



Spring 2021

From the Acting Chairman

A very warm welcome to our Spring 2021 newsletter. As I write, the sun is shining (weakly, but it is still early March) and there is a definite optimism in the air as we look forward with more hope and certainty to a gradual but hopefully permanent lifting of the restrictions that have affected our lives for a whole year now. Looking back at our newsletter for Spring 2020, the only inkling of what we would be living with was the late addition of a caveat around our planned events that due to Covid19 circumstances were changing on a daily basis and we would be bound by decisions made by our proposed venues and by government advice regarding live events. None of us foresaw what massive adjustments would be needed in so many aspects of our lives over the coming year.

If the government's provisional timetable is maintained, live events could in theory be resumed from 21st June. Common sense would however suggest caution and there will be ongoing constraints. We have taken the decision that we will again hold a virtual AGM – last year's went very well on Zoom – and we will be including the talk postponed from last year by John Collins, Historic Houses Senior Manager, London Borough of Hounslow entitled *Boston Manor, Engaging the 21st Century*. See the notice on page 5 and save the date of 22nd April in your diaries now.

The death of our Vice President and stalwart campaigner for Ealing, Corinne Templer, in December was a huge sadness. Many of us will miss Corinne personally and for her contributions to the Ealing community. An appreciation of her life can be seen on page 3 and we have taken the decision to make this year's annual John Delafons lecture, itself named after a long-term supporter of the Society, a celebration of Corinne's life and community work. This will be a virtual event in early June, with further details made available when confirmed. We hope many members will join us for what will be a fascinating event. At the AGM, members

will be asked to support the election of Robert Gurd, former chairman, as Vice President.

We hope we will be able to resume live events with our annual awards ceremony in October.

The main focus of our activities continues to be reviewing and commenting on planning applications. Many applications seem to be taking an excessively long time for the Council to determine, for no apparent reasons, but we are now seeing a number of long-standing applications coming to committee. It remains disappointing that very few applications to which we have lodged objections are turned down by planners and as a result, the character of Ealing so valued by many people is changing. We do not expect to stand still and reject all change, but in line with the Society's strapline, this must preserve and improve the environment.

Many residents argue that the proliferation of tower blocks of small but expensive flats and the approval of dense 'co-living' developments do not do this.

We also remain closely involved in another long-running saga, that of the Victoria Hall Trust. Later in this newsletter, I and Robert Gurd cover updates on some of these matters.

Ann Chapman, Acting Chair



News

You can see the most up-to-date news about Ealing and beyond by going to our website tinyurl.com/EalCivSoc. Pay a visit to see the latest on planning applications and upcoming events.

Planning and related matters

STOP PRESS - Perceval House latest

Objections to this controversial proposal mounted up over the closing months of last year and into the new year, including an objection from Historic England (HE) referring to the harm to listed heritage assets that the proposals and in particular the dominant 26-storey tower would cause. In response, we were advised that modifications had been made and further documents submitted. Unfortunately, the Council did not provide a convenient summary of the changes and it was necessary for those who had objected to wade through the documentation to establish the changes. In the event, these were minimal cosmetic changes to the colour of the materials to be used on the tower, which addressed one of HE's concerns but did nothing to address the fundamental problem of the very existence of the tower and the harm it would cause. A flurry of activity followed with the application submitted to planning committee for determination on 17th February. In a surprise turn of events at the committee, determination of the application was deferred. The reason for deferral was members' concerns about the proposed housing mix, but they never got around to discussing other areas of objection including the excessive height of the tallest tower and the adverse impact on the Town Hall and the surrounding conservation areas. A change to the housing mix was submitted with the application returned to a hastily reconvened committee meeting on 10th March. This change caused some objectors to raise further concerns and the key issue of overdevelopment remains unaddressed. This new committee was plagued by technical problems meaning that observers (and at one point the whole committee) had frequent interruption to the live stream which then failed completely before the end of the meeting. After more than four hours, the proposals were passed by a majority of 7-3 with a further 3 abstentions - hardly a clear endorsement. Community groups (of which we are one) are now considering what further steps to take to ensure this decision is first reviewed by the GLA and then, hopefully, called in for determination by the Secretary of State. Looking beyond the decision of the committee on the application, the way in which this application has been handled throughout has been widely criticised, starting with the form of public consultation and lack of response to feedback, through to the Council's handling of the application and a number of aspects of the conduct of the planning committees. In a further twist, the Council has been forced to declare the decision of the second committee void due to the technical problems - will a third committee now be called?'

