



EALING CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Working to preserve and improve our Borough



Founded in 1967

President: Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles

www.ealingcivicsociety.org

Member of
**CIVIC
VOICE**

Spring 2020

From the (Acting) Chairman

Welcome to our Spring 2020 newsletter. In this edition, we bring you up-to-date with the many ongoing developments around Ealing, look at clocks and look forward to our AGM. I shall have been acting chairman for a year and as I reflect on that time, I ask 'what have we achieved in that year?' and 'have we offered our members what they want from the Society?' As you will see in my update below on the 'Wiltern' development, we may have influenced the developers' thinking and we have contributed as one of the founder members to the formation and campaigning activities of the Friends of the Victoria Hall. We have installed two more green plaques celebrating notable Ealing residents and held a successful and well attended annual lecture about the subject of one of these, Ada Lovelace. We have also offered advice to others on enquiries including sourcing a handyman to fix a plaque and where to find a craftsman to restore stained glass in a Victorian property. So I can say that we have achieved results, but are we doing what members want?

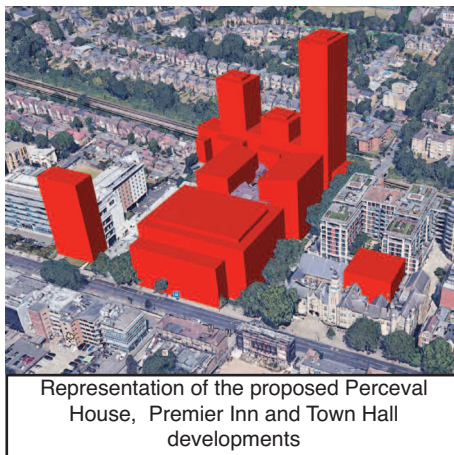
I think I can also say that we are, based on our stable membership with a number of new members joining during the year, the attendance at our events and the fact that we know that many residents want action taken in response to the many developments put forward, but feel unable to do this themselves. But if you would like to see us doing something different, please get in touch.

Our next event will be our AGM, to be held at the University of West London on St George's Day, Thursday 23rd April. See the back page of the newsletter for further details. We have adjusted the start time of the meeting to 7.45 so that anyone needing parking can park on the nearby streets - available from 7.30. We hope to see you there. At the risk of sounding repetitive, we would really welcome some new blood on the Executive committee and our Environment committee that considers our responses to planning

applications. Please get in touch if you would like to get more involved, via chair@ealingcivicsociety.org.

Ealing Town Hall

The saga of the Town Hall continues. The Council's proposed disposal on a lease to hotel developer Mastcraft and the associated redevelopment remain on hold while the Charity Commission deliberates on the response to the consultation at the end of last year on their proposed 'scheme' that would have allowed this to go ahead and meant the loss of the Victoria Hall, originally funded by public subscription, as a community asset. The sheer volume of responses to their proposals, including a massive and impressive submission by the Friends of the Victoria Hall, clearly took them by surprise. They have now been considering this for over two months with no indication of when they may reach a conclusion.



Representation of the proposed Perceval House, Premier Inn and Town Hall developments

Perceval House

Development proposals for the Perceval House site have now reached the detailed design stage and the Council's development partner Vistry (formerly Galliford Try) recently held a second public exhibition which (rather strangely in the view of many) omitted to make clear the height of the proposed residential blocks, which rise to we think 26 storeys. This excessive and inappropriate height is the objection

raised by the majority of those attending the exhibition. The Society is particularly concerned about the impact this will have on the listed Town Hall and also some of the design details and proposed materials. Sadly our concerns do not appear to be being taken seriously by the developers so we have little option but to await submission of the planning application and then to submit objections.

Ann Chapman, Acting Chairman

The Wiltern

We were delighted that following refusal of the original application for this development by the planning committee, the applicants have come back with a revised design that reduces the height of the tower element from 22 storeys to 15/16, specifically addressing a point made in the Society's submission



that a reduction of at least this amount was necessary to avoid the tower being visible above the roof of the Hoover building from the opposite side of the A40. However, the development is still out-of-scale with its surroundings and

would be highly visible from a number of viewpoints and residential streets. We have submitted an objection on these grounds to the revised application.

