



The Hammersmith Society

Newsletter April 2015



Rogers Stirk Harbour's proposed development at Thames Wharf.

*THE AGM & AWARDS *HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE * RAVENSCOURT PARK *
HAMMERSMITH PARK * HEATHROW EXPANSION * MASSIVE ST JAMES
DEVELOPMENT * THE WALKABOUT PROPOSAL * DRAFT LOCAL PLAN *
SHEPHERDS BUSH MARKET * LONDON FESTIVAL OF ARCHITECTURE * EVENTIM
APOLLO TOUR *WORMHOLT PARK * THAMES WHARF REDEVELOPMENT *
ADELAIDE WORKS & GEORGE BROAD * AND MORE*

AN INVITATION TO OUR 2015 AGM

Members are warmly invited to attend the AGM of the Hammersmith Society.

7.00pm - Tour of the new facilities. The Lyric Theatre has undergone a £16.5 million capital development project. The Lyric welcomes members of the Hammersmith Society to a tour of the new workshops and other facilities.

7.30pm - This year's guest speaker will be Jessica Hepburn, executive director and joint chief executive of the Lyric Hammersmith. As executive director, Jessica has steered the Lyric's redevelopment project.

8.00pm – AGM in the new cinema. The winners of the Society's annual Environment Awards will be announced during the evening. Our Patron, The Mayor of Hammersmith and Fulham, has been invited to present the Awards which will be followed by AGM business (see enclosed details).

Nominating an Award: the enclosed flyer gives details on nominating a project for an award. This could be a new building, a successful renovation or restoration scheme, even a greatly improved open space or street scene. Any nominations should be received by our Vice-Chairman, Tom Ryland, no later than Monday 4 May. Please send to 47 Black Lion Lane, London W6 9BG or tomryland@cparchitects.com.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the April 2015 Newsletter. We are delighted that Richard Tollemache (Treasurer of Hammersmith Embankment Residents Association) has agreed to join our Committee as Treasurer, and look forward to working closely with him; we thank our outgoing Treasurer, Julian Hillman, for his sterling work over ten years. We also welcome Derrick Wright, chairman of Friends of Wormholt Park to the committee.

The Hammersmith Society makes a substantial written submission for each major (and many less significant) planning applications. In this issue, amongst other articles, we include our full submission to the Thames Wharf application to more closely inform you of the work we do on members' behalf. We hope it dispels any misconceptions that our default position is always one of objection.

My grateful thanks go to the contributors to this issue: Rosemary Pettit, Tom Ryland and Melanie Whitlock. Derrick Wright, Chairman of the Friends of Wormholt Park, introduces the contribution of the Friends in the regeneration of the park.

Our committee works closely together as a team, pooling information and attending meetings and presentations, and I thank them for their help and support with the newsletter. If members would like to find out more about furthering the work of the Society, please contact Rosemary Pettit on tel: 020 8846 9707 or, alternatively, rosemary@rosemarypettit.plus.com.

Richard Jackson

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE



Hammersmith Bridge has long suffered from structural problems and been closed for lengthy periods. The next scheduled closure is in January 2016 for approximately 12 months.

The current bridge was opened by the Prince of Wales in 1887 to a design by Sir Joseph Bazalgette. It has an English Heritage Grade II* listing. Following the 1999 IRA bombing, renovations were carried out and the bridge repainted in the original colour scheme.

TfL is meeting the cost of the repairs to the bridge, and the Hammersmith Society is pressing for the bridge to be repainted during its forthcoming period of closure. In view of the great strides that have been made in lighting design in the last 16 years, this also presents an opportunity for subtly enhanced and more cost-effective lighting.

RAVENSCOURT PARK AND ITS MEDIEVAL CELLARS

In 2014, a geophysical survey of the site of the medieval manor house and moat of Palingswick was carried out in the park, and an exhibition staged by the Museum of London and the Friends of Ravenscourt Park. The Hammersmith Society is supporting the Friends in its bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to enable trial trenches to be dug this summer. If this is successful this will lead to phase three, a fuller excavation of the site.