55 West, Manor Road. We reported on this application in our last newsletter. The application, which was as

expected recommended for approval by planners, went to committee for determination back in October. The controversial proposal to build a 19 storey tower in a predominantly low-rise residential area met with huge opposition with over 2,600 objections being submitted, including from the Society. We also challenged some of the conclusions drawn by the planning officer in the committee report. Officers claimed the proposals would not negatively impact the local area. However, in a rare move, members of the Council's planning committee voted down the plan by six votes to five, due to concerns that the height and scale of the building would dominate the local area and that despite all the homes technically being 'affordable', they would not be available to those who need them the most.

It is very unusual for the Planning Committee to go against the recommendation of a planning officer, particularly where a development would potentially offer such a large amount of so-called 'affordable' housing. We are very pleased that the Committee in this case took account of the wide-scale public resentment about the scheme and in particular the extent to which it would have completely overwhelmed the scale of the surrounding residential area and harmed nearby heritage assets The Drayton Arms and Royal Mail Sorting Office. As anticipated, we have just heard that the applicants have appealed the decision to refuse so the fight will go on.

Gurnell Leisure Centre. This highly controversial application was considered by the planning committee on 17th March. The proposed development attracted over 1700 objections, highlighting the very significant local interest in the application. The Society's particular concerns included the proposal to build on designated Metropolitan Open Land, over-development, the height of the proposed tower blocks and the poor quality of the design. After a lengthy debate where many aspects of the proposals were questioned by members, the application was refused by a vote of 10-1 against, with 2 abstentions - a triumph for good decision making. The decision may be appealed, or the proposals will now need to be significantly reworked if they are to be resubmitted.

Dawley House and CP House. These two applications for large developments on Uxbridge Road were also considered on 17th March. The Society objected to both on grounds of their bulk and massing. The Dawley House scheme replaced a previously consented scheme for a smaller and more interesting building with an uninspiring and over-dominant design for yet another Uxbridge Road hotel. The CP House scheme proposed the demolition of the current CP House office block and its replacement with a dual office block covering a much greater area of the site and rising higher.

The bulk and massing towards the Uxbridge Road would be significant but of greater concern are its impact

on houses and gardens in Mattock Lane to the rear and in views from historic Walpole Park. Both applications were approved

178 Church Road, Hanwell. Sadly, our efforts to have this property, an Arts and Crafts house dating from 1912, listed or locally listed were unsuccessful. Despite requests to the planning officer for updates and an explanation of the apparent delays in determination,



178 Church Road: (artist's impression)

none has been forthcoming. We have just heard that the planning officer for this proposal has been changed and that further information has been requested from the applicants relating to the heritage significance of the original house. This may be slightly encouraging and we have contacted the new planning officer for more details.

Co-Living Apartments. Members may not be familiar with the concept of 'co-living'. This is an increasingly popular form of development, put forward as offering an alternative to either flat-shares or completely independent accommodation and supposedly targeted at 'young professionals'. Unlike a flat-share or HMO (House in Multiple Occupation), it offers rooms with their own en-suite facilities and sometimes some rudimentary personal cooking facilities such as a microwave oven. The building also provides shared spaces for food preparation and eating, socialising and laundry and possibly outside amenity space. Some earlier schemes have offered quite generous living spaces and facilities, but we are concerned that we are seeing more applications for very large blocks consisting of very small rooms and inadequate communal facilities. Rooms may be as small as 14 m², which we would see as suitable only for part-time or student accommodation rather than full-time living. These are so small that they may include a fold-away bed so that there is living space during the day. To provide an idea of scale, an application has been approved and another is pending to convert a single (albeit large and extended) Victorian house on Hanger Lane into 34 such units. Other pending applications have been submitted for a six-storey block in the same road (on Metropolitan Open Land, which is another cause for concern) with 59 units, and a town centre proposal for a 10-storey 81-unit building. We are concerned that these schemes would not offer suitable living conditions for future occupiers and, indeed, may become the 'slums of the future'.

