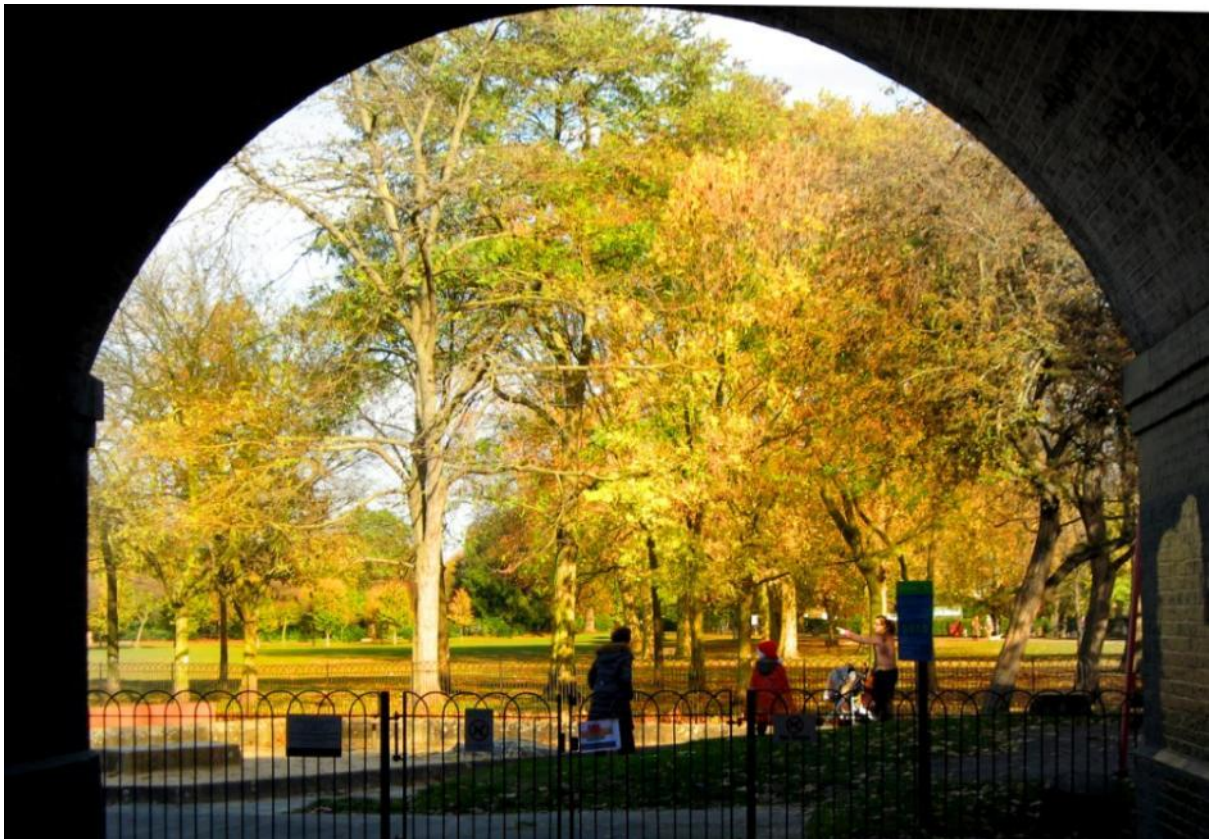




The Hammersmith Society

Newsletter September 2013



Ravenscourt Park

photo by Neville Collins

CELEBRATING 125 YEARS OF RAVENSCOURT PARK 1888-2013

This year we applaud the foresight of Mr Albert C Keen of 91 King Street. On 18 July 1888, Mr Keen wrote to the West London Observer saying that in his view Ravenscourt Park was ‘a place so pleasant that in years to come thousands would bless the memories of those who took the lead in acquiring such a spot for the pleasure of the public’. It is sobering to find that this centuries-old park only narrowly survived. The Scott family, last private proprietors of the 32-acre Ravenscourt Estate were brickfield owners and builders, who developed part of the estate and hoped in the 1880s to sell the remaining land for development. The sale fell through, and we should feel gratitude for those far-sighted Victorians in local government at the Metropolitan Board of Works, who acknowledged the importance of public open spaces, and were instrumental in acquiring Ravenscourt Park. It remains Hammersmith’s most popular park, and it is up to us to secure its future as a public open space for the next 125 years

EDITORIAL

This is my first newsletter as newly appointed Editor, and on behalf of committee and members, I would like to thank Melanie Whitlock for the high editorial standards she has maintained during her stewardship.

