



The Hammersmith Society

Newsletter September 2012



Photo from the "50 Special Places" project: Hammersmith Library by Marion Rhenell

FROM THE NEW CHAIR, ROSEMARY PETTIT

The 50th anniversary of the Hammersmith Society - a splendid and happy occasion masterminded by Melanie Whitlock, Tom Ryland and Angela Clarke – was an occasion to reflect on past campaigns, current challenges and hopes for the future. Basking in unexpected summer weather members, guests, councillors, MP and valued friends including Vanessa Redgrave and Joely Richardson gathered at the Corinthian Club on 23 May to hear reports, acclaim awards winners, view the ‘Special Places’ photographic exhibition and raise a glass to the next fifty years of the Society.

Since then, the pace has not slackened. Starting with an exhibition for the relocated Queensmill School off the Uxbridge Road at the end of May, other proposed developments include a residential block at 271-281 King St, the next-door developments of Hammersmith Embankment (St George) and Queen’s Wharf (A2 Dominion) downstream from the bridge, and the West London Free School at Palingswick House. Rearing its head north of Westway, the vainglorious 35-storey tower of Imperial West got

planning permission at the end of July and, if it goes ahead, will twin up with an opposite tower on the Dairy Crest site – both of these part of the White City Opportunity Area.

At Kings Mall in King St the street retail frontage received permission for a makeover while Lyric Theatre (on a long lease) has plans to build studios at the “podium” level above King Street. North of the tube line, St George proposes to demolish the grim multi-storey car park in Glenthorne Rd in favour of an urban residential development which includes a 25-storey tower

Other developments include proposals for a new Irish Cultural Centre in Blacks Rd, and the unfortunate decision to allow Fulham Football Club to build into the river. We have sought a better deal for Hammersmith Library, and this summer contributed to a government consultation on listed buildings. We are keeping a watchful eye on plans to build a changing room and toilet block for Hammersmith Academy in the park, and we oppose building on green space in any of our parks.

As to the Town Hall proposals – we can only applaud the recent decision of the new Leader, Cllr Nicholas Botterill, to put residents ‘at the heart of new proposals to regenerate the area around Hammersmith Town Hall – with a height limit of eight storeys a “cast iron guarantee” We aim for the cinema to pump new life into King St as classic cinemas have done throughout London.

West London Architects’ Flyunder Day in Lyric Square – as part of the June London Festival of Architecture – demonstrated the liberating benefits of burying the flyover in a tunnel from Hogarth roundabout to Barons Court or thereabouts - and so unify Hammersmith. It can be done, the Council wants it done, the next step is to work it up with Transport for London.

I am happy to report that Council planners, in briefings, consultations and planning forums, appear to be seeking engagement with – rather than opposition to - residents and groups. If this leads to a better environment for all, then of course we will play our part.

Stop Press: plans are under discussion to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the birth of Capability Brown, a Hammersmith resident, in 2016 – more details in due course.

MELANIE WHITLOCK

Melanie Whitlock stepped down in May of this year during the triumphant 50th Anniversary celebrations and AGM which she had largely planned and organised. This was her second three year stint as Chairman having previously done it 25 years earlier – something no-one else has done.

In her first round Melanie was responsible for the introduction of the Environment Awards, which have become one of the Society’s most important institutions. In her most recent term, Melanie has steered the Society through a minefield of changing planning legislation including the introduction of the Council’s Local Planning Framework and Core Strategy (and related documents), amendments to the London Plan and of course the new National Planning Policy Framework. In each case, Melanie was responsible for preparing brilliantly analysed and argued submissions on behalf of the Society.

In addition, there has been unprecedented pressure from a huge number of major planning applications. The most prominent of these was the hugely unpopular Hammersmith Town Hall scheme, and Melanie deserves much credit for her major contribution to the successful opposition campaign. Throughout her term, she has been unflinching in her dedication to the wider good of Hammersmith, which she has carried out in a quiet way with ruthless intellect and good humour.

Fortunately she is continuing to offer her expertise and experience: The Society and Hammersmith owe her so much: Thank you Melanie!

TOWN HALL REDEVELOPMENT

There was very welcome news in July when the Council announced that it was withdrawing its plans for the Town Hall redevelopment. The new leader, Cllr Nick Botterill, said the Council would be going back to the drawing board, that new proposals for the site would go no higher than the Town Hall extension and it would listen to residents' and amenity groups in order to find a more acceptable solution. The footbridge over the A4 will no longer be part of the scheme. That, and the reduced height, will be a tremendous relief to local residents. Meanwhile we and Save Our Skyline will be pressing for an early meeting with the Council to seek to ensure a good design solution to this vexed site and to incorporate retention of the cinema in a reinvigorated form to give real regenerative boost to the area. Many congratulations are due to Save Our Skyline for their highly effective campaign without which this turnaround would not have happened, and to all the thousands of residents who wrote and emailed the Council, the Mayor of London and the Government.