Further applications. We regularly publish on our website details of the applications we have considered. These can be found under the News tab or at tinyurl.com/ealcivsocnews
Ann Chapman

Corinne Templer (1929-2020)

– an appreciation by Robert Gurd

Our honorary vice president Corinne Templer sadly died in Northwick Park Hospital on Thursday 17th December. She was 91 and had been receiving treatment for a gastro-intestinal problem, together with hospital-acquired Covid-19, from which she failed to recover. Her family were able to be with her when she passed away. I first came to hear about Corinne in 1985 when I was involved in trying to save the former Northfields Odeon cinema from closure and its possible demolition for a



supermarket. A member of the Cinema Theatre Association had mentioned that she was one of three formidable Ealing ladies - the others were Joy Anthony and the late Sybil McRobie - who had been involved in saving the centre of Ealing from the depredations of developers and that I

should get to know her.

"Her reputation, which had spread far and wide, resulted from her close involvement with a long and arduous battle against an Ealing Town Centre redevelopment scheme in the 1960s and 1970s. During this time, Ealing Civic Society and a number of local residents' associations, one of which was then led by Corinne, were in the vanguard of fighting the Council and a developer who were determined to build a concrete monstrosity in the centre of Ealing together with a six-lane bypass which would have run along Mattock Lane, threatening the house in which she was bringing up her family. After landmark public inquiries the groups were successful in devising a scheme which resulted in the Ealing Broadway Centre that we know today. She was personally involved with campaigning, fundraising and appearing in front of Government inspectors at several public inquiries on that and other similar schemes which threatened the character of the centre of Ealing, including the Arcadia development opposite the station and the compulsory purchase order of the Empire Cinema site opposite the Town Hall. She was for many years Chairman of Walpole Residents' Association and treasurer of Ealing Civic Society.

Anyone who came to know Corinne as a result of her local activities will be familiar with how determined she was to protect the interests of her adopted town and she was prepared to go to endless lengths to help people with similar intentions. As my successor, Ann Chapman, said when she heard of her passing: 'Corinne was a stalwart of the community and a real fighter for the local environment – there are not many around who could match her knowledge and tenacity.'

Corinne became a good friend and her wise counsel will be sorely missed.

Annual General Meeting 2021

The 2021 AGM will be held on Thursday 22nd April 2021 at 7.30 pm, conducted virtually using Zoom. Joining instructions will be published on the events page of our website by 8th April.

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Executive Committee's Report for 2020
3. Adoption of the Executive Committee's Report
4. Treasurer's Report for 2020
5. Adoption of the Treasurer's Report
6. Election of Officers
7. Election of other committee members
8. Election of Life Vice President (see below)
9. Motions and any other business submitted to the Chairman in writing prior to the meeting
10. Talk by John Collins – *Boston Manor, Engaging the 21st Century*

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

Ann Chapman (Chairman), Josette Bishop (Treasurer), Jo Winters (Secretary), Jenny Gadsby (Membership), Philippa Dolphin (Web Manager), Robert Gurd, Tony Miller, Maggie Gold, William Hardman

In accordance with the constitution, further nominations for election to the committee may be made by members of the Society. They should be submitted by email to the Secretary (Jo Winters, jow.mail@virgin.net) 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.

Election of Life Vice-President

The Executive Committee of the Society proposes that in recognition of his long and valued service to the Society, former Chairman Robert Gurd should be elected as Life Vice President. The membership is asked to support the proposal.

Ealing Park Tavern listed Grade II

We are delighted to report that following an application from the Society this time last year, this historic public house (which closed at the end of 2019) has been nationally listed Grade II following an assessment by Historic England (HE) advising the Secretary of State. We were very concerned when the pub was closed that it might be completely demolished for redevelopment but instead a property company has gained planning approval for a fairly sensitive development incorporating the existing pub on the ground floor and converting the upper floors to residential. The listing process, which is always a lengthy one, was even more protracted in this case because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Remarkably, the property was listed without the benefit of any internal inspection by HE, which in our experience is most unusual. It remains to be seen what the effect of the listing will be on the consented development scheme.