As a journal of record this issue follows the tradition of all our newsletters in giving members and fellow readers an overview of many of the planning proposals, applications and developments taking place in our borough. However, lack of space and a rush of proposals mean that some projects, such as the Palco scheme in Beavor Lane, and 95 Goldhawk Road (formerly Nicolls Employment Agency) are not covered. The newsletter is, of course, a snapshot and new information is arriving all the time.

As a committee we are keen to work with all those interested in the environment, expand collaborative links with other local amenity and residents' groups and welcome readers' enquiries about various projects. We would like to stay in touch with you, so please, if you have not already done so, give us your email address.

The Hammersmith Society has liaised with developers and Council officers on virtually all the projects described below; intervention ranges from stopping undesirable projects dead in their tracks, to getting additional balconies and more sympathetic use of constructional materials on smaller schemes. With so many new and large projects to consider in Hammersmith, we allocate certain projects to different committee members. My thanks to Annabel Clark, William Cooper, Hans Haenlein, Annabelle May, Rosemary Pettit, Tom Ryland, Melanie Whitlock and Richard Winterton for their contributions to this newsletter.

If you prefer to receive your copy of the newsletter in email form only, please email richardjacksongardens@gmail.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We invite members and interested parties to submit letters for publication in our April 2014 issue, to richardjacksongardens@gmail.com. Members' photos for inclusion in future issues would also be most welcome.

KING STREET AND RIVERSIDE

LYRIC THEATRE CAPITAL PROJECT

The steelwork on this exciting project, is now being placed for the two-storey extension over Kings Mall. The development will provide new drama, dance, film and tv recording studios, a 60-seat cinema and new bar and cafe. The Lyric is strongly committed to developing theatre-based programmes to help young people develop skills and confidence.

SOVEREIGN COURT AT KINGS MALL CAR PARK

The temporary sales office recently opened on Beadon Road, whilst at the Leamore Street end of the development the longer-term sales office is prepared. Demolition will commence on the West 45 building in January 2014, and the first two Beadon Road phases, including the 17-storey tower are due to be completed by 2016, and the remainder by 2018. The two pedestrian bridges from the development to Kings Mall will be glazed and refurbished. Marketing of the apartments in Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur will commence later in the year.

TOWN HALL DEVELOPMENT AND KING STREET REGENERATION

After years of meetings, letters, petitions, briefings and exhibitions, the new and much improved Town Hall scheme is on track for a Planning Applications Committee meeting in the autumn. Gone are the very tall surrounding buildings, pedestrian bridge over the A4, the long ramps in Furnivall Gardens, the demolition of the Pocklington Trust homes and the closure of Hammersmith's cinema. The new scheme by architects Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands retains the Town Hall Extension for residential use and Curzon cinema (albeit slimmer and platforms removed), but reinstates a square and ceremonial steps to the Grade II listed Town Hall. The 1930s cinema building will be demolished in favour of civic offices with clock-tower, whilst flats will stretch down Nigel Playfair Avenue facing the west side of the Town Hall.

Many of the remaining problems – such as the bulky east building on the current Connexions site – are the result of excessive massing and density. The Hammersmith Society has urged the Council to take every opportunity to mitigate the impact of these substantial blocks. We are also concerned that lifts are proposed alongside the front steps of the listed Town Hall, that the cinema will only be 240 seats (a quarter of current capacity) and that housing will be bought but left empty as investment. The much lauded regeneration of King Street anticipated by the proposal will be a sham if the flats and houses are not occupied.

But it would be churlish not to acknowledge the significant steps taken by the Council and the developer, King Street Regeneration, towards a more welcome offer.

