

Summer 2019

From the (Acting) Chairman

Welcome to our Summer 2019 newsletter, my first for the Society. As many of you will know, at the recent AGM our chairman Robert Gurd stood down from the position that he had held for 21 years. I had already stepped into his shoes as acting chairman and it fell to me to chair that meeting. However, what concerns me now is that no-one has been nominated, self-nominated or been persuaded to accept this important role so I am for now continuing to act up (no clever comments please). A more detailed AGM report follows later in this newsletter but I would like to mention that I am delighted that the appointment of Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles as our president was ratified by the membership. We were also treated to an enlightening talk by architect Harbinder Birdi on John Soane's influence on contemporary architecture.

Elsewhere in the newsletter, we have articles featuring this year's ECS John Delafons lecture, the opening of the restored Pitzhanger Manor and Gallery, details of our upcoming events and, as always, updates on key planning matters.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and find it informative. If there are things you would like us to include going forward, please let me know through chair@ealingcivicsociety.org.

Ealing Town Hall

Mastcraft's application for planning approval for their proposed development of Ealing Town Hall went to committee for determination, with a recommendation for approval, in mid-May. In an entirely predictable decision, planning permission was granted. The committee debate was very disappointing, with questions and contributions from committee members limited in both quality and quantity. The legal officer seemed out of her depth and we cannot endorse the planning officer's repeated assertion that any harm to

the listed building and conservation area caused by in particular the demolition of part of the Victoria Hall is outweighed by the 'public benefit' of the scheme. The alleged benefits include such things as provision of (another) gym and access to the hotel's bars and restaurants.

The ruling from the Charity Commission on the status of the Victoria Hall Trust remains outstanding and they did not respond to Save



Ealing's Centre's urgent request to require a condition on any planning permission that no demolition may take place until their decision is issued. Without this, there is nothing to prevent demolition of the eastern end of the publicly funded Victoria Hall going ahead.

Perceval House

The Society, along with other local amenity groups, has been contacted by Galliford Try with an offer to meet with them, their architects and communications consultants as part of early stakeholder engagement. This is a welcome move and one we have been pushing for some time. Unfortunately, the practicalities seem more difficult and confirmed dates are still awaited. We understand that GT have changed their architects and are proposing some unspecified changes to the scheme previously outlined. We look forward to hearing about these and will pass on details as soon as they are available.

Coming Events

22 June Civic Day: Join us on a walk 'In the Footsteps of Soane'. Details on page 4

24 October Civic Society Awards. Presented by Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles. Details to be confirmed.

The Hoover Building, Perivale

As reported in the Spring newsletter, the Society responded to a local consultation on redevelopment of the rear of the Tesco car park currently occupied by a petrol station. The proposals for a residential development of around 300 flats included the erection of a part 10-storey and part 22-storey tower block (called The Wiltern). We responded to the consultation by suggesting that at a minimum the tower element should be omitted entirely so that the new buildings would be in scale with the listed buildings and would not dominate views of them. Sadly, it seems that our concerns fell on deaf ears and a planning application has now been submitted which seems unaltered from the initial proposals 'consulted' on. The tower certainly



remains and as can be seen from these views from the application, would be highly visible from surrounding residential streets although, it is claimed, not dominating the existing buildings when viewed from the A40. We are considering what to include in an ECS objection to the application.

Crossrail and Ealing Broadway station

There has been some limited progress here. The promised consultation on the revised canopy design and proposed public realm improvements in front of the station has not yet started, the latest delays possibly being attributed to the Council having gone into 'purdah' in the run-up to the unexpected



European elections. We hope that with these behind us, we will soon see this consultation. Slightly more encouraging is that the new contractor to build the redesigned station entrance (and also the new Acton Mainline and West Ealing stations) has been selected – Graham Construction. We are not aware of any timetable for the works, and it seems unlikely that they will be completed before trains start running through to Ealing next year.

