



EALING CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Working to preserve and improve our Borough



Founded in 1967

President: Charles Mynors

www.ealingcivicsociety.org

Member of

**CIVIC
VOICE**

Spring 2018

Chairman's message

Welcome to the Spring 2018 newsletter. This issue contains articles about the new London Plan recently published for consultation by Sadiq Khan to replace the old London Plan which he inherited from Boris Johnson. The most striking change is the increase in the housing target in the attempt to solve London's housing crisis. Cynics might suggest that previous targets have come and gone without having been met, usually as a result of external factors such as the state of the economy and the inability of housebuilders to build the properties. Only time will tell whether these increased targets will be met. We also have news about the Council's consultation on the future use of the Victoria Hall in Ealing Town Hall once it has passed into the ownership of the Council's preferred development partner for the Town Hall. This has proved controversial because of the nature of the original trust set up when the Victoria Hall was built with public subscriptions. More positively, the neighbourhood plan for central Ealing was approved by both businesses and local residents in the autumn and has now been adopted as part of Ealing's Local Plan. Finally, we report on the final events of our successful 50th anniversary celebrations: the John Soane walk and a very enjoyable lunch at Lisa's Restaurant which has sadly since closed.

I look forward to seeing you at our AGM on 10 April when Gavin Leonard will talk about the history of Ealing Town Hall and the Mayor will unveil a plaque to Charles Jones, Ealing's first borough engineer and architect.

Robert Gurd



Victoria Hall

London Plan

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, published a new draft London Plan at the end of November 2017 which was open for consultation until early March 2018. When adopted at the end of 2019 it will replace the old London Plan which was published by his predecessor, Boris Johnson, in 2011. The most far-reaching issue for us is the proposal to increase the target for new homes in the period covered by the plan up to 2028. The Borough of Ealing will be required

to deliver 28,000 new homes in this period. At an occupancy rate of 3 people per unit, the population of the Borough would increase by around 84,000 people or 25% at a time when infrastructure to support new residents, such as schools, hospitals and other health and public services, are coming under increasing financial pressures. In theory, up to 50% of the new homes provided should be affordable but in practice, as under the existing London Plan, this is unlikely to be achieved particularly since the Mayor has indicated that developers delivering at least 35% of affordable homes (50% on publicly owned land) will not have to

provide a viability assessment to justify their provision. Other worrying elements of the plan are the stated ambition of the Mayor to deliver many new homes (nearly 11,000 in Ealing in the Plan period) through development of "small sites" (i.e. smaller than 0.25 ha area). This, together with the stated aim of encouraging development of under-utilised areas such as low-density car parks, retail parks and leisure sites, is likely to lead to ever-increasing development pressures on the Borough.

Coming Events

Tuesday 10 April 2018: Civic Society AGM, Nelson Room, Ealing Town Hall, at 7.30 p.m. Speaker: Gavin Leonard, former Borough Architect, on the history of Ealing Town Hall (see page 6 for details).

Tuesday 29 May 2018 "Crossrail, Countdown to Delivery", Liz Cantell Room, Ealing Town Hall, at 7.30 p.m. Speaker: John Goldsmith.

Saturday 16 June 2018: Civic Day: an event to mark Civic Day (to be confirmed).

Tuesday 3 July 2018 John Delafons Lecture: Gunnersbury Past and Present. Ealing Green Church, at 7.30 p.m. Speaker: Val Bott, editor of the newsletter of the Friends of Gunnersbury Park.

Central Ealing and West Ealing Centre Neighbourhood Plans

The result of the referendum into the Central Ealing Neighbourhood Plan (CENP), announced on 13 October, was a resounding vote in favour of the plan being adopted by the Council. The figures [table below] show a decisive result in favour of the plan for central Ealing, developed over the past five years by the Forum jointly with local businesses and residents.

