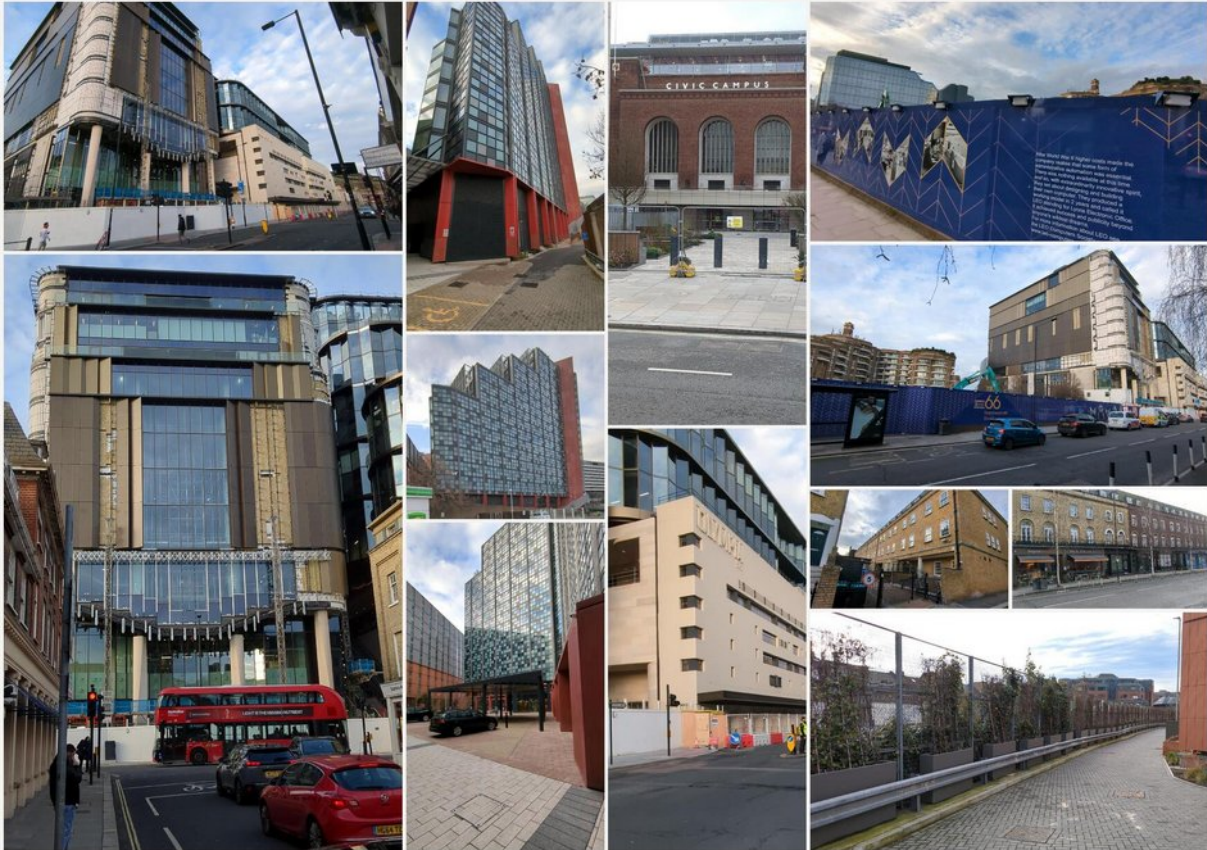




The Hammersmith Society

Chairman's Annual Report 2024-2025

The changing face of Hammersmith



Olympia G-gate theatre, 181 Talgarth road, Town Hall, 66 and 99-119 Hammersmith road (Charlotte Terrace)

This year has been unusual in a few ways, not least the lateness of the AGM! A 'curate's egg'.

While the residential property market nearly came to a halt in 2025, the effect of the slowdown had been evident for a while, with a number of new projects being proposed, some we'd discussed with developers, several of which didn't then progress to planning or got stuck there. The effect extends past residential, into the previously burgeoning realms of student accommodation (PBSA) and hotels. Some, such as 2 Queen Caroline St, and Landmark House mentioned in last year's report, languish unapproved or not started. We're expecting several of these to come back to life in 2026.