HAMMERSMITH LIBRARY AND THE ARCHIVES: HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Once the pride of Borough residents, the handsome Grade II listed building housing Hammersmith Library on Shepherds Bush Road now seems marooned in a wasteland of dusty building sites. However it is the Section 106 money from these same developers that will help to secure a future for this much-loved local landmark and community resource.

Following a public consultation, some Hammersmith Society committee members and representatives of local residents' groups, have been meeting David Ruse, the new tri-borough director of Libraries and Archives, to discuss options for refurbishment. A structural survey has revealed the need for extensive internal and external repairs and redecoration. Much of the ground floor may need to be reconfigured – hopefully without alterations to the successful Children's Library – with new staff offices provided on the first floor. The main entrance also needs upgrading.

Upstairs, where there was formerly a well-stocked Reference Library, little remains apart from tables and computer terminals where teenagers do their homework. Up the main staircase there is a confusing warren of small rooms on different levels. These could potentially be made available for community use, but are only currently accessible up steep and narrow back stairs. The feasibility of installing a lift is therefore being explored.

For the Borough Archives and Local History Centre, there are also grounds for optimism as the popular facilities there are now open every Monday from 10 am until 4 pm, instead of twice a month. This has been made possible with professional support from the justly-admired Westminster Archives. The service is always busy, so booking is essential - see the Council's website. The Archives service might not have survived at all without the help of volunteers co-ordinated by Maya Donelan of the Fulham Society. All in all, Hammersmith residents owe a debt to Mr Ruse, and the Hammersmith Society would like to thank him for the contribution he has already made to the Borough.

IMPERIAL COLLEGE WOODLANDS CAMPUS

Despite protests and objections from local residents, their ward councillors, Member of Parliament and the Hammersmith Society, Hammersmith and Fulham Council has approved plans for a 35-storey tower block on the Woodlands site, off Wood Lane.

Imperial College acquired the site from the BBC in 2009. It has since built four blocks of student accommodation, which are now being marketed. In late 2011 the college applied for planning permission for further development, including a 35-storey block of flats, a hotel and office buildings.

The site is part of the White City Opportunity Area. However, the latest planning framework for the area is still in draft, has yet to undergo statutory consultation, or be formally adopted.

Local residents' groups oppose the scheme, arguing that Council planning policies do not provide permission for such tall buildings on the site, which is adjacent to residential streets and a conservation area in neighbouring Kensington and Chelsea. They are calling on the Mayor of London to intervene, given the objections received from the adjacent borough of Kensington and Chelsea, which has also opposed the plans.

DAIRY CREST

A further development, with another tall tower, is now planned on the former Dairy Crest site to the south of Westway. The proposals are for a mixed used residential scheme providing up to 1,150 new homes, with buildings ranging from 8-32 storeys, with a maximum height of 118 metres. Outline planning and conservation area consent applications have been submitted on behalf of Aviva Investors and Helical Bar plc.

NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

The 2011 Localism Act introduced powers for local communities to develop a Neighbourhood Plan. Hammersmith and Fulham Council has received its first application for the designation of a neighbourhood forum to develop such a plan. The proposed St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum covers a conservation area in W10 and an adjoining residential area in W12, to the north of the Westway. This community lies mainly within the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, which has been very supportive of the proposal, as is the local MP, and the Hammersmith Society also broadly supports it. Local opinion appears divided on the issue, and Hammersmith and Fulham Council are delaying a decision. The aim is to establish a new democratically elected body to improve the quality of life of those living and working in the area through neighbourhood planning.

DEVELOPMENTS IN RAVENSCOURT PARK

The Friends of Ravenscourt Park - a group of local residents working with the Council to represent the interests of all Park users – report some positive developments. Thanks to contractors Quadron, maintenance is much improved, while flower planting has become more imaginative and less municipal. Many of the issues raised by the Friends are gradually being addressed. The lake by the bridge is now regularly cleared of plastic bags and other rubbish. As well as being unsightly, such rubbish poses a danger to wildlife, particularly in the breeding season.

Recently, the Friends were pleased to learn that two more of the railway arches have been cleared. It is hoped that the ugly boarding will soon be removed, enabling original vistas to be restored. As part of the Archaeological Priority Area at the King Street end, identified as the site of a fourteenth century leper hospital, the nineteenth and early twentieth century railway arches are also worth cherishing in terms of industrial archaeology.