Filmworks

Visible progress is now being made on the site with the first residential block rising up adjacent to Barnes Pike and a sales office open for those looking to invest. We have been pursuing detailed design issues, in particular for the Walpole Picture Theatre arch currently on the wall of 2 Mattock Lane (to be retained and incorporated into the development), and the retained former Empire (ex-Forum) Cinema façade. We have asked several detailed questions of developers St George and await their response. Of particular interest to us is that the cinema operator Picturehouse have, after much prompting, shown some interest in retaining some of the salvaged items from the old cinema, including some light fittings, to incorporate into their new complex, but there are no detailed interior designs as yet.

Ann Chapman

Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM took place in the Liz Cantell Room of the Town Hall on 2nd April. It was opened by Ann Chapman, Vice- Chairmain, standing in for Robert Gurd, our Chairman who was unwell and unable to attend. She reminded us that last year Robert stated his intention of standing down as Chairman, and this year illness had forced the issue. Ann is acting as Chairman in a temporary capacity but the search for a new Chair is earnest and candidates are eagerly awaited. In a similar vein new young blood is needed in the membership and on the Executive Committee.

Our President Charles Mynors has also resigned because of pressure of other commitments and Ann thanked him warmly on behalf of the Society. An Ealing resident, Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, has agreed to become President and he was duly voted in by AGM attendees. He took the floor and said that he was looking forward to the role and is deeply concerned about the issues championed by the ECS and with us regrets the inevitable failures in saving the built environment. The other members of the Executive Committee agreed to continue and were duly re-elected. We were delighted that Harbinder Birdi, one of our 2018 Awards judges, agreed to speak after the AGM. Harbinder Singh Birdi RIBA is an Ealing resident and Senior Partner at Hawkins/Brown Architects. He is the principal architect leading the design for the Crossrail stations at Tottenham Court Road, Liverpool Street and Bond Street, where he has collaborated with artists such as Daniel Buren, Richard Wright and Douglas Gordon. He is a trustee of Pitzhanger Manor House and Gallery, which has recently reopened after refurbishment, and the London School of Architecture. His theme was how Sir John Soane's design for Pitzhanger Manor has influenced contemporary architecture.

John Delafons Lecture: Ada Lovelace

9th May Liz Cantell Room

The annual John Delafons lecture this year was both a celebration of the life and work of Ada Lovelace, daughter of Lord Byron and Annabella Milbanke, and the occasion for unveiling a plaque to Ada that will be placed near her former home in Ealing at a later date. Our speaker, Professor Ursula Martin from Oxford University, is co-author of a book *Ada Lovelace: The making of a computer scientist* written with Christopher Hollings and Adrian Rice. She outlined the early life of Ada, her education and her contribution to the science of what we would now call computing. Professor Martin shared some of the discoveries she made going through the papers of Ada Lovelace now housed in the Bodleian Library in Oxford.

Ada was born in 1815 shortly before the breakup of her parent's marriage after only one year. Lady Byron moved to Ealing in 1822 when Ada was seven years old. Lady Byron was known for her passion for education – setting up an industrial school for the poor in Ealing, commemorated by a plaque on the University of West London. She tutored Ada herself in maths and science and ensured that she had other foremost tutors. Ada was married in 1835 at Fordhook House to William King, but she continued her mathematical education – evidenced by the correspondence Professor Martin showed us in her presentation. She even followed a correspondence course in 1840-41 with Augustus De Morgan, the first mathematics professor at what is now University College London. However, it was her collaboration with Charles Babbage, the inventor of the “analytical engine”, for which she is perhaps most famous. In 1843, she published a translation of an article by Luigi Menabrea entitled *Notions sur la Machine Analytique de M. Charles Babbage*. It was the notes, appendices and calculations that she added which made this such an important and

perceptive publication. She died in 1852 at the young age of 36.

At the end of the lecture, the new Mayor of Ealing, Dr Abdullah Gulaid introduced the Earl of Lytton who unveiled the Society's new plaque to his great

great grandmother and made some observations on his ancestor's legacy. The plaque will be erected on the premises of Grimshaw and Co on the corner of Fordhook Avenue and the Uxbridge Road.

Margaret Gold



Ed. If you have a passport issued after 2016 turn to page 30-31 and you will see the face of Ada Lovelace and her hair lodged between Charles Babbage and his analytical engine, computer screens and a watermark of William Shakespeare. She keeps good company.