However *Megaprojects* can and must ride out economic cycles, so it was full steam ahead for Olympia which I [visited one February morning](#), (pictured recently above), the project expecting to complete during 2025, but a sensible phased opening meaning that it will actually unfold during 2026.

This is, we think, an underestimated project, not only in its scale and ambition, but also its effect as a destination in the (West) London entertainment scene, easily stealing a crown gifted by Earls Court, but possibly also from Hammersmith central (Apollo etc). Disappointingly, Olympia doesn't quite have the excellent public transport links of Earls Court or the Broadway, leaving developers Yoo Capital needing to help fund Overground improvements as the most viable way to plug the gap.



Olympia is already having a profound effect on the office scene in Central Hammersmith, with most of the older and smaller offices along Hammersmith Road vacated and being proposed for conversion to flats under Permitted Development rules, many objectively likely to be of disappointing quality. I wrote about this in [detail in late 2024](#), with a trend of progression from Office/Industrial, sometimes to Hotel or PBSA, most to Residential, and mentioned it last year too. This year, our council have found grounds to refuse conversion of several sites, but their hands are increasingly tied by the GLA and government, forcing them to allow these poor conversions. This is ironic given the increasing regulation of ‘new’ developments, and the increasing complexity of ‘planning’ (despite government rhetoric), PD providing a bolt-hole for those unable or unwilling to navigate such obstacles.

Pictured above-right, the latest is Charlotte Terrace, 99-119 Hammersmith road, the Grade II listed frontage with modern rear, now up for conversion to flats, and already advertised in several vacant retail units below. X marks the spot – this is the epicentre of change in Hammersmith in 2025 - with [66 Hammersmith Road](#), (the Big Yellow development) bang opposite, demolished with its LEO-inspired hoardings in place, next to Olympia, about to complete.

[181 Talgarth road](#), also pictured, escaped nomination for a wooden spoon last year because it was incomplete. Now complete, Premier Inn has opened, and it still escaped. Perhaps the chequerboard glazing tipped it into the architect's preferred ‘playful’ category, avoiding eyesore status after all? However, as feared by Yeldham road residents, AKA the ‘Save Our Hammersmith’ campaign, the reflected noise problems from the Tube lines between them have appeared and been measured, despite their herculean efforts to get mitigations via planning conditions. The public realm, planned as the central green ‘heart of the scheme’ materialised as the bare paved carpark shown. Spoons still beckon.

Elsewhere, the [Town Hall](#) (or ‘civic campus’, as now named in lights) is also starting to appear and will complete in 2026; the scheme’s for-sale flats already attracting ubiquitous foreign investors.

None of the above addresses [White City](#), which continues to expand, but perhaps not at the initial rate. It’s pleasingly provided one of our Environment Award nominations, in the shape of the large Peabody development at [Macfarlane Place](#).

In development



[Earls Court](#) had built up a head of steam with planning submitted in late 2024, and was duly approved in late 2025 by both H&F and RBKC a few weeks apart. We’d joined with the Fulham, Kensington and Earls Court Societies, local Resident Associations, and The London Forum to discuss the problem of its unnecessarily overbuilt heights, lack of genuinely usable open space, vision, place-making / destination, failing to revive the self-declared ‘wonder’, and seemingly neither fully using

its unique position with top-rated public transport access (PTAL 6b), or name, plus a history to reckon with. Instead we noted a *metoo* jumble, the product of too many discordant architectural practices, a result that could be in Shanghai, Dallas, Harrow Road or Old Oak. With much else having slowed down, the government and Mayor taking an increasingly hardline stance on planning, they were never going to refuse it, or even dare to moderate the excesses, and it was waved through unmolested. We still don’t have the requested housing density figures (other than ‘optimising site capacity through a design-led approach’ [London Plan D3]).

Similarly, only a couple of miles away, the [Kensal Canalside](#) mixed-use development of 2519 ‘units’ on the borders of LBHF (Harrow Road), actually in RBKC, was waved through on 11th November to the chagrin of our members St. Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum, and the Kensington Society who put up a solid joint defence, based on it’s similarly overbuilt, so-called *spreadsheet architecture*,



North Kensington

plus in this case, a truly woeful lack of public transport, on its own enough for refusal in normal times. The development’s best PTAL score of 4 (in one small corner), with half the site **scoring zero**, is made all the more obvious by the Elizabeth Line and Paddington mainlines streaming past as shown, without a new station. If ever there was a failure in strategic transport planning, it’s here, overlooking the scene of the Ladbroke Grove train crash at the hands of signal 109, a quarter of a century ago. It’s now with the Mayor for his review.