Tavern is an ambitious late-Victorian suburban pub and a particularly good example of an inventive rendering of the 'Old English' style, bearing the influence of Richard Norman Shaw's work of the 1870s and important early 'improved' pubs of the 1880s. It is a design of architectural quality, with specific features of distinction,

such as the finely carved entrance frontispiece, and a good degree of survival of internal fittings and joinery from the late C19 and the inter-war period. We have thoroughly considered the claims to special architectural and historic interest and conclude that the criteria for listing at Grade II are fulfilled."

The listing designation may be seen on the Historic England website at tinyurl.com/EPTlisting
Robert Gurd

Historic England concludes "Overall, the Ealing Park

Gunnersbury update

Gunnersbury Park has been an even more popular place to walk, run or ride a bike during our various lockdowns. A walk all the way round the perimeter is an excellent way of getting towards 10,000 steps, and you can stop for a coffee at the truck which appears at different spots round the pond, the large mansion and the sports centre. Unfortunately the almost continuous rain over the winter turned parts of the park into a sea of mud.



The Round Pond

We have had some recent bits of good news. The first relates to the small mansion and east stable block, both of which are in a sorry state. A planning application went in to Hounslow for works on the small mansion to undertake "Repair of the structure and external fabric, including renewal of roof finishes and roof lights; repairs to external masonry walls and render finishes; taking down and rebuilding the rendered masonry parapet to reflect archive records; provision of new cast-iron downpipes; and replacement of the Conservatory modern external wall and glazed roof".



The sorry state of the Small Mansion

The stabilisation work on the east stable block includes: "removal and replacement of the modern roof structure to improve headroom to the internal accommodation and improved structural integrity. External masonry and render repairs and provision of new windows and doors". Permission to go ahead with work on the Small Mansion was given on 15 February, and Historic England and the Highways Agency have already provided the funding for the work. The building will soon be covered in scaffolding. There have been no decisions yet about how the small mansion or the stables will be used, but at least these works will stop them from deteriorating further.

The sports centre has not yet opened due to the pandemic restrictions, but is looking good, and the wire fencing around the building has now been removed.

The burnt-out café is at last being demolished. This should be completed in early April. The nearby children's playground will be closed during this period. Rebuilding is expected to be finished by late 2021 or early 2022. The reopening of the popular café should greatly improve the attractiveness of the park.

Finally it looks like there may be at least one much needed source of income for the park in 2021. The Secret Group has submitted an application to Hounslow

Council to hold another immersive cinema event in the south west corner this summer. If it is granted permission to go ahead the event may last for a period between 9 July and 22 August (with time either side for set up and dismantling), depending on any Covid-19 related restrictions on numbers. There have been previous successful Secret Cinema events in the park which have contributed towards the upkeep of the estate.



The gardeners have been hard at work, and if the displays are as good as last year Gunnersbury will look wonderful again.

Philippa Dolphin

Ealing Filmworks – cinema delayed again

Readers will be familiar with the long-running saga of the Filmworks Development on the site of the old Empire (originally-Forum) Cinema, Uxbridge Road. The former cinema was sadly demolished in 2009 after closing in September 2008. After lengthy delays the site was purchased by Land Securities following a public inquiry and sold on to St George in 2013. Eventually work started in 2016 on the main Filmworks residential development, which includes restoration of the old Forum cinema facade and provision of a new eight screen cinema to be run by Picturehouse. Construction delays caused by Covid-19 have meant that the reopening of the cinema itself has been further delayed. However, the facade of the old cinema has been restored and was revealed earlier this year. We understand from St George that the cinema box is due to be handed over to Picturehouse in June this year and they expect the new cinema will open in Spring 2022.



Frontage revealed

The Society is currently in discussion with St George about the wording of commemorative plaques to be erected adjacent to the restored cinema facade and the Walpole Picture Theatre arch in Mattock Lane.

Robert Gurd



Crossrail Update

Work on the **Ealing Broadway** station building has been delayed by about two months. Completion of works on the lifts and much of the new ticket hall is now expected around the end of April/early May. There is still no word from Ealing Council on when their new design for the public realm outside the station will be published (you may recall that the earlier controversial proposals which involved reduction of the number of traffic lanes outside the station were pulled following many complaints).

