



# EALING CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Working to preserve and improve our Borough



Founded in 1967

President: Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles

[www.ealingcivicsociety.org](http://www.ealingcivicsociety.org)

Member of

**CIVIC  
VOICE**

## Autumn 2019

### From the (Acting) Chairman

Welcome to our Autumn 2019 newsletter. In the last newsletter I wrote about the 'Wiltern' development proposed to the rear of the Hoover building in Perivale. The planning application has attracted over 300, often very detailed, comments opposing the proposals and just two – from non-neighbours – claiming support. Historic England have provided advice to the Council but despite their agreement and requests from the Society, the Council has not made their comments available for public viewing on the planning website. HE have written that they consider that the heritage assets on the site would be harmed by the proposals, but go on to note that it is for the planning authority i.e. the Council to weigh that harm against any public benefits of the scheme. This is true, but we are concerned that planning officers will claim that the 'public benefit' of additional housing units outweighs the harm – the Society and other objectors would disagree. This argument was relied on by the Council in granting the application for part demolition of the Victoria Hall to accommodate the modern hotel extension at Ealing Town Hall, something that objectors challenged to no avail. Robert Gurd has submitted a detailed comment on the planning website that refers to the HE advice, so residents are able to see this. We anticipate that this scheme will be supported by the Council and await a date for its consideration at planning committee.

A new challenge to our environment has recently emerged in West Ealing. Two separate development proposals for the West Ealing station area were unveiled at public exhibitions within days of each other. The developers involved have said that they had no knowledge of each other's applications, although both will have had discussions with Ealing Council, when one might assume officers would have informed them of other proposals in the area. Two 25/26 storey residential towers are proposed, one on the Hastings Road site currently occupied by Majestic Wine and Halfords and one on the corner of Manor Road, next to

the new station site. These proposals are completely out of keeping with the local suburban architecture comprising mainly two and three storey Victorian and Edwardian houses and are nearly three times the height of the existing residential blocks in the area. Unsurprisingly, there has been extensive local objection, with concerns including the height, wind tunnel effect, possible contaminated land, wrong housing mix and lack of necessary infrastructure to support such an increase in residents. We do not know how the developers have responded to the results of their 'consultation' exercises but understand that planning applications for both sites have now been submitted, although these are not yet available on the Council's website. A very energetic and well supported local action group has been set up to oppose the proposals. The group 'Stop the Towers' has a website: <https://stopthetowers.info/> and active Twitter and Facebook accounts. If you share their concerns, do visit the website for lots of information and to sign up to their campaign to receive regular updates.



### Ealing Broadway Station

The promised consultation on proposed public realm improvements in front of the station has now gone live and can be found here [www.ealing.gov.uk/ebstation](http://www.ealing.gov.uk/ebstation). It is now open until 27th August and we urge you to respond and make your views known. In the Society's view, there are several flaws in the proposals and we have responded accordingly, but again have little confidence that the Council will take any responses into account since the scheme consulted on is unchanged from earlier proposals shared with groups including ourselves and Save Ealing's Centre who made a number of suggestions for improvement at that time.

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](mailto:chair@ealingcivicsociety.org).

*Ann Chapman*

## Perceval House

The developers of Perceval House, Galliford Try, unveiled their initial ideas for redeveloping the site at a public exhibition in June. Information was very sketchy and we have been pressing for meetings with them and their architects ever since the exhibition. We finally were able to meet them at the end of July when more details were unveiled about the likely development. In summary, it would consist of 7 blocks ranging from 6-26 storeys, with the tallest sited on the existing substation in Longfield Avenue (which would be relocated). The front block would house relocated Council offices, public library and customer service centre (the last two on the first floor) as well as some commercial space on the ground floor. The rest of the development would be mainly residential, delivering around 500 homes, of which around 50% would be affordable, with some commercial uses on the ground floor (so far unspecified). There would be a "piazza" feature beside the Council building in Longfield Avenue (which will remain open to traffic) and pedestrian/cycle-only access from Craven Road, creating a through route. Construction is planned to start next year with completion in 2022 at the earliest. Currently there is little information about the materials to be employed apart from vague references to traditional materials being used in the front block facing the Uxbridge Road. Our main concerns relate to the height of the proposed tower feature which we consider to be excessive (and which has increased in height from the 20 storeys or so which were originally being proposed), the lack of information about materials, the juxtaposition of the front block to the Town Hall and the impact of vehicular access to the site during and after construction, particularly from Craven Avenue and the residential streets to the north. More details are available at <http://percevalhouseredevelopment.com/index.html>.