By contrast, we were pleased to see [Royal Masonic Hospital](#) consented after several iterations, having taken heed of much of the public consultation feedback – and ours – albeit with a few remaining local concerns, and minimal affordable provision. Not only will it bring back into use a large part of the Ravenscourt ward, but it now also promises to provide affordable housing via the boiler house site adjacent, recently acquired by the developer, TT, with plans pending but as yet unreviewed. The RMH site also provides for some public use, via its Grade II* listed Block A shown.



Local Plan

The H&F Local Plan has been overdue for a while: LBHF issued an early draft for review in the summer. While welcoming its appearance, we were a little disappointed in the vagueness of some of it, and made a range of comments, some detailed, some more general. The lack of clarity perhaps stems from the context in which it appears; we trust not the result of a dollop of AI. A difficult environment is created by regular rewrites of the NPPF (twice in the last 14 months), the 2025 Planning & Infrastructure Bill, now law, the unknown context of the next London Plan - in gestation - and changing central government and GLA edicts, the latest significantly changing affordable housing calculations - albeit only temporarily. Local Plan creation has even been subject to recent ministerial intervention with a ‘new plan-making system’ on the statute, transitional rules added in to complicate the mix. We expect to re-engage with this in 2026.

With the ink barely dry on the previous government’s 2023 Levelling-up and Regeneration Act ‘LURA’, the current government is already issuing ‘guidance’, and so committed are they to the detail, that even the *guidance* is caveated as ‘draft’! ‘*This is draft guidance and may change*’.

The effect of multiple rewrites could be to wear down the broader civic moment – we hope not the idea - but it’s a bit pointless, for example, requesting feedback on a 4 month consultation ‘that is not formal’ on something that, by law, must end up with no legal weight anyway.

If you were to do a top-to-bottom traceability analysis to make sure that the many layers of planning were all in sync, respecting each other, clear, unambiguous and not overlapping - or worse contradicting - you’d have restarted that process 3 or 4 times in 2025, and by Christmas might reasonably have taken to the bottle.

To ‘fix the planning system’ it needs to be clearer and simpler, which could be achieved by taking the approach [I outlined in 2025](#). Basic economics are overwhelmingly driving the housing market, and rewriting / complicating the legislative script may have the unintended consequences of driving developers and others to greener pastures, such as PD. This remains an ongoing significant concern.



The Bridge

There’s little of substance to say on this long-running story, now in its seventh year, and so we’ve again not reported on it in 2025. The sporadic “Task Force” was reconvened a year ago but produced little output, and MP’s of different stripes south of the River have since been more actively campaigning than our local MP’s, because their constituents are most affected, relying on essential services north of the river, often in their line of sight, yet barely reachable by public transport.



Committee members

We're indebted to Treasurer Nina Jindal who is standing down this year. We're again welcoming help from any member who can offer assistance by joining the committee. Please contact the incoming chair at chair@hammersmithsociety.org.uk if you think you can help in any capacity – a keen interest in Hammersmith's built and natural environment is all you need.

Reflections on Chairmanship 2022-2025



Welcome to **Hammersmith Weekly** for Sunday, 28th December 2025: our roundup of local, affiliate and topical news covering the Society's interests, plus this week's postings to our website and diary. If you find this useful, please [forward to a friend /neighbour](#)

John Yane: Harry Roberts, London killer

Source: [OnLondon](#) | Published: 27th December 2025 17:54

Braybrook Street, W12, is a residential road that skirts the common land of Wormwood Scrubs and the Category B prison of the same name. Six decades ago, it wasn't unknown for inmates to abscond from "The Scrubs" with the help of getaway cars lurking in the vicinity. It was, then, perhaps unwise of three men who had committed a string of armed robberies to be sitting in a shabby blue van parked on the street... [Read more >](#)