THE EVENTIM APOLLO

This Grade II* 3500 seat theatre reopened on 7 September after a £5-million pound refurbishment and restoration of its stunning Art Deco interior by specialist theatre architects, Foster Wilson. A strong contender for next year's Conservation Award?

QUEEN'S WHARF AND RIVERSIDE STUDIOS

The Hammersmith Society has been liaising closely with Hammersmith Mall Residents Association (HAMRA), The Historic Buildings Group and others. The proposed use of the ground floor and basement of Queen's Wharf and Riverside (as a single site), with residential properties above, is a ingenious solution. These proposals will enhance the Riverside Studios' reputation as *'London's pre-eminent space for risk, inspiration and creativity'*. The main concerns on this sensitive site are that the development be respectful of the adjacent Grade II* listed Hammersmith Bridge, and that the new river walk adequately accommodate both passers-by and those using the Riverside cafe/restaurant.

This proposed scheme, currently under revision, has great potential to enhance Hammersmith's cultural reputation (together with the upgraded Apollo and Lyric Theatres), providing careful consideration is given to the concerns of local residents and amenity groups.

LATYMER SWIMMING POOL AND SPORTS CENTRE

The proposed one- and two-storey milky-glass box redevelopment of the Latymer indoor sports hall has met with local opposition both from its Weltje Road neighbours for loss of light, and from amenity groups. The proposals are in stark contrast to the other Latymer buildings that blend well within the conservation area; the proposed views from Hammersmith Mall and the river of a re-clad

existing sports hall, and from the Great West Road of the glass box make this development contentious.

271-281 KING STREET (LONDON HOUSE / BEAVOR LANE)

The initial scheme of July 2012 was universally disliked as being overly large – 77 one- and two-bedroom units at up to eight storeys – and was refused permission by Council officers in November, on the basis of its excessive density, bulk, lack of context with the adjoining area, loss of employment use, and lack of affordable units.

New architects Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands were appointed by the developer Linden Homes. A revised scheme has evolved through many consultations with the Society, local groups and residents. A new application was submitted in July which, in the view of virtually all the consultees, is still considered to be too large for the site. The design, particularly of the elevation facing Ravenscourt Park, is also felt to be too severe and unsympathetic to its context in King Street.

The Society considers that the scheme is insufficiently improved from the refused scheme and we remain unconvinced that there is justification for the loss of employment use. The development appears to be a classic example where the price paid for the site far exceeds the reasonable development potential.

We urge the Council to refuse this scheme and the developer to completely rethink the brief for this site. If it is to become a residential site there should be a medium-density scheme that is family friendly and in context with its surroundings and neighbourhood.

SHEPHERD’S BUSH ROAD, BROOK GREEN AND OLYMPIA

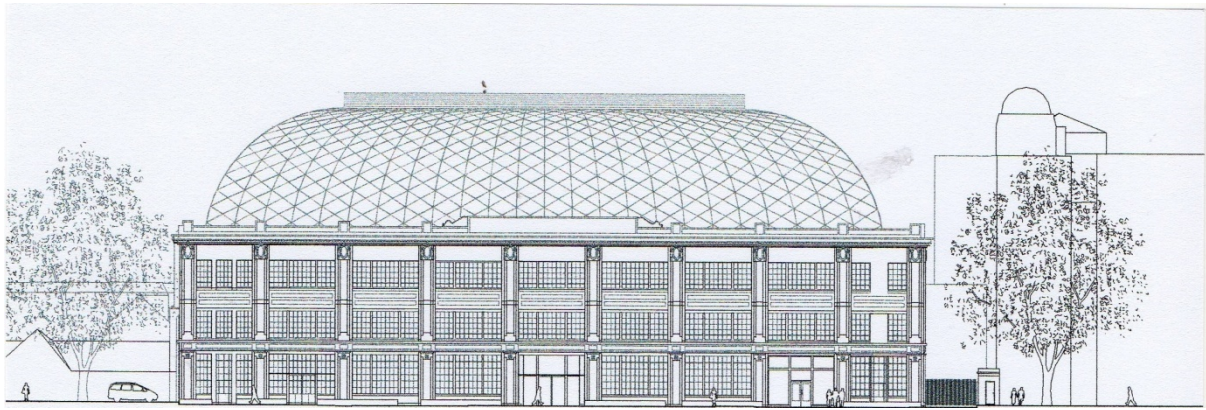
PURE HAMMERSMITH

The new building, of 418 student flats, on the site of the former Hammersmith Palais, is scheduled to open in late September.

