



Farewell Simon

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Simon Rowley earlier this year. Simon had been at the heart of CERA's Committee for many years, compiling and printing

the newsletter, and our link with EPTUG on local transport issues.

For the four years between 2009 right up to his retirement from the Committee at our AGM in October last year, Simon had also combined the roles of Treasurer and Membership Secretary. We miss him greatly and all our sympathies are with Gill, his wife.

Q & Your A's

Thank you to all (around 30%) of CERA members who responded to the questionnaire included with the last newsletter. We thought it was important to try to establish member's; priorities for the many issues with which we are engaged.

The questions covered the local environment, building developments, planning applications, LBE policy consultations, policing, licensing, and transport. The key findings are that members are typically concerned about all the topics we try to deal with.

CERA's role in responding to both large and small scale planning applications was considered extremely important – large town centre schemes were seen as the most important issue of all.

Improvements to Ealing Broadway Station (see update re new plans on pg 2) were the second most important concern and, also in the context of transport, improving conditions for pedestrians was seen as a priority. Environmental issues also scored highly, in particular improving and protecting local green spaces and the restoration of Haven Green. The other issues which are more than averagely important are input to LBE policy consultations, policing (particularly in the town centre) and licensing of pubs, clubs and gambling premises.

The Council has asked for topics to be proposed for the Scrutiny Committee to examine during the 2014-15 year. CERA will be putting forward some of the issues which were highlighted by members responding to our questionnaire.

BITES

- The Post Office at the back of WH Smiths is now open on Sundays between 11am – 3 pm.
- Recycling 'small electricals' no longer has to mean a car trip to one of the main recycling centres. A new facility at the junction of The Mall / Hamilton Road will accommodate pretty much anything smaller than a microwave. Spring clearance time for everything from cables to kettles...
- Former police borough commander Andy Rowell (guest speaker at CERA's 2011 AGM) remains suspended pending a hearing later this year. Detective Chief Superintendent Nev Nolan has now been appointed to the post.

- We had a disappointing response to a previous CERA News request to help us to compile a register of all surviving cast iron street nameplates to get funding for their restoration. So please let us know of any locations – phone 02089977131 or email john@talbot68.plus.com
- Benson Elliot has sold on the Arcadia building. A planning Application for the much larger part of the site is expected late this year.
- The new McDonalds, already open in Arcadia, has applied to have a licence to be open 24/7. CERA is opposing this because we have always maintained that it is desirable for customers from late night bars and clubs to make their way home rather than remain in and around the town centre in the small hours.

CERA NEWS

News from Central Ealing Residents' Association

CERA hotline: 020 8997 7131 or email: john@talbot68.plus.com

Spring 2014

"Aim High!"

That's the marketing slogan used by St. George for the "Skyline" apartments, currently under construction at Dickens Yard, and how very apt it is. This will be the tallest residential buildings in Ealing, at 15 storeys, but will soon be surpassed by the 20 storey Apex development, currently under construction slightly further west along Uxbridge Road.

The full height of these two developments is only now becoming apparent and has already proved a shock to many Ealing residents.



We are used to low and medium rise brick and tile houses and shops in this suburban location, not glass and concrete tower blocks described in the Apex marketing brochure as "a striking fusion of sheer glass and aluminium clad façade rising and arching to nearly 250 feet"!

This might be appropriate to central London, or Docklands. But even in central London buildings of this height would not be allowed in or adjacent to Conservation Areas, so why were they allowed to dominate central Ealing?

Will anyone want to live in these massive tower blocks? Apparently almost all flats in the "Skyline" building at Dickens Yard and in the Apex development are already pre-sold, many months before completion. Even in the Dickens Yard "Fitzroy" and "Dickens" buildings, which are over a year from completion, most flats are already sold.

But to whom? 70% of new build flats in central London (Zones 1 and 2) are sold off-plan to overseas investors (according to Knight Frank research), not to occupiers. In outer London, the picture is a bit different, but central Ealing's location, just outside Zone 2, and with superb transport connections, improved further with Crossrail, has growing appeal to overseas investors (hence the very high number of off-plan sales), with little benefit to local residents or businesses.



With the Dickens Yard and Apex schemes as precedents, what is likely for the next phase of Benson Elliot's Arcadia shopping centre – a 15-storey development towering over Haven Green? And what skyline additions have British Land got planned for the Broadway Shopping Centre? Central Ealing could be transformed out of all recognition in the next few years.

Beware garden grabbers !

Ealing has been known as "Queen of the Suburbs" since 1902, but for how much longer ? Recently, another phrase has been more frequently associated with Ealing – "garden grabbing". Ealing's gardens are being chopped up, at an alarmingly increased rate, by developers looking to profit from ever rising house prices, especially with the prospect of Crossrail around the corner. These developments are usually unwelcome, bringing with them a look and character alien to existing houses, overlooking and a general reduction to the open aspects which have been prized by residents and admired by visitors to Ealing.

Residents have responded with concern to the increasing number of back garden developments given Planning permission by the Council. Each time this happens, it serves to encourage other developers, many of whom do not live in Ealing and care nothing for its heritage. Even Council designated Conservation Areas are not safe.