HAMMERSMITH PARK – A NEW ERA

Progress has been made to stop a substantial part of Hammersmith Park becoming a private sports facility. Negotiations between the Council and PlayFootball will result in a revised scheme going out to a full public consultation shortly.

HEATHROW EXPANSION – WHAT EFFECT ON US?

The background to the recent H&F Commission on Airports Expansion chaired by Sir Howard Davies, has been looking into expanding airport capacity in the south-east. It shortlisted an extra runway for Gatwick, and two separate proposals at Heathrow – a new runway, and an extension of one of the existing runways. Davies will make its recommendation this summer after the General Election.

The resident-led H&F Commission – chaired by recently retired senior civil servant, Christina Smyth - was set up in the autumn to look at the Davies Commission reports on the shortlisted proposals. During the 12-week consultation period we looked at the likely noise, pollution, surface transport, safety, economy and quality of life impacts of the Heathrow options on our borough. The H&F Commission concluded that there would be some limited benefits from expansion but these were outweighed by negative effects.

H&F has a relatively thriving local economy compared to many London boroughs (consider Westfield, the Imperial College scientific campus and developments in White City east) and its economic future is not dependent on the prospect of Heathrow expansion.

Expansion would enable local residents to access more flights. Expansion would also mean additional flights and noise overhead; there could be flight paths where none exist now; A4 traffic and Piccadilly Line congestion would get worse. Air quality, already exceeding EU limits at Hammersmith Broadway and elsewhere, would deteriorate further.

The Heathrow promoters' plans to mitigate noise and air quality impacts are highly speculative and rely on uncertain forecasts, as well as later decisions. Claims of reduced noise over west London are not supported by Davies, which pointed out that the specific details of flight paths and heights were not yet available. Safety concerns would be increased by busier airspace overhead. Residents' health and quality of life would deteriorate.

Melanie Whitlock – Hammersmith Society representative on H&F Commission on Airport Expansion

MASSIVE ST. JAMES DEVELOPMENT IN WHITE CITY

As part of the White City Opportunity Area (WCOA) with Westfield to its south and the emerging Imperial College campus to the north, the site now owned by developer St James was always going to be tall and dense. But the part outline/part final application, still under discussion with the planners, overran our fears. The submission from the Hammersmith Society on 20 January 2015, whilst supporting the redevelopment of the site, considered the St James' proposals to be wholly unacceptable.

The excessive height and density of the proposed tower blocks is in contravention of the limits set by the WCOA and will set a precedent for future developments. The White City Green, part of the WCOA master-plan, has been split into two inhospitable pedestrian environments. We further objected to the extremely low offer of affordable housing.

THE WALKABOUT PROPOSAL AT THE DORSETT HOTEL



The Dorsett Hotel - phase two – The Walkabout Site.

We are currently considering a controversial proposal to replace the Walkabout Bar on Shepherd's Bush Green with additional facilities for the recently completed and adjacent Dorsett Hotel. The main reason for opposing this scheme is that **the proposed 16-storey residential tower is, in our view, incongruous in this location**, sitting as it does between two distinguished listed buildings.

To one side can be found the **Empire Theatre** designed by Frank Matcham (who also designed the London Palladium and the Coliseum) and, on the other, the **Pavilion** by Frank Verity, another famous theatre/cinema architect. This building has had a somewhat chequered history as the Pavilion, Gaumont and Odeon cinemas and a Mecca bingo hall before its extensive alterations, and reopening as the Dorsett Hotel.

The architects for the scheme, Pilbrow and Partners, call the proposed tower a 'campanile' which in our view is a vainglorious conceit. It has no bell. We agree that there may possibly be justification for the replacement of the Walkabout building – originally one of our earliest cinemas and also a Building of Merit - but this proposal shows no respect for its distinguished neighbours. The Design and Access Statement in the planning application says that Shepherd's Bush Green is 'a space that has failed to meet its full potential for the borough.' We might agree but do not regard another marker tower as a suitable aspirant for that potential.