HAMMERSMITH LIBRARY – THE ARCHIVES AND LOCAL HISTORY CENTRE

Earlier this year the Council announced a £700,000 package to enable the Archives to be moved to Hammersmith Library. The Archives Consultative Group – a joint body of local groups, Council representatives and professional archivists, welcome this move, providing proper and adequate storage and use facilities can be assured.

Very substantial works will be required to provide safe archive storage in a temperature-controlled strong room in the Library basement, a reading room and further archive storage on the first floor. The strong-room storage is approximately one quarter of that in the current Lilla Huset strong-room. Although there may be room for a degree of rationalisation in the current holdings, the Consultative Group is anxious to ensure that the Archive remains the excellent and comprehensive local resource it is today. There are also concerns about the absence of plans for lift access to the basement strong-room (essential to ensure safe movement of heavy, irreplaceable and often extremely valuable materials). The current weekly openings at the Lilla Huset are fully booked and staffed by a professional archivist who oversees the collection. For an insight into the rich variety of the collection go to lbhflibraries.wordpress.com. Meanwhile the library is due to close on 7 October 2013 for the refurbishment, reopening in summer 2014.



The approved scheme by Collado Collins for the Access Building, 184 Shepherd's Bush Road

ACCESS BUILDING, 184 SHEPHERD'S BUSH ROAD

Approval has been granted for the change of use of the Access Building from storage to offices. This is a scheme welcomed by the Hammersmith Society and the Friends of Brook Green, as architects Collado Collins have added an elegant three-storey glazed and domed extension to the Grade II listed building. It is to be let to global media analyst company, DunnHumby, who will relocate their 1000 staff from Ealing to Hammersmith.

NOMIS STUDIOS IN SINCLAIR ROAD / HOFLAND ROAD

Following the refusal of planning permission in May, the developer Regal Homes has launched a second appeal. This is a proposed development of 52 executive flats, with double basement and car lift that Council officers and residents are against on the grounds of density and unneighbourliness. The inquiry inspector's refusal is by no means a foregone conclusion.

OLYMPIA REDEVELOPMENT

There are three parts to the Phase II Olympia redevelopment – the proposed G-Gate Hotel, alterations to the Main Entrance and Olympia Way, and Maclise Road Car Park residential scheme which is not being progressed at present.

The previous 250-room G-Gate Hotel scheme was approved in 2008 and, following a public exhibition in May 2013, architects Collado Collins intend to submit a revised scheme for consultation within the next month. The proposal for the Grand Entrance will see the addition of a new glass entrance pavilion, which we anticipate will not impact on any detail of the facade. The damaged statues are being renovated.

GOLDHAWK ROAD

SHEPHERD'S BUSH MARKET

Following challenges to developer Orion in the High Court, the battle by Goldhawk Road shopkeepers moves to a new phase – a public inquiry into the compulsory purchase of the whole Shepherd's Bush Market area, including the historic row of shops at 30-52 Goldhawk Road, begins at Hammersmith Town Hall on 17 September at 10am. Eight days have been set aside to hear evidence from the Council, which aims to assemble the site for demolition by Orion, and the shopkeepers and

market traders who fear they will lose their businesses and livelihoods. Orion and the Council want 200 flats built on the site, nine stories high, with no affordable housing. The Inspector is already talking about the inquiry over-running and adjourning until later in the autumn, or next year.



The revised proposals by Collado Collins for 258-264 Goldhawk Road

258-264 GOLDHAWK ROAD (FORMERLY CARPETRIGHT)

The Hammersmith Society will shortly make a formal response to the revised proposals, now submitted for planning permission. The new scheme of 40 homes with commercial space at ground level is a great improvement upon its predecessor – the Goldhawk Road frontage being reduced to five storeys, the top floor on Greenside Road pushed back, parking spaces reduced from 23 to 9, and a courtyard garden space provided for residents at the rear.

