II*, including its garden walls. The Dove Public House, listed Grade II, dates to 1790 and Nos 13 and 15 Upper Mall, also listed, date from the 18th century.

On the downstream side of the site stands No 22 Lower Mall, listed Grade II. Within Furnival Gardens is the old Quaker Burial Ground.

In short, it is an area of valuable and fragile buildings and it is essential to allow for this in planning work on the site. Excavation, and movement by heavy vehicles on the surface, must stay well clear of the listed buildings including the garden wall of Sussex House and the Quaker Burial Ground.

Houseboats The houseboats are a longstanding, essential part of the local scene. Indeed, their absence from Hammersmith riverside would be unthinkable. Their preservation and protection during works is essential – as is ensuring that the permanent residents of these houseboats are not unduly disrupted.

At our meeting with Thames Water on 15 October and at the public meeting in Hammersmith Town Hall, reference was made to removing spoil from the excavations by river. Concern has already been voiced by some houseboat owners about the effect that removal of spoil will have on the houseboats moored against the river wall and on Doves Pier. If removal of the spoil by river requires a temporary jetty, it is imperative it is planned so as to leave the houseboats in place.

Riverside Walk Furnival Gardens form part of the Borough's Riverside Walk, part of the long distance Thames Path. A through route from Doves Passage to Lower Mall will be required during works. It would not be acceptable to divert the Riverside Walk to the other side of the A4.

Access to site Furnival Gardens is particularly difficult of access for heavy vehicles and provision should be made for temporary access directly from the A4.

The present access is via Rutland Grove and is unsuitable for anything larger than a council rubbish truck. The little pocket of mid 19th century houses of Rutland Grove, Mall Road and Bridge View is part of the Mall Conservation Area, and the roads are narrow and heavily parked by residents who are confined to those streets by the A4. The streets are heavily used by the long boat trailers of the rowing clubs on Lower Mall. These manoeuvre round, and occasionally obstruct Rutland Grove and Mall Road on both weekdays and weekends and would make access even more problematical for large vehicles.

After Completion We note that the Thames Water says the sites will be left as found but with a 4 -5m manhole cover for shaft access. Will this be flat on the ground? Or have some kind of building round it?

We have suggested to Thames Water that we would welcome a discussion as to ways in which the completion of construction and excavation might include a legacy for the area, for example restoring part of Hammersmith Creek in order to give Furnival Gardens a visual reference to its historic past. Earlier this year the Environment Agency launched plans to uncover sections of some of London's culverted historic rivers; Stamford Brook ran into the Thames via the Creek and a partial rehabilitation of the Creek itself would be a tremendous contribution to the local scene, strengthening the area's links with local history and affirming Hammersmith's connection with the river.

We hope that the same amount of thought going will be spent by Thames Water on mitigating effects of the works in this sensitive location as is being spent on achieving a cleaner Thames!

The Sewage System and Flooding : We are in agreement with the Council that this huge project will not provide relief to those businesses and households that have suffered, and continue to be threatened by flooding from sewage in storm conditions. It is admittedly a separate problem and Thames Water are responsible for resolving both of these problems. One of the problems is that

Thames still do not have a plan to deal with the sewage flooding. There is an issue of a lack of joined up thinking and this is not helped by the fact that the two project areas get funded from different 'pockets'. We will continue to press for the resolution of this problem.

Heathrow Airport – Proposed Third Runway and end of Runway Alternation

Despite receiving thousands of letters of objection – including The Hammersmith Society's own submission – the Secretary of State for Transport announced in January that the Government has agreed to give support to BAA who own and operate Heathrow, and allow them to prepare a detailed scheme and apply for planning approval for a third runway. The implementation timetable is still for the new runway to be operational in 2020 – subject we are assured that the 'environmental' conditions of noise and pollution are satisfied.

The effects on Hammersmith of a third runway would be drastic: at busy times arriving and departing flights will pass directly over Hammersmith every 90 seconds (the proposed flight path is roughly along the line of King Street), with the same kind of noise nuisance that the unfortunate residents of Richmond and Kew suffer now – but even more frequently. In addition, the Greater London Authority (GLA) considers the proposal will lead to a huge increase in air pollution from increased road traffic: the Government's own consultation paper estimated there would be some 25 million extra passenger trips by road. And if one thought one could avoid gridlock by taking public transport, think again: the expansion of Heathrow would generate an additional 4.5 million passenger trips per year on the already pressured Piccadilly Line. The Hammersmith Society is a member of HACAN, one of the leading organisations spearheading opposition to the runway, and John Stewart of HACAN believes the scheme is not yet a foregone conclusion: BAA will need 18 months to work up detailed proposals, by which time political changes and economic conditions may force reassessment. Meanwhile our Council is part of the 2M Group of local councils against the runway, which is looking into the possibility of judicial review of the Secretary of State's decision. Both our MPs and the Mayor of London are also against the new runway. The Hammersmith Society will continue to monitor the situation closely.