Tom Ryland

THE VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE – THE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

The Hammersmith Society and other interested groups commented on the newly redrafted Local Plan. This is a very substantial document of over 300 pages, and Committee members each took a different section to review and submit comments for compilation by our chairman, Rosemary Pettit. For me, and I think of particular interest to our membership, will be our comments on tall buildings. The English Heritage/CABE guidance is that tall buildings should meet all of the following key requirements:

Tall buildings should not be positioned where they obstruct views from key vantage points; have a detrimental impact on the historic environment; and have a significant adverse impact on the amenity of nearby occupiers.

Tall buildings may be appropriate if they are close to good public transport infrastructure; close to other tall residential or commercial clusters of tall buildings where it can be demonstrated that a new tall building serves to raise the quality and coherence of the cluster; and at locations where the provision of a landmark building would clearly improve the legibility of the city.

The Hammersmith Society has a more stringent view of the acceptability of tall buildings.

Any proposed new tall building **would reinforce the attractive and varied qualities of the borough's built environment** in order to create a positive image and identity; would be of a high standard of design and of architectural excellence, sympathetically integrated within the local and city context, and respecting principal views across the city and adjoining boroughs; would satisfy sustainable development objectives (as expressed through sustainability appraisal); and would preserve and enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas, and other areas, and listed buildings of special interest and character.

For a copy of the Hammersmith Society's submission on the Draft Local Plan please email rosemary@rosemarypettit.plus.com. Later this summer we will comment on the Council's Draft submission, followed by an Examination-in-Public next year.

Richard Jackson

SHEPHERDS BUSH MARKET – NOT OVER YET

The traders and shopkeepers of Shepherds Bush Market are challenging the **lawfulness of the decision taken by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government** to allow the Compulsory Purchase Orders. The Inspector at the 2014 Public Inquiry ruled against the Orders on the grounds that there were insufficient safeguards for the traders and that the proposed development would affect the ethnic diversity, independence and small-scale retailing environment of the area. The Secretary of State did not give reasons for overturning his Inspector's decision.

THE EVENTIM APOLLO TOUR



The Eventim Apollo - Decorative frieze to the foyer.

The Eventim Apollo was designed by the renowned theatre architect, Robert Crombie, and opened as the Gaumont Palace Cinema in 1932. Over the last year the Apollo's parent company, AEG Eventim, has spent £5m as the first stage of refurbishing the magnificent Art Deco interiors, including restoration of the plasterwork and historical decoration to match the original paint scheme. A further £3m is required to complete the work.

On 21 January the management of the Grade II* listed Eventim Apollo welcomed Hammersmith Society members and guests for a tour of the theatre. Approximately 30 members were introduced by Heiko Kacimi-Aloui, the general manager, to the architect, Edmund Wilson of Foster Wilson Architects, responsible for the restoration. The highlight for many of us was a demonstration of the recently restored Compton organ.

An application has been submitted to the Council for replacing the outdated signage with an illuminated digital LED screen. The Apollo has a history of large signage, and we have welcomed, with minor reservations this development.

THE FRIENDS OF WORMHOLT PARK

Formed in 2011, the Friends of Wormholt Park represent the users of the park and are heavily involved in its regeneration. The aim is to see it return to its former glory as an oasis within the surrounding urban landscape serving the diverse needs of the local community.

Derrick Wright

**THAMES WHARF REDEVELOPMENT:
FULL SUBMISSION BY THE HAMMERSMITH SOCIETY TO LBHF**

Thames Wharf Redevelopment: Demolition of existing buildings adjacent to the River Thames and redevelopment of the site comprising the construction of two buildings with balconies (one part six, part seven-storey and one part six, part seven, part nine-storey plus mezzanine) together with the retention and conversion of the buildings fronting Rainville Road; provision of a total of 57 residential units (Class C3); 699 sq.m. ground floor office space (Class B1); 116 sq.m flexible restaurant/office space (Class B1/A3) and retention of a 544sq.m restaurant (Class A3); with new access arrangements, basement car parking; cycle parking and associated landscaping. Ref: 2015/00642/FUL

I am responding on behalf of The Hammersmith Society. This application is of concern to the Hammersmith Society because it may be viewed from Hammersmith Bridge and is therefore integral to the character of Hammersmith. The site is alongside the river and is of particular sensitivity.