The London Plan (2011) and the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework, both of which inform the Council's recently adopted Development Management DPD, give Ealing Council the opportunity "for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area". We hoped that we would see this reflected in Ealing's Residential Gardens Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which was released for consultation a few weeks ago. Unfortunately, the current draft of is, in effect, a developer's charter. It does very little to protect existing back gardens.

We regret that circumstances have meant an unusually long interval between newsletters and reminders to members overdue with their subscriptions. However, the Committee has now been strengthened with 3 additions, so we look forward to resuming usual scheduling.

The neighbouring Borough of Harrow has used the opportunity afforded by the London Plan and the NPPF to introduce a presumption **against** back garden development in their Garden Land Development SDP.

Will Ealing Council listen to the concerns of its residents and amend its SPD to follow Harrow's example and protect Ealing's gardens ?



Station latest

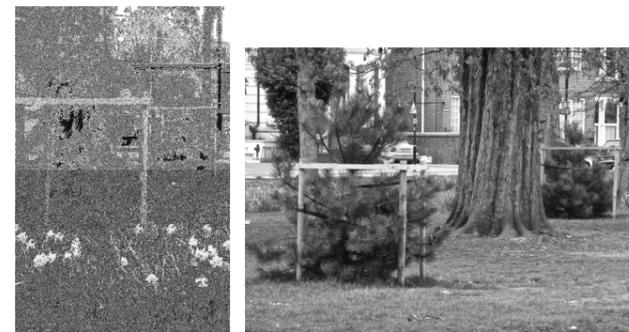
Following the wave of protest, led by Lord Richard Rogers, about the cheapskate and wholly inappropriate designs belatedly produced by Crossrail for the rebuild of Ealing Broadway station, a new version has just been produced by architects TP Bennett. The new drawings can be seen on the SEC website www.saveealingcentre.com. We believe that Crossrail will be submitting a planning application during May. However, due to the powers Parliament has given Crossrail, we understand that there will now be no basis for the Council to refuse the revised designs. The exterior appearance is undoubtedly an improvement on the ridiculous, and impractical, 'gull wing' canopy even the Council objected to.

The interior layout will be virtually unchanged from the previous design and so will disappoint the many passengers who were hoping for escalators, especially for those with disabilities, baby buggies and, even more so after Crossrail arrives, luggage. Three lifts will be all that will serve such travellers while stairs will continue to try to cope with most of the ever-growing numbers using the station.

As far as the forecourt is concerned, further design work is underway in the hands of HOK, the architectural practice appointed by the Council to review aspects of the station remodelling. CERA anticipates that few will be completely satisfied by the solutions which will emerge in coming months.

Haven Greening, but...

Spring buds bursting forth, are bringing to life the 15 trees planted this winter on the Green, the outcome of years of lobbying by CERA, latterly joined by Friends of Haven Green. We have tried to favour native species but in some cases, for example oaks, we have accepted three of the disease resistant American variety. A row of six Hornbeams, interspersed with a sweet chestnut, is planted along the northern boundary to anticipate the inevitable felling of the diseased horse chestnuts. Otherwise, all planting has taken place south of the diagonal road. Planting on the eastern side of the Green cannot be undertaken for the time being because it is due to be taken over by Crossrail as a works site.



Meanwhile, our struggle (together with Friends of Haven Green and the Open Spaces Society) to prevent the Council taking yet more areas of the Common Land, continues. Recently, and very late

Red vs. Green

TfL has just concluded a (little publicised) consultation about alterations to some of the bus stops on and around Haven Green. Indeed, some of the proposed changes have already been made (e.g. 112 service being added to the E2, E8, 65 stop outside the station). This has already demonstrated one of the concerns we have reported to TfL – growing congestion on the pavements along the east side of the Green. Another burning issue is the proposed entrenchment of bus stops and the parking along the diagonal road which would be used to justify the Council's take of yet more of the Common Land (see 'Haven Greening', above).

in the day, the Council has finally owned up to some of the land which has been lost and, on instruction from the Planning Inspectorate, submitted a new application. CERA and our allies will be responding to this and continuing to build the case for an Inspector to decide against any further encroachment.

Housing target soars

A planned 23% increase in London's housing targets will further intensify pressure on the Capital's transport infrastructure, amenities and services. Much of the new housing is not affordable to Londoners and is being sold to foreign investors. In the case of Ealing, the London Plan target for new homes is proposed to increase by 45% - a far greater percentage than in nearby Boroughs such as Hounslow or Richmond.

The implications for Ealing are serious as the Council will be tempted to meet targets by approving even more residential schemes that cause substantial harm to the character and appearance of existing neighbourhoods, open spaces, conservation areas and town centres. The poor design quality of much of the development already being built in the Borough provides little comfort that the provision of additional housing will be of a type and to standards that will be welcomed by existing and incoming residents.

Amongst other proposals, the buses, which sit alongside the Green's east side, would be relocated - superficially a good idea which should open up views but...

'Mini Holland' survives and the buses are being removed to make way for a cyclists' contra-flow running south to north. There is no mention of this in the information provided by TfL even though it is their funding behind all the street-level schemes.

CERA is very concerned that information/consultation is only emerging in a piecemeal way and that residents are not being given the full picture to help judge the totality of proposals which will have a dramatic impact on both Haven Green and streets nearby.