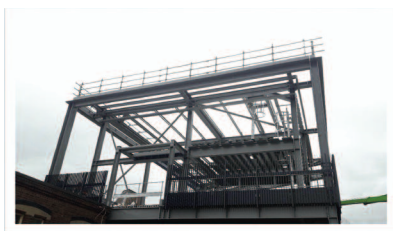
Work on the new station buildings and lifts at **Acton Main Line** and **West Ealing** is more advanced, so these should be open before Ealing Broadway.



Acton Main Line



West Ealing close to completion



Southall — the new station building structure

Hanwell station opened in December 1838 as part of the Great Western Railway. Re-built in 1875–77 it's now a Grade II listed building, but had been falling into decay. A derelict building on platform 2 has been turned into a waiting room with period features, while the waiting room on platform 3 has also been refurbished. A station nameboard, bearing the pre-1974 name Hanwell and Elthorne, has also been restored.

Now it has step-free access after a new lift shaft was constructed. The lift on platform 2 was built using specialist equipment and required hand excavation over a period of weeks so that the historic timber canopy could be left in place.

Hanwell has also benefitted from a doubling in service frequency, moving from two to four trains per hour in either direction and shorter, old trains have been replaced with Elizabeth Line trains providing a significant increase in capacity. The station will now be removed from the Heritage at Risk Register by Historic England.

At **Southall** pre-cast flooring has been installed for the new station building. Foundations have been constructed for the elevated walkway which will link the footbridge to the new station building. Drainage and ground works have been finished for the new station building and work has started on a drainage channel on platform 2/3.

Robert Gurd



A History of the Great West Road

We have an interesting talk lined up for July. James Marshall was formerly Local Studies Librarian for Hounslow Borough Library Service, and in 1995 he published *The History of the Great West Road: its social and economic influence on the surrounding area*. He is now working on the 2nd edition of the book. A review in the Brentford and Chiswick Local History Journal (No 5, 1996) states “His careful research and thoughtful analysis is exemplary – and very readable. The circumstances which led to the construction of the A4, one of the first major arterial roads out of London, the arrival of modern manufacturers using electric power and their 1930s heyday, the reasons for its post War decline and rebuilding during the last decade are all considered”.

James will be talking to us (on Zoom) about the development of the Great West Road on **Thursday 8 July** at 7.30 p.m. Further details about how to see the talk will appear on the Events page of our website.

Philippa Dolphin

Ealing Civic Society Annual Award 2020

Each year the Society runs an annual award to recognise good design in new buildings, major refurbishments, and landscaping projects. Normally we would draw up a short list of entries for our judges to visit at the start of October, followed by an Award Ceremony at the end of the month. But 2020 was not normal! Our judges - Anthony Ferguson, Ania Lill and Harbinder Birdi - were unable to visit the nominated projects and instead met 'virtually' on the judging day to peruse and evaluate the substantial documentation submitted for six interesting and varied projects.

Acton Town Hall, a building which many Ealing residents will know well, has been converted into 58 housing units with a further 13 units in a new extension (Alan Camp Architects).

The Ascott Avenue submission was for two newly built identical detached Edwardian style houses by Chalkline Architectural Services. The University of West London submitted their new **Sport Centre** project which provides a 'Fitness and Exercise Centre' for students, staff and the local community (Bond Bryan Architects) and a scheme in **St Albans Avenue** created a fully wheelchair-accessible extension including a lift giving access to the whole house while fitting seamlessly with the original property (Jeff Kahane and Associates).

Our judges awarded **commendations** to two entries. First for **1A Mortimer Road**, a 1930s house where the



1A Mortimer Road

old rear conservatory had been replaced with a new extension and the adjoining interior spaces reconfigured to create a modern kitchen and entertaining space, along with new rear garden

landscaping (Lill Architects). The judges loved the new spaces that had been created and the way the scheme allowed family life to spill out into the garden area. The



Origami House

second winner was the *Origami House* - a new flexible single-storey family annexe built to replace a garden home office outbuilding (KSKa Architects). Here the judges liked the dynamic roof design, the use of natural light and the clever use of space.

