

## Neighbourhood planning moves on

Since the last CERA News, the Neighbourhood Forum (CENF) has taken further steps towards a plan for Central Ealing. Over 300 people took part in the public consultation survey *Your Town – Your Plan*, and the linked *Best Ideas* youth competition attracted 60 entrants.

For each of the options in the survey, there were clear preferences from respondents, with very large majorities in favour of the most popular choices. The Forum's vision for Ealing was approved by 92%. Policy priorities which gained support from 9 or more out of 10 people, included action to protect and enhance the town's trees and green spaces, capitalising on Ealing's history, culture, and the human scale of its architectural heritage to revive the retail centre, and improving public transport – especially north-south links and access to Ealing Broadway station. One of the highest levels of support (97%) was for action to maintain and enhance facilities for arts and cultural activities, particularly performance arts.

A key concern was that there should be sufficient community infrastructure to cater for the growing population and that there should be a mix of development which includes provision for services such as healthcare, education and police.

The Forum is now converting the ideas into practical policies and projects for the town centre. These will be discussed at the next full meeting of the Forum and will then be submitted to the Council's planners for review in preparation for the draft plan to go to an independent public examination, before a referendum of residents and businesses in the area.

Full details of the responses to the questionnaire are on the CENF web site at [www.centralealingforum.com/survey-results.html](http://www.centralealingforum.com/survey-results.html).

You can keep in touch with what the Forum is doing through signing up for the newsletter at <http://eepurl.com/p8405>.

## Cast iron guarantee !

The Ealing Broadway Ward Forum has agreed to fund the refurbishment of the 17 original street name plates that CERA identified. The Council is writing to property owners to get their permission to remove, restore and replace the signs on their exterior walls – if you are one, please say yes !



### BITES

- Crossrail will, we expect, start to put its works site for Ealing Broadway station onto Haven Green around October this year.

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- CERA believes that the owners of Villiers House above the station are preparing plans to change the tower from offices to flats.
- The Broadway Ward police team are prioritising three aspects of Anti-Social Behaviour in the coming weeks: drug dealing, street drinking and the rising number of beggars. Any members with useful information can contact local SNT officers on 020 8246 9482
- McDonald's in the Arcadia Centre is going to Court to appeal against the Council's decision to support representations from CERA, Walpole Residents and Civic Society opposing their application to open 24/7.

## The Inspectors' call

February was not a good month for the Council with two separate Planning Inspectors issuing decisions against its handling of different aspects of Haven Green.

The first related to the Council's twin applications to convert parts of the Common Land to Highway status. This principally would have involved nearly doubling the width of the pavement along the southern side of the diagonal road across the Green and also re-designating the path next to the open air car park.

The Council's original submissions claimed that there would be a net gain in the area of the Green in the form of new Common Land which would be provided. At the Hearing day on 25 September 2014, it became evident that the Council's calculations were questionable and subsequently two re-calculations were ordered by the Inspector. His report concluded that there would be a net loss of 162 m<sup>2</sup> and also that such replacement land as was on offer was not of equal value – in short, neither quantity nor quality.

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## Beyond Arcadia

The remodelled Arcadia Centre has opened, but it is no longer a shopping centre, merely 3M's – McDonald's, TK Maxx and Morrisons. Plans for the majority of site along The Broadway up to the station and the railway line propose large shops on The Broadway with a new shopping mall behind, which would lead towards the station. Above the shops would be high-rise flats and one especially tall block of 18 storeys – even higher than the tallest Dickens Yard buildings or Villiers House above the station.

These proposals were on display in late January for public comment. Sad to say, only very minor modifications have since been made and it is hard to see a major rethink before a full planning application is submitted to the Council. A planning decision is likely in the summer, with a start on site late this year or early in 2016.

CERA's criticisms have been submitted to the developers. They include the narrow canyon-like shopping mall, too many small shop units, the



*Towers facing the station but not showing any traffic or the segregated cycle lane to be introduced on west side*

bland new Broadway frontage, the loss of all the attractive existing buildings along The Broadway (as well as the ugly ones which we agree should go) and the height of the massive tower block which would dominate Haven Green.

## Beyond Arcadia...(cont.)



Current view west along The Broadway



Proposed Broadway frontages

## Broadway Shopping Centre revamp

British Land's plans for the Broadway Shopping Centre were finally unveiled before Christmas and were more modest than expected. In summary, they involve refurbishing the Centre and adding two extra storeys along The Broadway, changing the appearance of this frontage and converting the un-let offices in Crystal House into flats to rent.

