



The Hammersmith Society

Newsletter – April 2006

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday, 27th June Hammersmith Society Annual General Meeting
See details below.

Friday 19th May 1200 noon Deadline for nominations for environment
Awards

Summer Canal Trip Details later

THE HAMMERSMITH SOCIETY ENVIRONMENT AWARDS 2006

Attached to this newsletter is a nomination form for this year's Main Award, the Nancye Goulden Award for schemes that are on a more minor scale and for the Wooden Spoon Awards for monstrosities and carbuncles. Full details are on the form.

The deadline for nominations is 6pm, Friday, 19th May, 2006.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our 2006 AGM will be held in the rehearsal room at the Lyric Theatre on Tuesday, 27th June starting at 7:00 pm. All members are urged to attend.

LATEST NEWS

White City Shopping Centre

We have been in conversation with senior planning officers about some proposed modifications to the design of the shopping centre, the construction of which is well under way. These alterations affect mainly the roof and the south east access behind Shepherds Bush Central Line station. We feel that the roof design, as proposed, will constitute a spectacular and unique feature and is to be supported. The two aspects of the scheme that we felt needed more thought are the frontage along Wood Lane and the landscaping. We will be making proposals ourselves for the Wood Lane elevation and we hope to arrange a meeting with the eminent landscape architect, Martha Schwartz who is in charge of that particular aspect of the development. We will suggest that the latter gets in touch with Peter Weiss, who is designing the landscaping for the masterplan currently in development for the much larger White City Opportunity Area which extends from the shopping centre northwards beyond the A 40 flyover. We also are keeping a very close eye on

what is being done to provide the 80-100 dwellings for key workers which were negotiated at the time of the granting of the original planning consent. These need not be situated necessarily within the site itself, and we understand that the developers are urgently looking for possible alternative sites within the borough.

Allied Carpets Site, Goldhawk Road

Hammersmith Society is working on preparations for the public inquiry dealing with the appeal by the developers against the Council's refusal of planning consent for their proposed scheme. This will be held in early June. More news later.

Hammersmith Embankment

As reported in our previous newsletter, an application for redevelopment of the Hammersmith Embankment site was under discussion. Hammersmith Society welcomed the idea of the inclusion of a water sports club into the overall plan but we had concerns about the monumental scale and mass of the four proposed office blocks and their effect on the adjoining residential streets and the riverscape. We were also had reservations about what looked like an attempt by the designers to create the impression that Frank Banfield Park was part of the scheme. This is what Angela Dixon, our Vice-Chair calls "annexation by design". Due to the amount of opposition, the application was withdrawn. The developers have told us that they are revising the scheme and a new one will doubtless be forthcoming soon.

Chelsea College of Art, Lime Grove

An application for redevelopment has been received by the Council for the removal of some of the later undistinguished buildings at the rear of the listed college and to construct facilities for the occupant, the London College of Fashion which will be part of the new University of the Arts. While the Hammersmith Society welcomes any such educational and artistic initiatives, we have certain reservations about some aspects of the proposed design and we are, at the time of writing, considering our response to the application.

St Paul's Church, Queen Caroline Street, central Hammersmith

With other community representatives, Hammersmith Society has been involved in a lengthy consultation process with the authorities at St Paul's Church who find they have a serious shortage of space due to a large increase in their congregation. They wish to build a large extension on to the west end of the church in the existing churchyard. At the last but one meeting we were presented with a design that we felt would comfortably answer the need to expand and, at the same time, harmonise very well with the listed church in terms of its exterior appearance. Unfortunately at the more recent meeting this design had somehow been replaced. The interior space was very similar but the external elevations looked very different in that they were horizontal in style and constructed in concrete. Apparently our views were echoed by the Parochial Church Council and the design has is now being reviewed.

Shepherds Bush Green

The new high-quality York Stone treatment on the pavements around Shepherds Bush Common (which we all refer to as Shepherds Bush Green), and in Goldhawk Road and Uxbridge Road has now been completed. The previous surface along the north side of the Common was without doubt one of the worst examples in the borough and we are very pleased to see the back of it.

Now that the Hammersmith Society has become a member of the Open Spaces Society we will be consulting their experts on what can or cannot be done to preserve Shepherds Bush

Common, particularly in the light of the outrageous proposal from Transport for London to use it as a depot in the event that construction of the West London Tram goes ahead.

Additional powers for the Mayor

In November the government set up a consultation on proposals that the Mayor should be given more powers than he has at present. The attitude of the Hammersmith Society is that there are many options in the consultation paper that we support but there are some that we would be completely opposed to. Our views for this consultation were represented by the London Forum of Amenity & Civic Societies of which we, together with similar groups from all parts of London, are a long-standing member. Its observations included the following:

The government wants to transfer to the Mayor the role the Government Office for London has hitherto played in drawing up a housing strategy for London and distributing Housing Capital Allocations. We support that, as a desirable rationalisation; and believe the Mayor should be free to make the distribution without seeking the approval of Ministers.

We also back the Mayor's view that there should be a single waste management authority for London. That does not mean we back what he has so far said about waste management; the London Forum has criticised the draft Alterations to that part of the London Plan, which will be the subject of an Examination in Public later this year. But there is a pressing need for more effective policies and more effective organisation to increase the proportions of waste recycled and phase out dumping in the ground. We believe this requires a unified approach across London, and that giving the Mayor executive responsibility for managing wastes will ensure he gives this issue the necessary priority and takes a realistic approach; the boroughs would remain responsible for collecting wastes.