We understand that local residents now regard this as a good scheme and, furthermore, that Collado Collins and Linden Homes have listened to them; however, we consider the scheme does not respond to the dynamic of the street corner or the geometry of the roundabout.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC COLLEGE HALLS, GOLDHAWK ROAD

New plans for additional student accommodation on this site by architects TP Bennett will be exhibited at College Hall on 26 September from 5-9pm, and 27 September from 12-4pm.

176-182 GOLDHAWK ROAD (HARVEST FILLING STATION)

A planning application for the redevelopment of the site of the petrol station to provide shops at ground level and three storeys of flats above was given planning permission on 11 September.

The scale and height of the proposed development appears generally acceptable, but the exterior design, despite minor improvements, is anonymous and bland, offering little response to the rich street context of adjacent Melville Court and its 1930s-style curved balconies, and a Victorian terrace and pub on the Coningham Road corner. The application design statement reveals all: *‘ the architectural language is quiet and modest, the narrative is simply read: the larger windows identify the main living/dining, and smaller windows identify bedrooms..... ’* Is this the stuff of architecture?

The upper floors provide twelve 2-bedroom and three 1-bedroom flats, including an unspecified element of affordable housing. No significant amenity space is provided in the development. The borough, the community and future residents deserve better.

WHITE CITY OPPORTUNITY AREA

WESTFIELD AND KIDZANIA

Westfield already has approval for a 17-year £1 billion development project, including 1522 new homes (250 affordable), and ½ million sq. feet of retail, restaurants, offices and new public space on Ariel Way (adjacent to the bus station on Wood Lane). Approval has been given, and work started on Kidzania, a children’s educational and entertainment centre, being built on top of M&S in the existing shopping centre.

Next month, the board of John Lewis will decide whether to open their fourth London store at Westfield.

WHITE CITY GREEN

The M&S site, between the proposed Westfield extension and the Imperial College Brickfields site (formerly owned by Helical Bar) has been sold to developer St James. The site includes the designated White City Green – the size of Brook Green, described in the draft of the White City Opportunity Area Planning Framework as *‘extensive parkland’*. The Hammersmith Society is keen to ensure that this valuable open space opposite the TV Centre comes to fruition.

TELEVISION CENTRE

The plans for the former BBC TV Centre, by developer Stanhope, for housing and offices are well advanced. The site will be transformed into a mix of uses: some 1000 dwellings, mostly flats, in the existing BBC buildings and new additional buildings of up to 10 storeys in a new outer ring around the existing 1950s ‘question mark’ building; shops and offices; a boutique hotel facing the iconic Helios courtyard; and more residential accommodation in a 25-storey tower on Wood Lane. There is much to support in this development. There will be new east-west pedestrian links through the site, the well-known Grade II listed frontage and circular courtyard of the BBC buildings will be renovated and will generally be made open to the public. After completion, some programme-making will return to the famous Studios 1, 2 and 3 and the BBC’s commercial arm, BBC Worldwide, will occupy office space on site.

However, the Hammersmith Society has serious reservations about the height of the 25-storey tower which replaces an office building some 9-10 storeys lower, despite original promises that the new tower would be no taller than the existing one. The new tower will be highly visible up and down Wood Lane, adding to the inhospitable streetscape. It will also be very visible from White City Green in front of the TV Centre, affecting the setting of the listed buildings. The height contravenes the draft

White City Opportunity Area Planning Framework, which recommends a building of no more than 20 storeys in this location. It is disappointing that the Council does not apparently intend to enforce its own guidance.

IMPERIAL WEST CAMPUS



View of Imperial's approved Woodlands development from Oxford Gardens

Imperial College, which acquired the former Woodlands site from the BBC, has also recently acquired an adjacent site to the south from developer Helical Bar, taking its total plot on either side of the A40 Westway at Wood Lane to over 22 acres.