The commendations were presented by James Murray MP at a virtual Award Ceremony. He went on to talk about his interest in housing and design and life as a new MP following in the footsteps of Steve Pound. We would like to thank James and our three judges for making the Annual Award possible under such unusual circumstances.

Maggie Gold

A Plaque for Dusty

Our latest plaque is for Dusty Springfield (1939-1999) who had a long career as a soul and rock singer in the 1960s through to the 1990s. Dusty was born Mary O'Brien and moved to Ealing where she went to St Anne's Convent School, Northfields between 1951 and 1955. She was one of the best-selling UK singers of the 1960s and had a large number of hit singles including *I Only Want to Be with You*, *Son of a Preacher Man* and *I Just Don't Know What to Do with Myself*. In her later years she recorded with the Pet Shop Boys. She died aged 59 of breast cancer.

Dusty's old school has recently been transformed into Ealing Fields High School which was officially opened on 13 October, a very wet day. The plaque was unveiled on the same day by Ann Chapman (Acting Chair of the Society) and Keith McGinness, Senior Project Manager

at bowmer + kirkland, the firm which rebuilt the school and sponsored the plaque. The Mayor of Ealing, Dr Abdullah Gulaid, senior staff of the school plus the head boy and head girl were also present. The plaque is on a pillar at the entrance to the school on Little Ealing Lane. It is the Society's 14th plaque. See the plaques page of our website for pictures of all our plaques.

Philippa Dolphin



Victoria Hall update

In our last newsletter, we reported that the Council had prepared but not submitted their response to the Charity Commission's assessment of the Council's original proposals for changes to the charitable Trust which owns the Victoria Hall. We were then awaiting the Commission's further response. We heard later in the Autumn that the Commission had continued to block the Council proposals to dispose of the Hall, which would allow the site to be turned into a hotel, unless certain specific conditions had been satisfied. These conditions included a requirement that the charitable Trust, which was revived by the Council after a long period in abeyance, should have a majority of independent members. Until now it has been run as part of the Council's General Purposes Committee, which is essentially a committee of councillors run in the interests of the Council rather than of the Trust. The Council initially appointed two independent members and has now agreed to recruit one further independent member to a new Trust committee to satisfy the Commission's minimum requirements. However, it will continue to appoint five councillors, who will constitute a majority of the trustees.

Concerns remain over the conduct of the Committee which we consider would remain under the control of the Council. It remains essentially conflicted in its dealings with the Trust and the terms of the provisions

relating to the declaration of conflict of interest or loyalty by members of the Trust have not been made clear.

Most recently, the Council has put its revised proposals to the Charity Commission for their approval. As we went to print we learned that the Commission had agreed the proposed course of action which seems highly regrettable. The Friends of the Victoria Hall (of which we are a founding member) is currently urgently considering taking legal action to ensure that work on the redevelopment scheme (which could entail damaging demolition of the Trust's property) could not start without the opportunity to challenge the decision taken by the Charity Commission.



More information is available at the link tinyurl.com/SaveVH
Robert Gurd, Tony Miller

2020/21 Executive Committee

Ann Chapman (Acting Chairman) chair@ealingcivicsociety.org

Jo Winters (Secretary)

Josette Bishop (Treasurer)

Margaret Gold

William Hardman

Tony Miller

Philippa Dolphin (Web Manager)

Robert Gurd

Jenny Gadsby

Coming Events

22 April AGM + Talk: John Collins: Boston Manor, Engaging the 31st Century, by Zoom

June date tbc: John Delafons Lecture , Celebrating the life and work of Corinne Templar, on Zoom

June date tbc: Civic Day

8 July Talk: James Marshall: The History of the Great West Road, by Zoom

4-5 September: Open House Festival

November date tbc: ECS Annual Awards Ceremony

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Photos: *Filmworks*, St George plc; *Awards Houses*, Architects; *Station pictures*, Crossrail; 178 Church Road, p-ad; *Dusty Plaque*, PD; *Gunnersbury*, PD Printed by Pollyprint www.pollyprint.co.uk