Acton Town

Turning now to two proposed developments in the Acton Town area, members will perhaps be familiar with the ongoing Acton Gardens redevelopment of the South Acton Estate, which has improved the area and has many positive features. The scale of what has been delivered so far has been acceptable, without excessively tall tower blocks. Sadly, this is not being continued with two recent new proposals. The first, on a very small and constrained site off Stanley Road, currently with industrial use, proposes a 22-storey development that would loom over its neighbours and is significant overdevelopment of the site. The site is also next to an award-winning allotment site and the plot holders are very concerned about the impact this would have on their growing space. The second is a proposed development by TfL on a narrow strip of land running alongside the tube line southwards from Acton Town station. While the principle of residential use for this land that TfL claim is now surplus to their requirements is acceptable, and promises some attractive landscaping and 50% affordable housing, we are very disappointed that despite initial suggestions that the development would respect the scale of other local schemes and the listed tube station, the now released proposals do not do this. The worst aspect is two towers, of 18 and 25 storeys at the southern end of the site, massively exceeding even the neighbouring Chiswick Business Park, and likely to be visible in views from the Bedford Park Conservation Area. The Society is also concerned about the setting of Grade II listed Acton Town station. We have relayed our concerns to TfL and await a response.

Filmworks

The Filmworks development continues to rise, with priority being given to the residential elements. Offering a reminder of what once was, the original cinema façade has recently been uncovered, presumably as its incorporation into the new build approaches. You may recall from earlier reports that when ECS representatives met one of the directors of Picturehouse Cinemas and their architects just before Christmas, they indicated that Picturehouse would not gain possession of the shell of the building on Bond Street which would house the new cinema until the middle of 2020 and that fit-out was unlikely to be completed until the middle of 2021. So there is still some way to go. We hope to arrange a follow-up meeting with Picturehouse and their architects later this year to discuss possible design options to incorporate into the new development some salvaged artefacts from the old Empire cinema.



Ealing Broadway station

Crossrail advise that the station upgrade works are now progressing well. Installation of the steelwork for the new lifts started in November with brickwork following behind; the lifts are expected to come into operation later this year. The programme of work is being carried out in two phases. The first will deal with the south side of the station (right hand side facing the station). Most of the new ticket hall and the canopy in front will be built in this part. The work is expected to complete in late summer when most of the new street level ticket hall will open up. The second phase will deal with the north side of the station and include the completion of the ticket hall, the canopy in front of this part of the station and Villiers House (the office block above the station). Design work is also continuing on the platform canopies.



The design of the canopy outside the station has seemingly reverted back to the design originally given planning approval in 2017, which had earlier been deemed 'unbuildable' because of the weakness of the road bridge over the railway, but further work has since indicated that it is apparently now possible. The TfL Rail service to Reading started before Christmas replacing the GWR services. Freedom Pass users may

now travel as far as Reading free of charge using the TfL Rail services (which will eventually be branded Elizabeth Line). There is still no firm date for when the new trains will start running to Heathrow. The delay appears to have been caused by continuing compatibility problems between the new Crossrail trains and the existing signalling systems employed on this section of the line.

Following consultation on their proposals, and in the face of a large number of objections, Ealing Council are re-thinking the public realm works outside the station and held a further meeting to discuss changes with stakeholders including the Society in early March.

Other Crossrail stations in the Borough

Construction work on West Ealing station has been

continuing, concentrating upon the structural steelwork for the new station building and widening of existing platform 4. Much of the structural steelwork for Acton Main Line has now been completed and construction work has started on a new footbridge and lifts at Southall station. Much to the relief of long-suffering rail passengers in Hanwell, both east and westbound platforms now have had lifts installed. The earlier reopened south entrance traditional canopy has been replaced by an out-of-keeping ultramodern glass canopy and a striking new lift tower has been erected next to the existing north entrance. Also, TfL Rail have recently announced that the services from the station will be upgraded to 4 trains an hour from 18 May (this improvement also applies to intermediate stations).