The only good news in all this is that the Government has dropped the idea of allowing BAA to stop runway alternation which gives residents' relief from aircraft noise for half the day

Goldhawk Industrial Estate

It is disappointing that a planning application has been submitted to redevelop this site into a combination of housing and offices when successful local businesses are and wish to continue to operate from the site. The existing single storey buildings and use are unobtrusive to those living around it.

The Hammersmith Society Committee has expressed its concerns over the proposed scheme in relation to the lack of gardens being provided for family housing and far too close to a high western boundary wall which will make both the living rooms overlooking the tiny amount of outside space and the 'gardens' themselves like being in a chasm. The proposal is also to put some 2 bedroom 'mews' houses beside the access road which will have no outside space at all. UDP standards require a minimum of 36 sq. metres of private open space for family housing (anything more than one bedroom).

There is to be a central 4 storey block of offices and flats which we believe is far too dominant and needs to be reduced by at least one floor as the proposed flats on the top floor will overlook much of the surrounding area and will have a dominant effect on the skyline. The developers commissioned a 77 page report on sunlight and daylight issues but nowhere did it address

sunlight into gardens of houses to the north of this block which it seems will be lost except at mid-day at high summer.

Although all the residential units will have parking spaces, there are concerns that nearby roads which are currently heavily parked will also be used by the new residents exacerbating the situation further. The Brackenbury Residents' Association is working hard for further surveys to be done of existing parking pressure at various times of the day and night.

This application has been badly handled by the new site owners with a minimal and ill-organised pre-application consultation. They only provided very late notice of the exhibition they arranged with some affected neighbours omitted altogether. In addition the planning application was lodged with the Council almost immediately thereafter and thus it is unlikely that any notice was taken of any comments made by those who did manage to get to the exhibition.

Following a well attended public meeting organised by the Brackenbury Residents Association in January, the Council announced that there would be Planning Forum to allow more discussion on the scheme, although we understand that the new owners are unwilling to participate in it. This is a new procedure introduced by the Government and nobody quite seems to know how it will work. Watch this space for developments.

Academy on Stamford House Site, Cathnor Road

Two City Livery Companies – the Mercers' who run the two St Paul's Schools and the Information Technologists - have submitted a planning application for the proposed Academy school for 700 pupils to open in 2011 on the former young offenders' unit site. Your Committee is supportive of this proposal which will give greater educational opportunities to our young people in Hammersmith and we generally support the interesting design of the proposed building. We have some misgivings as to its effect on neighbouring properties.

New Buildings in Ravenscourt Park for Academy

The school wishes to use some of the tennis courts and the allweather football pitches in Ravenscourt Park – eventually for four mornings a week during term time. Of major concern however is their requirement for a new toilet block and changing rooms to be built in the park. Any new buildings in Ravenscourt Park would be totally unacceptable and we shall be lobbying hard if any firm proposals are made – working with the Friends of Ravenscourt Park. Any new buildings in a park would set an appalling precedent for the future.

Our Parks

The Friends of Ravenscourt Park has now been established and an interim committee is working towards presenting a Constitution and memorandum of understanding with the Council at an AGM to be held in the spring. For its first year they are keen that people living near the park and park users join the Friends – details can be found on its website friendsofravenscourtpark.org. Initially there will be no subscription.

Last summer the Council announced it aimed to achieve Green Flag Status for Ravenscourt and Hammersmith Parks. Let us hope it can keep the momentum going to achieve truly high standards of care for the parks, even in these difficult economic times.

Hammersmith Park

This hidden oasis with its Japanese garden (one of the few remnants of the original White City Exhibition in 1908) which has been renovated by volunteers, has made it to the final of a competition run by the Mayor of London to win a grant of £40,000 for restorations and

improvement. The result should be known some time in March. Access to Hammersmith Park is from Frithville Gardens at the south end, and South Africa Road at the north.