Having built 600 student flats on the Woodlands site, Imperial gained planning permission for further extensive development, including proposals for a hotel and a 34-storey apartment block. The adjoining Brickfields site to the south includes planning permission for another 31-storey tower, as part of a mixed residential, commercial and retail development with blocks of 8-11 storeys. The stimulus for this massive redevelopment has been the White City Opportunity Area Planning Framework. Consultation on the latest draft of this document closed in early August, although planning applications based on it have already been approved.

The Hammersmith Society and other local groups have objected strongly to the scale and density of these proposed developments, including the spurious justification for tall tower blocks, in particular north of Westway where they will overshadow traditional residential streets, including a conservation area in neighbouring Kensington and Chelsea. The hope is that Imperial, which has new architects, will now reconsider the overall scheme and take the opportunity to create a coherent campus that makes a more positive contribution to its environment.

HAMMERSMITH PARK

Hammersmith Park is seen by surrounding residents as a 'hidden gem'. It lies within the Wood Lane Conservation Area, and is renowned for its impressive Japanese Garden of Peace, refurbished in 2010.

The Council's scheme to lease one third of the park to PlayFootball, a commercial sports developer, was given approval on 31 July. The Hammersmith Society considers that the 35-year lease sets an unacceptable precedent of leasing dedicated public space to a private enterprise, in this case, for a generation.

While the space at the South Africa Road end of Hammersmith Park has long been neglected and clearly needs refurbishing, it is much used by local individuals and groups for informal sport and recreation. The development proposed by the Council with PlayFootball now sits uneasily with the emerging plans for housing and other facilities on the adjacent TV Centre site.

Two 7-aside and eleven 5-aside Astroturf football pitches will be provided, together with a basketball court and new clubhouse. The £2.2m scheme will be funded by PlayFootball and will allow residents free access to two football pitches and the basketball court, but otherwise charge for what was previously freely accessible.

VISIONS

OLD OAK – A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The Mayor of London, in collaboration with Hammersmith and Fulham, Ealing and Brent issued this consultation document, with a request for responses by 6 September 2013. The Hammersmith Society supports the regeneration of Old Oak, providing the views of local residents and amenity societies are taken into account, the environment created is of a high standard and Wormwood Scrubs is neither encroached upon, nor the subject of detrimental change, particularly to its wildlife areas.

As a vast 20-30 year project, creating 19,000 homes, and jobs, schools and health centres there will be a high level of input from the Hammersmith Society for many years to come. The proposals are changing almost week by week. For example, Queen's Park Rangers has recently shown interest in selling their 18,500-seat football stadium in Loftus Road as a development site, and building a new 60,000-seat stadium at Old Oak.

The centrepiece of the scheme is a '*major international transport interchange*', connecting underground, Crossrail and overground services, and that political hot potato - HS2. However, we understand that Network Rail is looking into a connection to the West Coast Mainline at Old Oak, if the HS2 project does not go ahead.

An opportunity for sensitive and imaginative redevelopment.

TOWN HALL COURTYARD

Included in the Town Hall regeneration scheme, £4m is earmarked from the developer for works to the Town Hall. As an expensive building to maintain, much of that will no doubt be swallowed up in essential refurbishment. The Town Hall courtyard, however, currently used as a Council car park, could have a much brighter future.

The Hammersmith Society recommends – as do others – that the courtyard becomes a public domain, either open to the sky, or as a glazed atrium. The present parking provision is unsightly, outdated, over-generous and barren; the Council will have parking provision elsewhere and the Town Hall is well connected to public transport. Somerset House is an excellent model of an open court, and the Wallace Collection of a courtyard that has been glazed over. These show what Hammersmith Town

Hall courtyard could offer in terms of space for events, exhibitions and functions. It would be a truly imaginative stroke – a hub of elegance, energy and creativity.

A VISION FOR SHEPHERD’S BUSH – REGENERATING THE PUBLIC REALM

A scheme funded by the Council, Transport for London and local developers to upgrade and redesign roads and footways, improve pedestrian crossing points and de-clutter streets is proposed for the eastern end of Uxbridge and Goldhawk Roads, and Lime Grove. Improvements include tree planting, new street lighting, cycle lanes, pocket parks and improvements to bridge facades. For further information go to www.lbhf.gov.uk/sbtc.