Ann Chapman, Robert Gurd

Public clocks in Ealing Town Centre

Have you ever thought about public clocks in your area? Before the era of mobile phones and tablets, public clocks were an essential feature of the townscape. Unfortunately, with the passage of time a number of them have fallen into disuse. Ealing town centre has the

unfortunate distinction of having a number of stopped public clocks, most notably the art deco clock opposite Ealing Broadway station (outside 38/39 The Broadway) which has been stopped for



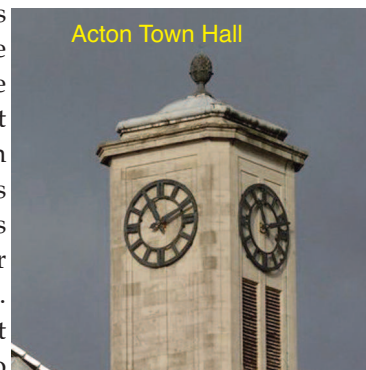
decades and, more recently, the distinctive clock above 7 The Mall. Your former chairman has tried to make some progress in getting these clocks restarted without much success it has to be said. It turns out that the cost of restoring the Broadway clock, having fallen into disuse for so long, is prohibitively expensive and the owners of the block (British Land) have indicated that they are not prepared to spend any money on it given that its future



is uncertain in any redevelopment plans. The clock above 7 The Mall, formerly a clockmakers shop (Grade II listed), was converted to digital operation some years ago when the original mechanical movement was taken out of use, but unfortunately it has not operated reliably since. We are in touch with the owner of the building who has been attempting to sort the problem out, so far it seems with little success. Perhaps the most notorious clock is that above the former Arcadia centre on the corner of

Springbridge Road and Ealing Broadway. It originated out of design improvements proposed by the architects for the redeveloped centre who wanted to create a public landmark to replace the former carillon clock above the original Waterglade Centre which had itself fallen into disuse. Unfortunately, their design turned out to be rather ungainly and many people do not consider it to be an improvement on the townscape. Fortunately, the bells from the original clock were saved and incorporated into a freestanding carillon clock now housed within Christ the Saviour School.

The next public clock that will stop working shortly is that on Ealing Town Hall if and when the proposed disposal to Mastcraft for conversion into hotel takes place. At least we know, as a result of the Society's intervention, that the Council will specify that the clock will be restored to working condition once the development is completed. This is more than can be said for the equivalent redevelopment of Acton Town Hall into flats where the clock has remained stopped for the last five years or so. We have been in contact with the developers to try to get them to restore the clock to working order but this is clearly not high on their list of priorities at present when they want to concentrate their attention on selling the flats.



Are you aware of any stopped public clocks in your neighbourhood? If so, please let us know at info@Ealingcivicsociety.org.

Robert Gurd

Gunnersbury update

The Gunnersbury estate continues to evolve. The new sports hub is nearing completion which is scheduled for "early in 2020". Flyers have been delivered to the local community urging us to join, and an energetic young team is selling memberships in the café, but no date for the opening has been publicised.



The nearby car park has been considerably extended, together with some attractive new planting. Free parking is not sustainable so parking charges will be introduced at some point over the next year, and the Community Interest Company which manages the park recently surveyed users regarding appropriate charging rates and mechanisms.

A number of events are scheduled during the summer which will bring in more much needed income. Lovebox returns and is being widely advertised. It will take place on 12,13 and 14 June. The organisers have promised to learn from problems which have arisen from the last 2 years of Lovebox. If you have concerns, there are meetings on 6 and 18 April to learn more about the festival (see <https://gpresidents-eventshub.com/> for more information). A series of immersive cinema events run by Secret Cinema will be held in the park between 22 July and 16 August (5 shows per week). A meeting will be held on 30 March for local residents to hear more.