282-288 Goldhawk Road

Places for People has been chosen as the Council's development partner for a mixture of affordable and market housing plus a block of "supported housing" for this prominent site which used to be an old people's home. The chosen scheme has been called a "mediterranean village" and the Ashchurch Residents' Association have concerns over its visual impact in relation to the Conservation Area in which it is sited, the security of its design, which features small alleyways, and its intention to destroy the significant hornbeam hedge that surrounds the site, and some of the trees. The Hammersmith Society is to be represented on a group to work with the developers in fine tuning the scheme – and hopefully resolving some of the concerns we have over what is being proposed.

Advertising Banners and Hoardings

Your committee has been extremely concerned by the Council's erection of banners on lamp-posts around Shepherds Bush Common, Hammersmith Broadway, King Street and Fulham Palace Road – to name only the roads in our area . This is in direct contravention of its own considerable efforts to improve the streetscape by improving the pavements in line with the Council's own StreetSmart policy document in order to, among other things, reduce street clutter. Most of the banners have been put up without seeking planning permission although they did apply for planning permission for those around Shepherds Bush Common.

Over £3 million is shortly to be spent on improving the Common itself by re-landscaping and revitalising the whole Common, starting in March. A new Central Line underground station, bus station and West London Line station have been designed and built to very high standards which add to the improvements at Shepherds Bush. We understand that funds will shortly be allocated to helping with the improvement of shop fronts on Uxbridge Road on the north side of the Common. The impact of all of these will be ruined by advertising banners being hung from every lamppost round the Green, purely for the purpose of generating income.

Also for income generating purposes and without considering future consequences, the Council has also given itself planning permission for huge advertisement hoardings in inappropriate sites – having specifically sought but ignored the Society's views as to where such hoardings might be appropriate! One site which concerns us particularly is the plan to place a hoarding on high stilts on St Paul's Green – again putting new structures in our precious open spaces. They have yet again themselves set planning precedents which will make it almost impossible to refuse any future planning applications for any other proposed advertisement hoardings it receives.

Barnes Riverbank

The Port of London Authority seems to have listened to local concerns regarding their proposal to fell virtually all the trees growing in the riverbank in Barnes. They have now appointed consultants to come up with a scheme to preserve as many trees as possible while meeting the requirements to protect the revetments.

Olympia 'Aparthotel'

Olympia were granted planning permission to build an 'aparthotel' on the vacant corner site on Hammersmith Road/Lyons Place – despite objections to the application made by the Society and local residents' groups. However the decision has been 'called in' by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government so there will now be a public inquiry following which she will take the final decision. .

Town Hall CarPark Site and other Development Sites

The joint regeneration project by the Council and their development partner Grainger/Helical Bar seems to be suffering at the hands of the current recession in the economy. We keep being informed that discussions are continuing. Meanwhile Tesco's property arm's, St James's Investments, appeal hearing for refusal of planning permission to turn the cinema site, which they own, into two floors of shopping and 75 residential units has also been delayed. We await further information with interest.

It looks as if any redevelopment of other sites with planning permission, including the NCP carpark site in Beadon Road and the Hammersmith Embankment scheme have also suffered from the present economic problems. The situation of these two sites does highlight the need for high-quality new office buildings in Hammersmith to assure the continued commercial viability of Hammersmith Town Centre – but the key is high quality of design – perhaps we may yet get schemes we are happier with as a result?

Allied Carpets Site

We understand that Network Housing are no longer proposing to redevelop the Allied Carpets site themselves as they have withdrawn their latest planning application and put the site on the market.

Council's Website

TAKE A LOOK at the Council's website from time to time. It has lots of items of local interest and frequently gives details of meetings or exhibitions on issues that affect life in Hammersmith. www.lbhf.gov.uk

Membership

We welcome the new members who have joined the Society in recent months – but look forward to increasing our membership further. An updated version of the leaflet about the Society has recently been produced with the support of a Fasttrack grant from the Council. A copy is enclosed – please do give it to a friend or neighbour – and ask us for more if you know other people who might be interested – or give us their address details and we will send them one!

News by email

KEEP INFORMED BY EMAIL Are you receiving emails from us with updates of local planning issues and public meetings? If not, it may be because you have changed your email address, or have never given it to us! If you want to be kept in touch by email, send your address to the Secretary at: whitlockmelanie@hotmail.com

Subscriptions

Have you already paid your subscription for 2009? 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 Standish order as this makes our Hon Treasurer's job so much easier.

The Hammersmith Society. Chairman : Angela Clarke. Secretary: Melanie Whitlock