No of votes cast:	YES	NO	Turnout (% of eligible voters)
Business voters	54 (91.5%)	5 (8.5%)	45.4%
Residential voters	2616 (92.4%)	214 (7.6%)	17.2%

The Plan will influence how Ealing's town centre develops in the years to 2026. It will guide how planned changes can respond to the challenge and opportunity brought by a rapidly increasing population and improved transport access, while preserving Ealing's distinctive and historic character.

Following a decision by full Council in December 2017 the CENP has now become part of the statutory development plan for Central Ealing, and will directly influence decisions on local planning applications. The Plan's vision is that Central Ealing will once again be a sought-after destination and a natural focus for both the Borough and the West London sub-region, for the benefit of those who live, work or study in the area.

A similar plan for the centre of West Ealing is due to go to a referendum in May. As with central Ealing, both businesses and residents will be entitled to vote and a majority of both have to approve the plan for it to take effect. More information may be found at <http://www.wecnf.org/>.

In the Footsteps of John Soane

A walk from Pitzhanger Manor to the Soane Museum was part of the Society's 50th Anniversary celebrations, a distance of 8.7 miles regularly walked by Sir John Soane and many others who lived in Ealing, from Quincy Adams to boarding schoolboys on their afternoon off.

There was fine weather and much to note on the way, from two former Passmore-Edwards public libraries, one now a theatre in Shepherd's Bush, to the *Horse at Water* sculpted by Nic Fiddian-Green at Hyde Park Corner. On the way we took in the statue to St Volodymyr, ruler of Ukraine 980-1015, J.M. Barrie's house in Bayswater, the Holland Park house of James McBey, a World War 1 artist, and the cemetery with 300 pets at Lancaster Gate as well as many other notable historical architectural sites. We looked over the railings at Lancaster Gate to glimpse the Italian Water Gardens given as a gesture of love by Prince Albert to Queen Victoria. We passed Kensington Palace Gardens,



Horse at Water

to Roman Abramovich, Lakshmi Mittal, Bernie Ecclestone and Leonid Blavatnik. We ended with a tour of the Museum, now so popular that it opens on Sundays. There you can see a sarcophagus, complete with Egyptian hieroglyphics, and paintings by Hogarth and Canaletto, as well as many of the drawings of projects Soane had in mind.

The route is now entirely built up, whereas much would have been countryside in Soane's day and we imagined him using the walk productively as thinking time. It is virtually all flat and in a straight line and not difficult. Should any member wish to try it and like a copy of the notes we made of the sights along the way, please contact Jenny Gadsby at gadsbyj@hotmail.com

50th Anniversary Lunch

Over 40 members of the Society filled Lisa's Restaurant in Pitzhanger Lane on 12 October to celebrate our 50th anniversary. We were delighted that Councillor Ranjit Dheer and his wife, Councillor Harbhajan Kaur Dheer, were able to join us for the lunch. Robert Gurd, Chairman of the Society, spoke briefly about the history of the Society and the reasons for its establishment. Afterwards Charles Mynors, our President, spoke in praise of the Borough and proposed a toast to the future of the Society. The lunch concluded a successful year commemorating the milestone event which included special walks and a lecture marking the 50th anniversary of the creation of conservation areas.



The Soane Rangers



Our President

a tree-lined avenue cited as 'the most exclusive address' and now home not only to a number of embassies but also

Civic Society Awards 2017

The presentation on November 9th last year was made in Haven Green Baptist Church, which easily accommodated the fifty or so members who attended. One of the judges, Gavin Leonard, talked us through the shortlisted entries and winners, and Mike Jordan operated the microphones, PA system, screen display and computer.

The short-listed entries were judged by local architects Franklyn Nevard, Anthony Ferguson and Gavin Leonard. They assessed the eight shortlisted schemes against four criteria:

- design
- fitness for purpose.
- contribution to the landscape/townscape.
- other factors (energy efficiency, good pedestrian access, anti pollution measures and re-use of materials).