They also want to improve the car park, the central square and the entrance from Oak Road, relocating the lavatories and replacing them with shop units. The offices in International House on the High Street will be refurbished, to include a new atrium and improved entrance.

Some of the project is already completed, with new lighting along the mall from the central square to High Street. The colonnaded area of High Street has now been occupied by a sequence of (chain) restaurants in and around where the Post Office used to be.

The work so far has generally enhanced this part of the shopping centre and British Land's other proposals should improve much of the rest of it over the coming months. But....

CERA is concerned with the proposed changes to the external appearance of the centre along The Broadway, which are bland and look like many other developments in many another town centre. We will put pressure on British Land to provide a more interesting and attractive frontage, more

appropriate to this prominent location in the centre of Ealing.

We are also worried about what will happen to the Library if and when the Council decides to relocate it. Their current thinking seems to be to put it in the Town Hall, with most of the rest of the building converted to (yet another) hotel...

## Council sell-offs?

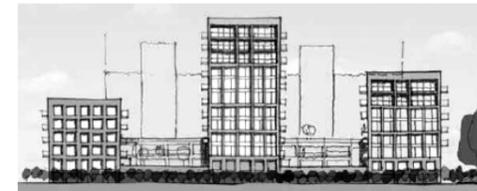
Government spending cuts are forcing Ealing Council to consider staff reductions and to occupy less office space. They are planning that part of the Town Hall, a Grade II listed building, should become (yet another) hotel, leaving some meeting rooms and office space for Councillors. Perceval House and its large car park might be sold off and redeveloped for offices (to house a reduced number of Council staff) and/or a large number of flats. Who would bet against the Council's friends at St George coming up with "Dickens Yard West"?

This could make better use of the large site, keep offices on the New Broadway frontage, and provide yet more flats. But would this help local residents or would it benefit even more overseas investors? And, coupled with all the new flats in Dickens Yard, the Apex tower, the Broadway Shopping Centre, the Arcadia proposals and on the cinema site, what about local schooling needs, doctors and dentists' surgeries, dental facilities and other much needed community infrastructure?

## Fair Exchange?

Redevelopment of the large BT Telephone Exchange at the western end of Gordon Road, just before its junction with The Avenue, has been discussed with the Council for a number of years. This is a very substantial site stretching down to the railway. Yet another big, high density residential scheme is now proposed of over 300 flats behind new terraced housing along Gordon Road.

CERA is particularly dismayed by the design and scale of two massive blocks of flats (one long 7-13 storey block along the railway and one long 7-



Phase 1

## Cinema saga

There has been virtually no news on the cinema site since last summer. Although it looked as if Empire Cinemas, which owns the remains of the old cinema on the New Broadway, had re-started work, nothing significant has happened. It is unlikely to now until after a four day Compulsory Purchase Order Inquiry (14 April onwards) and the subsequent decision by a Planning Inspector.

A favourable decision for the Council, enabling them to acquire all four components of the site down to Mattock Lane, could mean a start by the developer, Land Securities, in 2016. A cinema (six screens?), plus lots of cafes, restaurants, shops and around 160 flats above would not be finished until 2018 at the very earliest.

But suddenly a new player has emerged to throw another spanner in the works. On 6 March, a planning application by Aberdeen Asset Management was published which proposes converting Walpole House on Bond Street into 41 flats. Of course, they may just be looking to force up the price that Land Securities would eventually have to pay for this piece of the jigsaw...

storey block in the centre of the site). They appear like part of a 1960's housing estate rather than something to see us through the 21st century.

No other uses or community facilities are proposed. This looks like another profit maximisation scheme trying to cram too many flats onto a site, which is more than large enough to accommodate a variety of uses. Some imaginative urban design is called for using scale, form and materials which would enhance the setting, rather than imposing yet more pre-fabricated panels bolted to steel frames.



## The Inspectors' calls...(cont.)

### Snubbed Station

The second Inspector visited the electricity substation on the Green to consider the Council's application for it to be retained for 25 more years. His subsequent conclusion was that "it obstructs the views of the common and is an alien feature within the landscape."



CERA, together with Friends of Haven Green, put a lot into achieving both outcomes and is now pursuing the Council for action.