A range of interesting talks and events are regularly held at the museum, including an exhibition of paintings by Madeline Green, a neglected modern figurative artist who lived in Ealing died in 1947. Details of What's On at the Museum may be downloaded from the website <https://www.visitgunnersbury.org/>

A grant from Historic England and £340,000 from Highways England are bringing in sufficient funding to pay for specialist surveys of the buildings and initial work to protect the Small Mansion and Stables from further deterioration. The surveys should result in outline designs and detailed costings for refurbishments. The Gunnersbury Development Trust is co-ordinating a feasibility study, part-funded by the Architectural Heritage Fund, the Trust, the Friends and the CIC to be

undertaken over the next few months to refine earlier work, develop proposals for use of the buildings and test whether they can be delivered and could be sustainable.

Finally there are two proposed developments which are likely to have an impact on the Park: a large development called Hudson Square (which includes an 18-storey residential block) on the site of the B&Q building near the Chiswick roundabout, and proposals for flats including a 25-storey block, along Bollo Lane. However, the appeal by the developers to the High Court over the Secretary of State's refusal of their huge Chiswick Curve development at the Chiswick Roundabout has been dismissed. You can read more about them on the Friends of Gunnersbury website. (The website does not include reference to the latest Chiswick Curve news).

Philippa Dolphin

UWL unveils new gym

Young and old well-wishers turned out at The University of West London on February 24 for the grand opening of its new sports centre (it opened for business back in November 2019). Much of the old UWL car park has been given over to the new gym building and a new

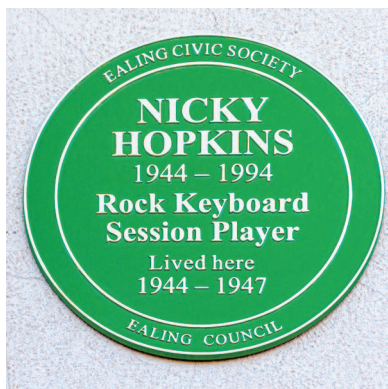


postgraduate block. Run by the UWL Students' Union, facilities include state-of-the-art gym equipment, two large studio spaces and a wide range of fitness classes. A commemorative board was unveiled by Ade Adepitan, the renowned paralympic basketball player. The ceremony was also attended by the Mayor of Hounslow Tony Louki. Opening the proceedings Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter John, CBE, announced that the planning for the new centre also included use by local residents at a reasonable charge. He explained that this is not the only sports facilities available: the new Sports Hub to be opened this month at Gunnersbury will also be available to UWL students (See left).



Tony Williams

Plaques



Our first plaque to be erected in Perivale was unveiled to honour the late musician Nicky Hopkins (1944 - 1994). Nicky spent his early years in Perivale, won a scholarship to study at the Royal Academy of Music and went on to become an accomplished pianist. He performed on the records of dozens of rock 'n' roll greats, including The Who and The Beatles, and even toured



with The Rolling Stones, but largely stayed out of the limelight.

The plaque was unveiled by the widow of Nicky Hopkins, in the presence of The



Mayor of Ealing, the Perivale councillors and fans.

Our next newsletter will contain news of our next plaque which will honour another of Ealing's legendary musicians.

Josette Bishop

Awards 2019

The Society's 30th Award Ceremony took place on 23 October at the University of West London. It was tough on the other seven shortlisted entries up against the stunning Pitzhanger Manor restoration which has already been given a range of awards. Ealing Civic Society Acting Chairman, Ann Chapman, explained that the aim of the award was to embrace all kinds of building and landscape design. She was impressed by the quality of the entries and said: "We had a wide variety of entries, all to a very high standard – ranging from a number of interesting landscaping schemes through school, residential and church buildings to the full restoration of a historic central Ealing landmark building." Harbinder Birdi, one of our three judges, discussed and showed slides of the shortlisted entries before Ann Chapman announced the Award winner, the Pitzhanger Manor restoration. This is a major four-year conservation project in the heart of Ealing, led by Ealing Council in collaboration with Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery Trust. It has peeled back layers of history, extensions and overpainting, returning Pitzhanger to John Soane's original design, now visible for the first time in over 175 years. Important structural elements of Soane's design were reinstated, such as the conservatory demolished in 1901 and the dramatic central roof light.

The architects were Jestico + Whiles. Clare Gough (Director, Pitzhanger Manor and Gallery Trust) is pictured receiving the award from Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles (the Society's President) and Ann Chapman (Acting Chairman, centre).