Duty to Cooperate ends

Source: [London Forum](#) | Published: 27th December 2025 14:00

The Minister of State for Housing and Planning, Matthew Pennycook MP, wrote to the Planning Inspectorate in November 2025 to set out that the Government intends to revoke the Duty to Co-operate for the current plan-making system. Paul Morrison, the CEO of the Planning Inspectorate, replied on 15th December 2025 welcoming the change and giving details on how Local Plans will be examined and legally compliant and sound plans brought forward to adoption. [Read more >](#)



Reeves and Khan Clash Over Local Transport Funding

Source: [Channel4](#) | Published: 24th December 2025 09:33

Mayor angry over lack of cash for Hammersmith Bridge and West London Orbital [Read more >](#)



Written Answers – Department for Transport: Hammersmith Bridge Repairs and Maintenance (23 Dec 2025)

Anonymous | Published: 23rd December 2025 00:00

Baroness Hodgson of Abinger: To ask His Majesty's Government when the strengthening stage of works will be completed on **Hammersmith Bridge** so that it can reopen to traffic.

Single Construction Regulator

Source: [London Forum](#) | Published: 23rd December 2025 11:00

The Crenell Tower Inquiry's Phase 2 report recommended a single regulator that draws together functions relating to the construction industry. There is a Government consultation on a Single Construction Regulator until 20th March 2026. [Read more >](#)



Grimshaw wins £4.4m job on redevelopment of Battersea Power Station waste facility site

Source: [Building Design - Latest news](#) | Published: 23rd December 2025 12:07

Practice to lead design on Cringle Dock facility with engineering consultant WSP [Read more >](#)



Mari Delli Claims Overwhelming Support for Chiswick Mall Parklet

Source: [Channel4](#) | Published: 23rd December 2025 10:34

Residents' association says those living closest remain concerned [Read more >](#)



Previously...

- [Leavis Boston: What if the London Blueways had been built?](#)
- [3 London councils named among those allowed to impose large tax rises in 2026 - some won't do it](#)
- [TfL commits to re-opening West London bridge described as 'rather depressing sight'](#)
- [Written Answers – Department for Transport: Hammersmith Bridge \(23 Dec 2025\)](#)
- [Second part of 4,000-home West London development given green light - one hurdle remains](#)
- [Godalwin Gardens playground transfer...](#)

With the overhang of the pandemic early in my tenure, there were fewer substantive new projects than normal, however larger projects that we believe we helped improve in some way include: the Royal Masonic Hospital, Earls Court, and Shepherds Bush Market, all now with plans consented. The committee met with developers of smaller sites, and discussed, reviewed and commented on countless other schemes such as the proposed M&S redevelopment. We're still working on the [Black Bull](#) and [fountain restoration](#), along with HOLT.

We brought to light the issues around school developments – *building on school land* – and highlighted some exaggerated claims behind the 'toxic air' debate that some continue to rely on, with numbers that turn out to be a bit less toxic than the politics, with the Mayor claiming in late 2025 that "London has achieved the impossible: its air quality levels just met legal nitrogen dioxide limits for the first time. Experts said this would take 193 years, but under Mayor of London Sadiq Khan's visionary leadership, it was accomplished in just nine years".

One of my objectives as chairman was to provide greater integration with our affiliates in the spirit intended by the federated organisation set up by Hans Haenlein back in the 1960's. But in common with many societies, it became difficult to print and deliver physical newsletters in the pandemic: we stopped and didn't restart, which made regular communication even more important.

I created the weekly email in 2023, combining excerpts from affiliate websites and our own, fed with a growing list of around forty other public sources, covering the built and natural environment, and local matters of interest to members of the Society, and I expect to keep managing it when I step back into the former membership role.

If you're not yet a member, please [follow this link](#) to subscribe. Members need to amend their subscription using the 'update preferences' link in the bottom of each email we send out. **Please note that as an existing member, you are not automatically subscribed to Weekly for GDPR reasons - you must opt-in.**

In a parallel life, as a new trustee of [London Forum](#) in 2025, I created similar: now over 100 societies across London, including this one, share each [other's news](#), knowledge, successes and challenges, plus the output of London Forum's own work. You can [subscribe for free here](#).

Finally, as I stand down after the three-year term defined by our constitution, I'd like to thank the committee for their work and tolerance, and members for all their feedback, input and comments, plus 'Taking a View' articles that help keep us grounded.

Best wishes for 2026 and the future.

Richard Farthing, Chairman, January 2026