We are opposed, however, to giving the Mayor sweeping new powers over planning. At the moment boroughs have to refer a limited category of large planning applications to the Mayor, who can direct them to refuse an application. The Mayor wants to be consulted on a wider range of planning applications, and have power to direct the borough to grant planning permission. He also wants a power of direction over borough development plans. And he is seeking a review of the government's role in the planning of London, although he has not been specific about changes in that respect. The government's consultation paper floats the further possibility that some 'strategic' planning applications might go straight to the Mayor.

The London Forum wants a review of the way the Mayor exercises his present powers. We want to make sure he keeps his role in promoting development separate from his quasi-judicial responsibility in planning. We are concerned at the lack of effective scrutiny by the London Assembly in this respect. We have come down strongly against the draconian new powers the Mayor is seeking, or any fundamental change in the present balance of responsibilities between the Greater London Authority, the boroughs and the government. There is no precedent anywhere for the proposed powers of direction - they would sweep away legal safeguards and democratic accountability, and sow the seeds for bitter conflicts in future.

Thames Water plc

Work on replacing the Victorian water pipes in our area is proceeding. However, there is still a long way to go as the Goldhawk Road area has had three burst water mains in about eight years. Now there is a suspicion that the central section of Hammersmith Grove has a serious problem evidenced by the collapsing road surface and a constant presence of surface water, even during dry spells. This is at the same time as a hosepipe ban has been imposed and we hear that leaks account for approximately 40% of London's water. It is to be hoped that Thames Water will also be upgrading their sewer network, especially in the area of Starch Green which has recently been subjected to flooding with raw sewage for the second time in thirteen months.

St Stephen's Church, Uxbridge Road

A recent planning application from the church authorities for the construction of a new church hall in the graveyard of this Grade II listed church was withdrawn in the teeth of united opposition from Hammersmith Society and local residents. The proposals

included selling the present church hall to the neighbouring church school. Grounds for opposition were a) the loss of open space in an area where it is in very short supply, b) damage to the visual setting of the listed church and c) the poor and inappropriate design of the scheme which would thus fail to preserve or enhance the Conservation in which it is situated. The developers hurriedly withdrew the scheme as smoke signals from the Town Hall pointed towards a refusal by the Planning Applications Committee. The church's architects have now come up with a revised scheme but the only difference is a small reduction in the size of the proposed church hall. Therefore, our original objections remain and we will be making them forcefully when the formal application is made.

Former Filling Station Gold hawk Road

We note that this site, currently in use for the sale of plants and organic vegetables, car washing and a café together with the flats above, has been acquired by Notting Hill Housing Trust. This is a welcome development and we have contacted the housing trust to discuss its plans in detail. It now transpires that some of the present owners of the flats are asking more than the trust is willing to pay for their leaseholds. Matters are therefore at a standstill at present. However, the trust has indicated that it wishes to build a nine-storey development and, if this is the case, we will be objecting on much the same grounds as our submission regarding the Allied Carpets site. There is also the matter of the open space at the rear which contains several trees, among them a very large mature one.

Janet Adegoke Site, Bloemfontein Road, White City

The new swimming pool has opened to the public in the grounds of Phoenix School and plans have been lodged for the redevelopment of the former Janet Adegoke Leisure Centre Site, designed by Richard Rogers Partnership. However, your committee felt that, although the principal concept was excellent, some aspects of the scheme were flawed and needed further thought, particularly the encroachment into Wormholt Park which would entail a net loss of 6% of the current open space. We submitted our views to the Council and as a result the Planning Applications Committee decided to defer its decision on the application until after the election.

Advertisement Hoardings

Hammersmith Society is currently working with senior planning officers to tackle the increasing blight of advertising hoardings, especially in Cromwell and Talgarth Roads, King Street, Shepherds Bush Green in the Holland Road roundabout locality and in Goldhawk and Uxbridge Roads. Most of these hoardings are illegal having been installed without any form of planning consent. However, the hoarding companies use every delaying tactic they can to stall or slow down proceedings so it is a time-consuming and labour-intensive task to get them removed. The Council are working hard but don't expect overnight success.

New email Newsletters

In order to access this service please advise our Hon Secretary, Angela Clarke, of your email address at aficlarke@gmail.com

Membership . . . a repeated plea!!

We continue to look for new members and I am happy to report that several have joined since the last newsletter came out. However, more would be welcomed and an application form is attached. **I encourage all of our present members to set themselves the task of recruiting at least one friend or relative** (hopefully including some younger than the current average!) during the coming twelve months.

It would also be a great saving of time and money for the Society if members would switch from paying their annual subscription by cheque to paying by Bankers Standing Order. Please help us by using the attached form to make the change.

We are likewise trying to compile a list of members who have email. If successful, this will also help to keep costs down and to stabilise subscription rates. If you have email, please either fill in the attached form or send your details to our Hon Secretary, Angela Clarke, by email to aficlarke@gmail.com

As always, we are also looking for new committee members and if you feel you may be able to make a contribution to the running of the Society please contact Angela Clarke, by email at aficlarke@gmail.com or by phone on 8748 0284 (evenings).

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Chair

We need more members!

Please recruit some!