THE HAMMERSMITH SOCIETY

ANGELA DIXON – AN APPRECIATION

Angela Dixon decided not to stand for re-election to the committee at this year’s AGM after serving for more than 40 years. She has been a very dedicated and active member of the Hammersmith Society and her infectious enthusiasm very quickly made itself felt on a number of fronts. Her energy and support were critical in enabling the Society to reinvent itself as a federation of local associations leading to a rapid increase in membership.

In the days immediately following the Civic Amenities Act 1967, the Town and Country Planning Act 1968, and the Skeffington Report ‘People and Planning’ (1969), planners recognised the need to encourage people to participate. Angela demonstrated supreme gifts in helping our Council to move towards this goal.

In 1969 the Greater London Development Plan was published. This included the concept of an inner London motorway box, the western north-south element of which became the subject of the famous West Cross Route inquiry in 1972. It was largely due to Angela leading the opposition that the battle against the initial West Cross Motorway proposals was won. She was also centrally and very successfully involved in our fight to save the Lyric Theatre interior. There were many other Hammersmith Society initiatives spearheaded by Angela, for which the burghers of Hammersmith owe her a large debt of gratitude.

In 1987 Angela founded the Hammersmith & Fulham Historic Buildings Group (HBG), an organisation dedicated to safeguarding the borough’s history. Angela in her capacity as Chairman of the HBG and Jane Mercer the then chairman of the Hammersmith Society, jointly set up the West London River Group which was influential in the preparation of ‘The River Thames Strategy: Kew to Chelsea.’ Although Angela has this year retired from the Hammersmith Society committee she continues to give her energies to helping achieve high standards of planning and conservation in our borough.

On behalf of our membership and the residents of Hammersmith we would like to thank Angela for her selfless dedication to the work of the Hammersmith Society over so many years.

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

The newsletter editor, Richard Jackson, draws attention to two interesting prototype housing schemes – a committee member’s personal views on a local issue.



Rational House 0001 in Biscay Road

Approval was granted on 31 July for 10 ‘Rational Houses’ by manufacturer Aecom on Brook Green’s Spring Vale Estate’s underused car park. The scheme consists of two 1-bed, six 2-bed flats, and two 3-bed houses, and will be built by City House Projects Ltd, at a building cost of less than £150 sq/ft. The Council intends to sell six of the homes at a discounted rate to ‘aspirational’ first-time buyers on their Home Buy Register. Green space will be enlarged and re-landscaped.

In 2011, a single pilot ‘Rational House 0001’ was built in Biscay Road, taking 11 days to erect with this system of architect-designed high quality prefabricated panels. In my view the new house, despite some strangely quirky details, just about fits into the streetscape, but is this system, as the manufacturer claims, appropriate ‘*to be stacked up to nine storeys*’? It doesn’t follow that what works well at two storeys will work well at nine.

The other project is Octavia Housing’s ongoing development in Sulgrave Gardens, Shepherd’s Bush. This is a pioneering project on two counts – firstly, its mixed tenure is unusual in an inner-city context (9 affordable units, 12 shared ownership and 8 town and mews houses for private sale); and secondly, it is built to sustainable Passivhaus principles, which claim to reduce standard heating bills by 90% using triple glazing and super-insulation. The system of sliding shutters to the two main blocks makes for an uninteresting bland streetscape, as they mostly remain closed, but the incomplete mews houses look a more promising development. Both are innovative approaches to housing provision that I welcome and am following closely.

MEMBERSHIP

The Hammersmith Society represents over a thousand residents in Hammersmith through our individual members and members of affiliated societies. We are Hammersmith’s only borough-wide dedicated amenity society, and are keen to recruit new members, and involve our membership in the active running of our society. To find out more please contact:

our Chairman Rosemary Pettit on tel: 020 8846 9707 or rosemary@rosemarypettit.plus.com or our Secretary, Annabelle May at secretary@hammersmithsociety.org.uk.

Subscriptions remain at £6 for individuals (£5 concession), £8 for a family or couple, and £15 for organisations. Please make payment by standing order as this makes our Treasurer’s life so much easier! If you are interested in joining you may also download a membership form from our website.