Robert Gurd, Chairman of Ealing Civic Society 1998 – 2019

A huge thank you is due to Robert for his dedicated chairmanship over the past 21 years. He has worked tirelessly to improve public understanding of our built heritage and the importance of its conservation, and embodies the Society's strapline 'Working to preserve and improve our borough'. In his time as chairman he has overseen many initiatives, including our green plaques scheme celebrating notable Ealing residents now in its 15th year, the setting up of our website and the development of our presence on social media. Our annual architectural awards scheme, now celebrating its thirtieth year, has flourished under his direction. He has also played a major role in the Society's response to planning applications, contributed to the Council's local plan development and appeared at public planning inquiries. He is a champion of the Borough's conservation areas and was instrumental in providing evidence to the Council supporting the extension of a number of these and the creation of three new areas. These are only some of his contributions of expertise and time.

Ann Chapman



Gift Aid

Gift Aid is a tax relief scheme which allows us to reclaim an extra 25% in tax on every eligible subscription fee and donation made by members who are UK taxpayers. We are pleased to report that two thirds of our members have signed up. However, if you are a UK taxpayer and have not yet signed up, please download the Gift Aid form from our website and either send the completed form to our treasurer or give it to us when you come to an event.

Opening of Pitzhanger Manor and Gallery

The newly renovated Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery reopened to great acclaim on 16th March and has been extremely busy from the moment the doors opened. Both the house and the amazing Anish Kapoor exhibition have been extremely well received and you will certainly have seen the very positive press coverage in every serious national newspaper. Judging by the huge smiles on the faces of the many visitors the manor and gallery had over its free entry weekend, people are loving the venue.

Some people I spoke to during the opening events, had never been to Ealing before and pronounced themselves charmed by the Manor and its immediate surroundings.

Vivienne Cane-Honeysett (report borrowed from the *Walpole Now* newsletter, April 2019)

Thirty years of Annual Awards

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the first award given by the Civic Society to the designers and commissioners of prizeworthy new buildings, landscape projects and restorations in the private and public domains in Ealing. In 1989 the first winners (there seem to be two) were the Clock Gallery, St Marys Road, W5 and St Mark's Court, Boston Manor Road, W7.

Since 1989 the Society has given awards to recognise and encourage building and environmental projects that make a noteworthy contribution to the community in the Borough of Ealing. Winners receive a certificate and the award winner may display a specially designed Society plaque.

In establishing the award the Society aimed to (a) stimulate interest amongst people who live, work and study in Ealing in development and conservation projects; (b) recognise and reward designs, new buildings or landscaping and open space, refurbishments or restorations which make a positive contribution to the amenity of Ealing and contribute to the townscape; (c) encourage a high standard of design, sustainability, fitness for purpose and value to the community in buildings and other projects throughout the Borough.

Ealing Civic Society Annual Award

- An award scheme for new buildings, refurbishments or renovations, and open space.
- The project must have been completed within the last two years and have been in use by the beginning of April 2019
- Information can be found on our website or contact info@ealingcivicsociety.org



Deadline for entries

- Monday, 16th September with judging taking place on Sunday 6th October



In case you didn't make it to the re-opening, this – and many other examples of indelible pavement art like it – will be around for some time to remind you of what you missed.



Planning matters

There is no article on planning in this edition of the newsletter but in a few days we will be placing the stories about planning applications and our responses on our web page: www.ealingcivicsociety.org

Civic Day – Saturday 22nd June In the Footsteps of Soane

An 8.7 mile walk from Pitzhanger Manor to the Sir John Soane's Museum, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

The walk follows the route that Soane and his friends would regularly take between his country house in Ealing and his town house in London

Meet at 9.45 outside Pitzhanger Manor for a 10am departure

4.5 hours including stops for coffee and lunch.



2019/20 Executive Committee

Ann Chapman (Acting Chairman)
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Corinne Templer (Hon. Vice President) (8567 5353)
Josephine Barry-Hicks (Minutes Secretary)
Josette Bishop (Treasurer)
Philippa Dolphin (Web Manager)
Paul Fitzmaurice (8567 3024)
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Tony Miller (8997 6042)
Jo Winters (Secretary) (8579 1885)

Tony Williams (Newsletter Editor)

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