Gavin, a former Borough Architect, discussed the eight schemes shortlisted by our panel of judges: two were highly commended and three were commended. No scheme was considered sufficiently exceptional for the 2017 main award. One of the **Highly Commended** entries,



Springhallow School, although not notable for its architectural originality, stood out because of its suitability for its pupils, 90% of whom were autistic boys and who respond best to unobtrusive

colouring, signage and design.

The other **Highly Commended** entry was Acton Gardens. **Commended** entries were 81 Madeley Road and Hanger Lane; Alfresco Living, W5; West Twyford Primary School. Full details and pictures of the five award winners and three other shortlisted entries are shown on the Awards pages of our website.

It had been a quiet week in the Palace of Westminster (ahem...) as Steve Pound MP told us, so he was able to get away and present the certificates to our winners. Fortunately, he told us, he has been able to overcome the initial prejudice against architects which was instilled in him by his mother, mainly on the grounds that they wore suede shoes. A propos of nothing he shared with us that his father was a Communist and his mother a catholic so on one wall of their family home a picture of Joe Stalin was glowered at by another of the Madonna. As a long-serving resident of



Steve Pound with Mike Woolliscroft, Acton Gardens

Ealing he could quote from memory the poet John Betjeman's immortal lines:

*Parish of enormous hayfields
Perivale stood all alone
And from Greenford scent of mayfields
Most enticingly was blown.*

(Middlesex from *A Few Late Chrysanthemums*, 1954).

Not much change there then.

Steve Pound went on to talk of the need to conserve the best of the past and to look forward to the future, praising the work of the Civic Society and wishing us another 50 successful years. We were urged to cherish and preserve the small gems of suburban style to be found everywhere in the Borough.

Tony Williams and Philippa Dolphin



James Tatham, Springhallow School

Filmworks Cinema site

Work on the site came to a halt shortly before Christmas and was slow to start again afterwards but we have been assured that the delay was due to the need to prepare for demolition of Walpole House, the unloved office block in Bond Street. Long-standing members will recall that the former Walpole Picture Theatre was originally located here but was sadly demolished in the 1970s to make way for the office block which for many years housed Thames Valley University (latterly West London University) offices. Only the (pictured) façade of the cinema was saved and is due to be incorporated into the Filmworks development in its current location next to the first house in Mattock Lane.



News from Gunnersbury

The first phase of the Gunnersbury Masterplan 2026 is nearly finished. The new café, run by Benugo (strapline "great coffee and food in the most beautiful places") opened on 3 March on the site of the old café next to the round pond. Works are being finalised on the Large Mansion and the Orangery, plus the surrounding planting. Once they are finished the new playground next to the café will open and the creation of new displays in the museum can begin. The round



New café

pond and the horseshoe lake have been restored and a very attractive kitchen garden established. 700 new trees have been planted in the park in the last few months, including



Civic Society lime trees

four new lime trees funded by Ealing Civic Society to celebrate our 50th anniversary in 2017. The limes are located at the north end of the playing field near the Lionel Road/Popes Lane entrance. We are grateful to Chris Ellis, the head gardener, for his help with this.

The official handover of the restored buildings is likely to be the end of April. This first phase has been made possible by funding from the Heritage

Lottery Fund, Ealing and Hounslow Councils, Historic England and the Friends of Gunnersbury Park and Museum. The 2nd phase will focus on the now sad-looking small mansion and the stable block, and repairing various structures in the park. The 3rd phase will focus



The Orangery: work in progress

mainly on the sports hub.

From April 2018 management of the park will be in the hands of the Gunnersbury (2026) Community Interest Company, jointly owned by Ealing and Hounslow. The long term funding of the park could well be problematic. It is hoped that considerable sums can be raised by holding events in the park.

Two major events are scheduled for this summer. Details plus information about consultation arrangements are

given on the Friends of Gunnersbury Park and Museum website <http://gunnersburyfriends.org>.