Background: Members of the Hammersmith Society have attended various meetings and presentations regarding proposals for this site by the architects, Rogers Stirk Harbour and Partners and their client, London and Regional Properties. In October 2014 we attended a briefing and presentation at Thames Wharf Studios following which we sent initial comments by email on 24 October. In November we attended the exhibition of amended proposals in Dorset Wharf, and in January we were represented at the Planning Forum in the Town Hall. We have had ongoing discussions with some of our affiliated groups and others, and it is fair to say that there is not a consensus view of the scheme.

History of the site: In many respects, this is an attractive scheme, retaining as it does the three-storey wharf buildings along Rainville Road, increasing the grassed and landscaped area between the wings of the new U-shaped development facing the river (by incorporating the existing car park standing and putting the proposed car parking underground). Since the original conversion of the wharves 20 years ago, and the introduction of the new studio extension with its barrel roof, the building has become an iconic feature of this stretch of the Thames.

The River Cafe: Originally intended as a staff restaurant, this has developed into one of London's most famous restaurants. We are pleased to note that both the River Cafe and an element of employment are being retained on site. Rogers Stirk Harbour and Partners have shown themselves to be sensitive at a small local scale, winning the RIBA Stirling Prize for Architecture in 2009 – and the Hammersmith Society Environment Award – for their Maggie's Centre building at Charing Cross Hospital.

The proposal: We believe that, despite the on-going criticisms by some against these proposals for Thames Wharf, reasonable steps have been taken to overcome many of the reservations which the Hammersmith Society had about the scheme.



Rogers Stirk Harbour's visual of their Thames Wharf scheme.

The architects have reduced the height of both the wing buildings, in the case of the south wing to part 9 storeys (from 11 storeys), and in the north wing to 6 storeys from 8 storeys) – and re-orientated the latter with a partial barrelled roof. The landscaping treatment in the centre courtyard defines usage.

The essential ethos of the new scheme has been to develop the design theme (begun with the original conversion of the Duckhams Depot in the 1970s), with its main feature being the barrel-vaulted south wing. The two wings are now further developed in modernist style and, although a further barrel roof has been introduced to the north wing, it has been turned through 90 degrees parallel to the river and so does not compete with the south wing. The height of the north wing is comparable to the adjacent Thames Reach (also designed by the practice).

The south wing will be visible from Hammersmith Bridge (and Furnivall Gardens) as it is at the moment, although the height will be increased. This extra height will compromise views through the bridge. Compared to the developments for Fulham Reach and Riverside Studios the proposal for Thames Wharf is not only half a mile away but is of small proportions and of superior architectural merit, and will provide a point of interest rather than an eyesore.

The proposals will also impact to some extent on the adjacent streets of two-storey houses, and the conservation area in general, but the architects have carefully considered this and graded the heights up towards the river from the existing wharf buildings. Overall the architectural treatment will provide excitement and contrast, and in our opinion will not be detrimental. The architects can be relied upon for their thoughtful crafting of the project and their reputation for exquisite detailing.

Many have expressed concerns about the demolition of the existing north wing. All the existing wharf buildings are classed as Local Buildings of Merit. As a rule, we support the

principle that there must be exceptional justification for demolishing all or part of such buildings. In this case, only a part of the group of buildings, and one which has been extensively altered over a number of years, is being replaced. The proposed contemporary design is commensurate with the design theme of the overall scheme. Juxtaposition of high quality contemporary design beside fine traditional buildings has provided some of our best architecture in recent years, and there are many examples that can be cited in London of alterations and juxtapositions to important listed buildings, e.g., The Royal Opera House, British Museum, King's Cross Station, etc.

We also assessed the massing of the scheme, with particular reference to the south wing. However, if this is examined in the context of the model of Fulham Reach helpfully provided by the architects, it is obvious that the relative scale of this proposal compared to other approved schemes now under construction along this stretch of the river is of minimal proportions.

Nevertheless, we do have concerns regarding the following points:

Riverside Walk and retaining wall: The opportunity should be taken to incorporate visual improvements to the riverside walk along this stretch in accordance with the Riverside Walk Enhancement Report 2010. The existing wall was rebuilt some years ago and left as a reinforced concrete finish. This is in contrast with other wharves, e.g., Crabtree and Blakes Wharf, where the wall has been faced in brick. However, we would not support treatment such as at Fulham Reach where the riverside walk has been annexed as a part of the adjoining development and highly inappropriate railings and finishes added. The wall on the Thames Wharf stretch would also appear to be excessively high and discussion should be held with the PLA to see if some reduction is possible.