Philippa Dolphin

From our Treasurer

If you pay your subscription by cash or cheque, it helps if you pay as early in the year as possible. This will save you from receiving reminders from the Treasurer. The amount due for the year is £12.00.

You may make the payment by **online bank transfer**. Our bank account details are

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Sort Code 30 92 82 Account Number 02420491

Please use your surname as the reference for the payment. Or you may send your cheque made payable to Ealing Civic Society to:

Mrs Josette Bishop
Treasurer, Ealing Civic Society
8 Castlebar Hill
Ealing W5 1TD

email: josettebishop@btinternet.com

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Annual General Meeting 2020

The 2020 AGM will be held in the Weston Hall, University of West London 7.45 pm, **Tuesday 23rd April 2020**

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Acting Chairman's Report for 2019
3. Adoption of the Acting Chairman's Report
4. Treasurer's Report for 2019
5. Adoption of the Treasurer's Report
6. Election of Officers
7. Election of other committee members
8. Motions and any other business submitted to the Chairman in writing prior to the meeting.
9. Talk by John Collins, London Borough of Hounslow Heritage Manager, on *Boston Manor, Engaging the 21st Century*.

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

Ann Chapman (Acting Chairman), Corinne Templer (Vice President), Jenny Gadsby (Membership), Robert Gurd, Tony Miller, Maggie Gold, Philippa Dolphin (Web manager), William Hardman, 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.

Red blocks all over Ealing

The striking graphic on page 1 was produced by Will French (Chairman, Save Ealing's Centre) to demonstrate what would happen if developers in Ealing got their way. The red blocks give an indication of proposals approved or in the pipeline in a small stretch of the Uxbridge Road, which could change the skyline of the Borough over the next 10 years. This is being repeated all over the Borough. How has this been allowed to happen? The proposals have prospered under a planning regime in which the Government has loosened planning controls and the GLA's London Plan has been calling for many new units of housing to be built. Developers rather than the Council's policy makers and councillors, appear to be calling the shots and to set little store by the damage that these developments could wreak in local neighbourhoods. Following the loss of the Council's conservation officer in 2018 the Council has little or no remaining in-house heritage expertise, and worse, seems not to care if heritage areas or buildings are removed or harmed by the developments. A local protest group called Stop the Towers has been formed to fight these tall developments in West Ealing and elsewhere. We support their aims and ask you to do the same. More information can be found at their website <https://stopthetowers.info/>

Coming Events

23 April AGM: Weston Hall, University of West London at 7.45 p.m. Speaker: John Collins, LB Hounslow Heritage Manager *Boston Manor, Engaging the 21st Century*

19 May John Delafons Lecture: William Barry Theatre, University of West London at 7.45 p.m. Speaker: Harbinder Birdi *The Thames Tideway Project*.

20 June Civic Day: event to be confirmed.

22 October Annual Award Ceremony: Open Ealing, Dickens Yard at 7.30 p.m.

Covid-19 update Circumstances are changing on a daily basis and ECS will be bound by any decisions made by its venues and by government advice. We will let you know if there are any changes affecting our events but also keep an eye on our website, Twitter and Facebook feeds for updates.

2019/20 Executive Committee

Ann Chapman (Acting Chairman) chair@ealingcivicsociety.org (8567 7955)

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

Josephine Barry-Hicks (Minutes)

Josette Bishop (Treasurer)

Paul Fitzmaurice (8567 3024)

Margaret Gold (8567 6158)

William Hardman (07730 592956)

Jo Winters (Secretary) (8579 1885)

Tony Miller (8997 60420)

Philippa Dolphin (Web Manager)

Jenny Gadsby (Membership) (8567 3074)

Robert Gurd (8998 4417)

Tony Williams (Newsletter Editor) 2 Nicholas Gardens W5 5HY (8567 6941)

Contributors: Ann Chapman, Robert Gurd, Philippa Dolphin, Josette Bishop, Tony Williams, Carolyn Brown

Photos: Awards TD, Nicky Hopkins JB, Gunnersbury PD, Ade Adepitan TW, Clocks RG, Perceval House WF

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