## Filmworks development

The Filmworks development includes an eight-screen cinema which is due to be operated by Picturehouse when it opens in 2020/21. They have now appointed architects Lyons, Sleeman + Hoare (LSH) to design the interior of the shell which is currently being built by St George as part of their wider development. We have been in touch with both Picturehouse and the architects with a view to persuading them to consider reusing some of the artefacts (see picture) which were salvaged from the old Empire Cinema which originally opened as the Forum Cinema in 1934 and was prematurely demolished in



2008/9. Empire Cinemas safely stored these artefacts, which were transferred between successive owners, including Land Securities who originally obtained planning permission for the site and St George who are now building it out. Both Picturehouse and LSH are showing some enthusiasm about doing this and we hope that it will be possible to reuse some lighting fittings and possibly stained-glass windows from the old building, subject to finding a suitable location for them in the new building. This would provide a fitting link between the old and new cinemas.

## Ealing Town Hall update

Ealing Town Hall eventually formally closed for lettings after many delays in May of this year. Planning consent for the scheme drawn up by Mastcraft, Ealing's development partner, was approved in the same month despite many objections, including from the Society, about the design of the scheme, in particular the proposed modern rear addition to the central part of the building, construction of which involves demolition of part of the Victoria Hall. We were very disappointed that Historic England did not submit more critical comments on the proposals particularly since the Council was giving itself consent for the scheme having paid off its conservation officer last year. However, the scheme has not yet been able to progress because the Charity Commission has still to take a decision about whether or not the Council will be permitted to lease the Victoria and Princes Halls as part of the deal with Mastcraft. As we have reported previously, the unresolved problem facing the Council is that the proposed lease to Mastcraft includes the Victoria Hall and related areas, property which is held by a charitable Trust. The Trust cannot dispose of any of its assets without permission from the Charity Commission, which will only be given if it can be shown that there is no alternative way of fulfilling its charitable objectives. The Charity Commission has been extraordinarily dilatory in dealing with the Council's application for permission and latest indications are that a decision will not be taken until September at the earliest, following a further period of consultation on the Commission's draft decision.

*Robert Gurd*

## Planning Issues

Proposals for residential towers are not new. We only have to go back to the 'brave new world' of the 1960s and 1970s when terraced housing deemed to be 'slums' was cleared away for the building of high rise blocks that would provide new 'housing in the sky'. It did not take long for the social problems of this approach to be acknowledged, particularly the damage done to families due to isolation from any community, which led to a policy in many local authorities that families with children should not be housed above the third or fourth floors. This all seems to have been forgotten and ever taller towers are being proposed, often with no supporting infrastructure or proper green space provision. The towers of the '60s and '70s were not 20+ storeys, but typically just 10 or 11 storeys, yet the problems existed. More recent safety concerns should also be ringing loud alarm bells, yet developers and Ealing Council are not listening

Over the last year or so, there has been a proliferation of applications for tower blocks across Ealing borough. Since January 2018, Ealing Civic Society has reviewed 14 applications for developments comprising buildings of 10 storeys or more. Eight of these applications have been for sites in the Bridge Road/Merrick Road area of Southall or in North Acton. However, there are also tower blocks planned in Greenford, Perivale, Northolt, Hanwell and West Ealing..

Our responses to Ealing Council have typically objected that the planned buildings would be 'overbearing' or 'out of scale and out of keeping with the surrounding area' when compared with neighbouring residential properties. We have also raised concerns about the proposed demolition or alteration of local heritage assets to make way for the new development. For example, the 80 year old former art deco 'Woolworths' building in West Ealing; the arches of the Southall Arches Business Centre, one of the few remaining relics of the Otto Monsted margarine factory; and the remaining locally listed Elizabeth Arden Perfume Factory buildings, which were designed by Wallis, Gilbert & Partners in 1939.

In addition, we have commented that proposed tower block developments would impact very negatively on neighbouring locally listed buildings or conservation areas. For example, the Hamborough Tavern in Southall and Trumpers Way in Hanwell sites are both adjacent to conservation areas. The planned hotel building on the site of the White Hart pub on Ruislip Road, Northolt would have an overbearing effect on the listed building immediately adjacent to it.

At the time of writing, six of the applications have been granted with conditions by the Council and the rest are

'pending consideration'. None of the applications has been refused. To exacerbate matters, three applications have been made during this time for additional storeys to already granted developments. Ealing Civic Society has responded to these.

Ealing Civic Society's responses to planning applications are published on our website and can be viewed as 'public comments' of the planning section of the Council's website. Here are summaries of two of the applications considered.