A beautiful new book on the history of Gunnersbury Park written by Val Bott and James Wisdom will be published on 28 March. It will be available (price £6.95) from Scala Books, Amazon and hopefully from local bookshops and the Museum in due course ISBN 9781785511325).

Philippa Dolphin

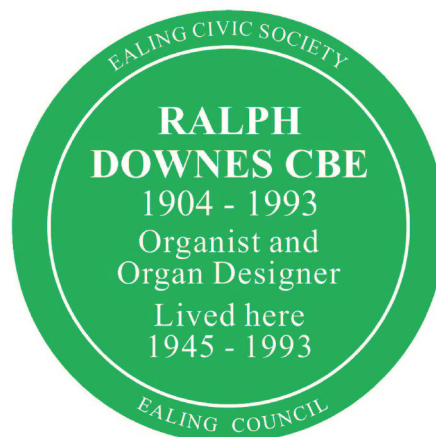


The Large Mansion

Ed: Val Bott will be giving this year's Civic Society John Delafons lecture on "Gunnersbury Park, Past and Present", at Ealing Green Church, on 3 July at 7.30 p.m.

Our latest plaque

A new green plaque was installed in October 2017. It commemorates Ralph Downes (1904-1993) an organist, organ designer and music teacher. Although he was born in Derby, he lived at 9 Elm Crescent W5 for much of his life. He was commissioned to design the organ for the Royal Festival Hall, which was unveiled in 1954. This organ replaced a temporary Compton organ which had been in place since the hall was opened as part of the Festival of Britain in 1951. He was Professor of Organ in the Royal College of Music from 1954 to 1975 and was regarded as the leading organ teacher of his day.



The plaque was funded by
Ealing Common Ward Forum

Victoria Hall

The Council has plans to sell most of Ealing Town Hall to a hotel operator called Mastcraft. It would retain the east end of the building, including the Council Chamber, for civic purposes. Part of the sale would include the Victoria and Princes Halls and other ancillary rooms which were originally built in the 1880s by public subscription to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. A charitable trust was set up to manage the halls and their public hire for meetings and social events. The Trust was due to be operated separately from the Council and any surpluses were to be distributed to local charities. The original trustees were members of the Ealing Local Board and in time their duties were passed to the members of the Council and the operation and maintenance of the property became merged with the rest of the Council's operations.

The Council has asked the Charity Commission if they can change the wording of the Trust to allow it to hand over the halls to a commercial operator on a 250 year lease. Public access is likely to be more limited than currently and

in the long term is likely to cost more. In response, the Charity Commission has told the Council to consult stakeholders first. We consider that the Council may not have the right to dispose of the halls for a variety of reasons: first and foremost the halls were paid for by public donations and the Council does not have the right to sell them without compensating the Trust; and, second, the Council does not appear to have properly taken into account the significance of the obligations of the Trust when deciding to dispose of the Victoria and Princes Halls. We consider that the Hall should not be sold off to a developer but instead be retained for community use at reasonable prices. The consultation has been extended on several occasions as a result of further information being placed in the public domain which has so far not been helpful. At the same time, the Council indicated that redevelopment of Perceval House by its preferred developer Galliford Try had also been delayed.

Robert Gurd

Planning Issues

Here are some significant planning applications to which Ealing Civic Society has submitted recent responses.

2 Portal Way, Acton

This application is to demolish the existing buildings and to redevelop the site to provide two buildings of 25 and 35 storeys comprising 380 residential flats and 11 ground floor commercial kitchens. We objected because the scheme would result in a very high density development. Its proposed 'carving' of the building forms would be unsympathetic in this location and the elevational treatment would be garish and unresolved. Plans for single-aspect north-east facing flats would also provide poor living conditions. Nevertheless, we welcomed improvements outlined for the public realm, including from the North Acton Underground Station. Despite our objections the proposal was approved in principle by the Planning Committee at its February meeting but the final decision will be taken by the Mayor of London because of the size of the scheme.