Parking on the site between Thames Wharf and Thames Reach: It is regrettable that the opportunity cannot be taken to deal with the fenced-off car park in this important location immediately adjacent to the river. It is currently an eyesore and should be landscaped and made accessible.

Loss of privacy: We are aware of concerns expressed by residents of Thames Reach regarding loss of privacy as a result of the proposed development. We appreciate that there will be a slight reduction in outlook, and loss of views, but note that there are no windows or balconies facing or even immediately adjacent Thames Reach, and no windows on Thames Reach facing Thames Wharf.

Parking nuisance: Another complaint from local residents, with which we sympathise, is that of late-night parking nuisance by customers of the River Café. It seems that, due to the high profile of the restaurant, many chauffeured cars, often with engines running, remain outside the restaurant until the early hours. We ask that the Council makes it a matter of high priority to condition restaurant parking arrangements.

Overall, we consider that the benefits of this scheme, to the otherwise frankly dull architecture of this stretch of river, outweigh any disadvantages. Best Regards

ADELAIDE WORKS, MARGRAVINE CEMETERY AND GEORGE BROAD



The Broad family monument, Margravine Cemetery.

Adelaide Works featured briefly in our September 2014 Newsletter, when a proposal was outlined to demolish the rare 19th century brick kiln and build eight flats on the site. This proposal has now been withdrawn but the works and its distinctive square chimney are still at risk.

Adelaide Works was, in the late 19th century, the site of George Broad's foundry which produced many fine statues including London's most iconic, Eros in Piccadilly Circus (by the sculptor Alfred Gilbert). We believe greater regard should be given to Hammersmith's very considerable industrial heritage.

A fine example of the Broad foundry's work can be found in the Margravine Cemetery. This is the Broad family monument, an elegant cast bronze baroque-style panel, dating from 1895, designed by sculptor Aristide Fabbrucci. It has an English Heritage Grade II listing.

LONDON FESTIVAL OF ARCHITECTURE 1-30 JUNE

West London's contribution to the London Festival of Architecture continues to develop from our visionary **project to transform Hammersmith by reconnecting the town to its riverside**. The debate about how to replace the ageing Hammersmith flyover was followed by the LBHF Feasibility Study, and there has been an enthusiastic response from the GLA/TfL and the London Mayor to placing city roads in tunnels, especially at Hammersmith.

Events this year will include children's design workshops, an exhibition entitled 'Hammersmith – Past, Present and Future' and a Question Time discussion about city roads in tunnels. This debate is currently scheduled for 18 June, with high-profile guest speakers. All events are being held at the Lyric Theatre, Further details at www.westlondonlink.com.

Tom Ryland

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER – SUBSEQUENT ROUND-UP

The revised scheme for the **Triangle Site**, Beadon Road, W6 by developers Romulus and architects Allies Morrison has been withdrawn.

A new application for **Leigh Court** only in Avondale has been submitted and the previous application including **1&2 Rowley Cottages** appears to be in abeyance. Several schemes mentioned in the September newsletter have received planning permission:

Quaker Meeting House

Bechtel House, 245 Hammersmith Road, W6

17 Rylett Crescent, W12.

Riverview House, Beavor Lane, W6

MEMBERSHIP

The Hammersmith Society represents over 3000 residents in Hammersmith through individual members and membership of our affiliated societies. We are Hammersmith's only dedicated amenity society; we welcome new members, and encourage our membership in the active running of the Society. If you can contribute by joining the committee please email our Chairman, Rosemary Pettit, at rosemary@rosemarypettit.plus.com

Subscriptions remain at £6 for individuals (£5 concession), £8 for a family or couple, and £15 for organisations. Email our Treasurer, Richard Tollemache on r.tollemache1@gmail.com, or download a membership form from www.hammersmithsociety.wordpress.com/

HAMMERSMITH SOCIETY COMMITTEE 2014-2015

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