### **Holiday Inn London West, 4 Portal Way, Acton**

Still pending consideration, this application is for two linked buildings of 45 and 55 storeys respectively, that would include approximately 700 residential units, a hotel and flexible workspace and retail space. If granted, this would result in the tallest building in the North Acton area, albeit with its immediate neighbour at 6 Portal Way having applied to add to its already granted 42 storeys. The majority of other tower blocks in this area are approximately half the height.

We responded that we consider the height, massing and scale of the proposed building to be totally out of scale and out of keeping with the surrounding area. Overall, we assess the design to be inappropriate for this location – it is extremely aggressive and of a form usually associated with offices in a financial district, rather than of an area largely comprising residential accommodation.

### **Land to rear of Tesco Superstore, The Old Hoover Building, Perivale (The Wiltern)**

This application is for a part 22-storey and part 10-storey residential building with ancillary communal multi-use space. We objected due to the 22-storey building which we consider would overwhelm and impact negatively on the setting of the two listed art deco buildings on the site. This tall block would be highly visible from the surrounding lower level streets and several open spaces, which is unacceptable. Furthermore, contrary to the assertions of the applicant, we consider that the tower would be very visible from the pavement on the far side of the road and to drivers on the A40. To avoid this visibility, our assessment is that a minimum of seven storeys would need to be removed from the planned tower block. The application is also still pending consideration.

*Jo Winters*

## Ealing Civic Society Annual Award 2019 30th Anniversary

As part of our mission to support good architectural and environmental design in the London Borough of Ealing, we run an Annual Award. The award scheme was originally introduced in 1989 following a suggestion from our previous chairman Robert Gurd that the Society should consider emulating the Richmond Society which had been running a similar award scheme for many years. This was adopted by the Executive Committee at the time and many of the rules of the Richmond scheme were taken on board in Ealing's version, in particular the criteria that the scheme should have been built within the last two years and also at least partly occupied for six months or longer so that users' experience could be gauged by the judges as part of the judging process. This year 2019 will be the 30th anniversary of the Award.

Maggie Gold



Do you know of a project that could be nominated for an Award? The Award covers new buildings, renovated/remodelled buildings and open space schemes (such as parks, gardens, playgrounds, landscaping). Projects must have been completed during the past two years, and have been in use since at least since April 2019 (i.e. six months prior to the date of judging). The deadline for entries is Monday September 16th, and judging takes place on Sunday 6th October. The nomination Form can be found on our website at <https://ealingcivicsociety.org/awards-plaques/>. Please pass the nomination form to anyone who has a project that would qualify for 2019.

### Coming Event

**23 October** Civic Society Awards. Presented by Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles. 7.30 p.m. University of West London.

**Tony Williams** (Newsletter Editor)

Contributors: Ann Chapman, Maggie Gold, Josette Bishop, Jo Winters, Robert Gurd, Tony Williams.

Photos: Ada Lovelace: JB; Town Hall artefacts: RG; Stop the Towers: STT; Printed by Pollyprint [www.pollyprint.co.uk](http://www.pollyprint.co.uk)

## Ada Lovelace in Place

Thanks to SSE, the contractor who looks after the street lighting for Ealing Council, the Ada Lovelace plaque was erected on 20th June. The SSE team were very efficient and it took no time at all thanks to the lift on the back of their van which allowed them to work safely high above the pavement.

The SSE team said that it wasn't their usual line of work but were happy to follow the fixing instructions provided by



Wards of Bristol who manufacture the plaques for ECS. Along with these fixing instructions ECS just had to supply the Gripfill product which holds the fixings in place in the wall. Gripfill is not usually carried in the SSE van along with the tools.

Louise Grimshaw of Grimshaws Estate Agent told us *Derek Grimshaw says that he has seen a few people stop and discuss it. We are very proud to have the plaque and Ealing Common is all the better for it!*

Josette Bishop

## 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.

## 2019/20 Executive Committee

**Ann Chapman** (Acting Chairman)

[chair@ealingcivicsociety.org](mailto:chair@ealingcivicsociety.org) (8567 7955)

**Corinne Templer** (Hon. Vice President) (8567 5353)

**Josephine Barry-Hicks** (Minutes Secretary)

**Josette Bishop** (Treasurer)

**Philippa Dolphin** (Web Manager)

**Paul Fitzmaurice** (8567 3024)

**Jenny Gadsby** (Membership) (8567 3074)

**Margaret Gold** (8567 6158)

**Robert Gurd** (8998 4417)

**William Hardman** (07730 592956)

**Tony Miller** (8997 6042)

**Jo Winters** (Secretary) (8579 1885)