The Friends agree with the 2012 Green Flag Inspector that the most important issues facing the Council are pressure and overuse in this historic park. Proposals to build changing rooms, effectively converting much of Ravenscourt Park into secondary school playing fields, will meet strong resistance from many sections of the community. The Olympics have shone a spotlight onto this issue, and alternative solutions can and must be found.

The friends can be contacted through the Chair, Annabelle May, with any queries at: ravenscourtparkfriends@hotmail.co.uk

KING'S MALL CAR PARK AND VACANT WEST 45 OFFICES – GLENTHORNE ROAD

Developers St George have submitted a planning application for the re-development of the unloved King's Mall Car Park and the West 45 Office building, using local architects Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands.

The proposals consist of a housing development of some 500 dwellings, including some "discounted market" housing for sale; a new underground carpark (built in stages, so that current users are accommodated), commercial space on the Beadon Road frontage, and – controversially - a 25 storey 'town centre marker' tower.

The Glenthorne Road frontage is made up of six storey mansion blocks, with the sixth storey set back. The entrance and exit to the car park is moved to Glenthorne Road, which allows customers to use it without getting into the Beadon Road one-way gyratory system. Running up to the railway cutting will be three areas of garden for use by residents, and two taller residential blocks of 11 and 13 storeys. These are likely to be very visible from local streets. The 'town centre marker' is completely unacceptable, and the Society has asked that the proposed tower be reduced by half. We've recently been assured by Council planners that they are of the same opinion.

The proposals include shallow garden frontage along Glenthorne Road and a smaller landscaped corner at Beadon Road. The plane trees on Glenthorne Road are very likely to be felled but will be replaced to maintain the green avenue of the road.

The removal of the car park building would certainly be an improvement to Hammersmith but the height of the tower must be in keeping with the heights in central Hammersmith generally.

LATEST PLANNING REFORMS

Responding to the government's 7th September announcement on Housing and Growth, London Councils' Executive Mayor for Housing, Mayor Sir Steve Bullock said, "We are concerned that if the announcement today means getting rid of not just affordable housing but also other necessary community infrastructure like schools, roads and health centres, local support for new house building will be undermined.

“Barely six months after publishing the National Planning Policy Framework, the government is once again throwing the planning system into uncertainty, with the reprise of ideas like turning empty offices into housing.

“The suspension of planning rules for householders (for extensions) may have unintended consequences. Of course councils want people to be able to improve their homes with minimum stress. But one person’s improvements could impact on their neighbours, and if there are costs for councils to enforce otherwise illegal alterations to buildings, it may end up costing more than it saves, and no clear plan for dealing with these situations has been outlined as yet.

“Ultimately, however, it is not the planning system that is holding up economic growth. London’s boroughs have granted permission for nearly 200,000 homes that developers have yet to build out. The real problem is a lack of development and mortgage finance, not delays in the planning process.”
(reproduced courtesy of the London Forum of Civic and Amenity Societies.)

MICHAEL MCDERMOTT

Michael McDermott, past chair of the Society, died recently. We remember him with appreciation and respect as Chair of the Society from 2003-6. He was an energetic and effective Chair: on behalf of the Society he took an active part in the development of the London Plan, he co-founded the West London River Group, and among many other initiatives he created positive links with groups in White City in the early days of redevelopment discussions. He continued on the committee till two years ago and, as well as appreciating his contributions to policy, members also valued his enormously likeable character and splendid sense of humour. Prior to his involvement with the Society, through his work with the Grove Community Council he created a wonderful legacy for Hammersmith in the shape of the Grove Neighbourhood Centre which he was largely responsible for promoting and seeing through to completion.

HEATHROW THIRD RUNWAY

This refuses to go away entirely, despite a High Court ruling in 2010 and subsequent election promises. Recent press coverage suggests it is a given that proposals will be introduced after the next General Election. It is worth recalling that the previous proposals would have brought arriving and departing flights directly over Hammersmith every 90 seconds at busy times, with the same kind of noise nuisance that the unfortunate residents of Richmond and Kew suffer now – but even more frequently; 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 even with 2009 figures an additional 4.5 million passenger trips per year on the already pressured Piccadilly Line

The previous proposals were seen off by a wide-ranging coalition of amenity groups, residents’ associations and the very effective 2M group made up of west London Councils. H & F Council at present is saying Heathrow should not grow – let us hope it maintains that stance and supports 2M or its successor.

AND ALSO....