The Perfume Factory, Acton

In our last newsletter we noted that we had objected to the proposal to demolish the existing buildings on the site (including part of the locally-listed art deco façade of the original factory) and replace them with three residential buildings between 12 and 25 storeys to provide 400 residential units. Somewhat to our surprise, the Planning Committee rejected the proposal at its February meeting but the final decision again rests with the Mayor of London who could still approve a slightly amended



version of the scheme passed by the Planning Committee at a later meeting.

Argos Homebase Superstore, Western Avenue

Redevelopment of the site to provide a residential-led development comprising 333 residential units with building heights between 3 and 16 storeys is planned for this site. While we have no objection in principle, we considered that the proposed north east corner block would be overbearing and over-high compared with the recently approved redevelopment of the former Savoy Cinema site across the road to the east. We thought that the height of the proposed north east corner block should be reduced to be comparable to that approved development on the Savoy Cinema site. We also considered that the elevational treatment of the frontages on Old Oak Road and Western Avenue is unresolved and needs much more attention to produce an appropriate design for this corner.

Hanwell Railway Station, Campbell Road

The plan is to install two lifts, one to the north entrance via Campbell Road and one within the subway. We

commented because this is an important Great Western Railway Grade II listed railway station. While we welcome the principle, we consider that the installation of lifts at this station needs to be done in a highly sensitive way in order not to harm the setting of the listed structures. We had no comment on the proposed installation for the first lift as it would be unobtrusively incorporated into the existing platform structure. However, we strongly objected to

the proposed loss of the existing southern entrance canopy which, although a modern construction, is in keeping with the existing station and surrounding area. The proposed 'stripped down' canopy would be out of keeping with both. For the second lift, we appreciated the need for a separate lift 'tower' in the location adjacent to the north station entrance but would have preferred its height to have been reduced and for the roof to have been of pitched



Hanwell Railway Station

construction to match the existing station hipped roof shape.

Jo Winters

British Sign Language Interpreter wanted!

Do you have BSL skills? A member is looking for someone who would be willing to volunteer to interpret for him at Civic Society Meetings. If you are able and willing to do this, please contact our membership secretary: gadsbyj@hotmail.com.

Annual General Meeting 2018

The 2018 AGM will be held in the Nelson Room, Ealing Town Hall 7.30 pm, **Tuesday 10th April 2018**

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Chairman's Report for 2017
3. Adoption of the Chairman's Report
4. Treasurer's Report for 2017
5. Adoption of the Treasurer's Report
6. Appointment of Auditors
7. Election of Officers
8. Election of other committee members

The following current committee members have indicated a willingness to stand for a further year:

Corinne Templer (Vice President), Jenny Gadsby (Membership), Tony Miller, Paul Fitzmaurice, Maggie Gold, Philippa Dolphin (Web manager), William

Hardman, Josephine Barry-Hicks (Minutes), Jo Winters (Secretary), Josette Bishop (Treasurer).

In accordance with the constitution, further nominations for election to the committee may be made by members of the Society. They must be submitted in writing to the Secretary (Jo Winters, 28 Ranelagh Road, Ealing W5 5RJ) at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting, supported by a seconder who is also a member of the Society. The consent of the nominee must first have been obtained. If the nominations exceed the number of vacancies, a ballot shall take place.

9. Motions and any other business submitted to the Chairman in writing prior to the meeting
10. **Talk by Gavin Leonard on the history of Ealing Town Hall**

From our Treasurer

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Contributors: Robert Gurd, Jo Winters, Josette Bishop, Jenny Gadsby, Tony Miller, Tony Williams, Philippa Dolphin.

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Gunnersbury: PD; Perfume Factory: *Essential Living*; Hanwell Railway Station: *Wikipedia*

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