Membership Secretary: The Hammersmith Society has 1000 members or more if you count – as we do – members of residents’ associations which have joined the Society. Members are the lifeblood of any voluntary association and we value you all. But we could value you more with the help of a membership secretary to keep lists and contact details in good order and, with the support of the committee, encourage more residents to join Hammersmith’s only dedicated amenity society. To find out more please email Chairman Rosemary Pettit at rosemary@rosemarypettit.plus.com.

New members: a recommendation from an existing member is the best way to bring in new members. If you know a neighbour, relative or friend in Hammersmith who takes a lively interest in the area why not introduce them to the Hammersmith Society? **A membership present...** give a year’s membership of the Hammersmith Society as a birthday or anniversary gift, or just as an appreciative thank-you. **New neighbours:** welcome new neighbours to your street – introduce them to the Hammersmith Society. Recently arrived residents are usually very happy to feel part of a community.

Subscriptions are £6 for individuals (£5 concession), £8 for a family or couple, and £15 for organisations. Contact the Treasurer, Julian Hillman, at 19 Flanchford Road, W12 9ND, email hillman19@btinternet.com or download a membership form from the website.

Website: the Hammersmith Society’s website is at www.hammersmithsociety.org.uk We would welcome help to expand and improve it. If you can help with a fairly straightforward blog-based system please contact rosemary@rosemarypettit.plus.com .

Email address? Do let us have your email address. We’ll be sending email news and from time to time special alerts, so do let us keep in touch. If you change your email address, please notify us. Send to rosemary@rosemarypettit.plus.com and copy in hillman19@btinternet.com. If you change your address or your name or telephone number we’d be glad to hear from you.

HAMMERSMITH SOCIETY COMMITTEE 2012/2013:

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|--|---|---------------------------------|
| Professor Hans Haenlein MBE (President) | Julian Hillman (Treasurer) Chris Allen | Angela Dixon Richard Jackson |
| Rosemary Pettit (Chair) | Angela Clarke | Carlo Nero |
| Tom Ryland (Vice-Chair) | Anabel Clarke | Melanie Whitlock |
| Annabelle May (Secretary) | William Cooper | Richard Winterton |

ENVIRONMENT AWARDS 2012

For the main prize winners, see overleaf with photographs. Meanwhile:

Wooden Spoon: The Wooden Spoon was awarded to St George plc at Hammersmith Embankment – not for “annexing by design” the Riverside Walk into their development (although that effectively has been done) but for cladding the historic riverside walk in bright white stone and incorporating an unsuitable railing design .The principles of the riverside design have been set out in StreetSmart and the Riverside Walk policies but the St George version is against the spirit and character of the riverside walk and has damaged the Conservation Area.

ENVIRONMENT AWARDS 2012

The Society was delighted to present the awards at its 50th year AGM on 23 May in a packed hall of the London Corinthian Sailing Club. Our judging panel, made up of members of the Committee, looked at a wide variety of nominated schemes before deciding upon the winners.

Main Award: The Old Treacle Factory in Goodwin Road: Alterations/Extension

The award was presented by Vanessa Redgrave to Guy Greenfield Architects who are second time winners, having won the Award in 2001 for the Surgery at 1 Hammersmith Bridge Road. The



architects' brief was to re-organise the interior and to add a storey to the building. They achieved this with a lightness of touch and in a manner that ties the whole building together, while also being very efficient in its use of energy. The result increases the buildings capacity from 120 to 200 employees. It sits well next to the neighbouring Erno Goldfinger listed Greenside School and 1 – 3 Westville Road which won our Nancye Goulden Award in 2009. Overall it provides us with a stylish and very pleasing building in an area that needed it.

Nancye Goulden Award: Goldhawk Road Highway Improvements

The award was presented by Elizabeth Reardon, daughter of Nancye Goulden to Mahmood Siddiqui



and Nick Boyle of the Council's Highways Department. For many years the Hammersmith Society has campaigned for the adoption of good streetscape design and the removal of clutter. Then the Council produced 'StreetSmart' a design Bible for our highways. (We gave it our main Award in 2006). A revolution started in Kensington and Chelsea with some good road treatments in Notting Hill Gate and Kensington High Street. Now Goldhawk Road with its central barriers and a plethora of nasty surfaces and lack of trees has had a make-over, removing barriers, adding trees and improving crossings. We understand Phase 2 is to start shortly.

Conservation Award : St Peters Church – New Windows

The award was presented by Councillor Nick Botterill, now Leader of the Council, and was received by Canon John Record on behalf of the church.



St Peter's must be the most elegant church in the Borough. It is also we believe the oldest having being completed in 1829 . After a massive fund-raising programme, the magnificent elegant Georgian windows have been completely restored. The metal frames were stripped back, repaired and repainted. All of this has been under the supervision of architects, Carden and Godfrey.