

ISLINGTON *news*

The Journal of the Islington Society

Development threatens Highbury Corner greenspace

The desperate need for affordable housing has led to a controversial proposal for development at Dixon Clark Court on Highbury Corner. The scheme would see the loss of the open space around the existing tower block. Traditionally tower blocks were surrounded by green space by way of compensation for the reduced amenity such buildings offer.

The proposal follows schemes elsewhere in the Borough to increase the density of council housing estates. Elsewhere this has been achieved by demolishing underused garages, or by sensitive infill over hardstanding.

This particular scheme comes on top of the gyratory removal plans, which have also resulted in loss of green space. Many critics saw the failure to take advantage of the green space in front of Dixon Clark Court as a lost opportunity. It can now be seen that this obvious solution to the problem of adding social space and space for cycling without taking from buses and bus users was not being advanced because it would either undermine the scheme for affordable housing or itself be compromised as a result of the decision to proceed with the housing scheme.

The plans are also opposed by parents and teachers at Canonbury School, which would be adversely affected during construction and perhaps in perpetuity, since there would be a net loss to the green lung which mitigates the adverse impact of the nearby traffic on air quality.

Progress report from T&L

The Upper Street Association and Canonbury Society met Ben Plowden of TfL at the start of last month. He indicated that revised proposals for Highbury Corner would be put forward in a few

months (probably March 2017), but that nothing could happen until the bridge strengthening works were complete. This was scheduled for end-2017, but was dependent on securing the necessary permissions for temporary closure of the railways below. Freight operators displaced from the Barking-Gospel Oak line would not want to lose the alternative route via Highbury as well, and the new franchisee of London Overground did not want passengers' first impressions to be of a rail replacement bus.

Premier Inn rejected

Further south close to Mount Pleasant, the need for housing has led to a more popular planning decision. A proposal to turn the NCP building, once listed in Councillor Broadbent's ten ugliest buildings in the Borough, into a Premier Inn, has been turned down. The development was out of scale with its surroundings as well as failing to offer any element of housing.

A scheme to build on the car park at Centurion Close, near Pentonville Prison, is expected to be approved shortly after we went to press. The scheme would provide eight two bedroom flats.

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Islington Society News

ISLINGTON IN BLOOM

The Islington Society sponsored Islington in Bloom 2016, an annual competition run by Islington Gardeners and Islington Council to judge the best horticultural displays in the Borough. This year we were again one of the sponsors (list attached). We sponsored the category "Best Community Garden", defined as "a garden which is maintained by a group of local people". Judging criteria included: "choice and use of plants, their health and maintenance and wild-life friendliness".

The winners of each category received certificates, awards and prizes at a ceremony held on Wednesday 14th September in the Assembly Rooms next to the Town Hall. The winners of our sponsored category "Best Community Garden" were:

- 1st - Olden Community Garden
- 2nd - Culpepper Community Garden
- 3rd - King Henry's Walk Community

Garden

Committee members, Sarah Curtis and David Trillo, handed out the prizes to the winners of our category.

The borough of Islington has been successful in previous years' London in Bloom awards. Last year Islington won Borough of the Year 2015, Islington Gardeners won Gold and Category winner in Small City Category and Arlington Square won Best Small Park.

Annual Dinner

This year's Annual Dinner for members and guests will be at Côte Brasserie, 4-6 Islington Green, London N1 2XA

Tuesday 18th October 2016 at 7.0 for 7.30 pm.

There will be a Set Menu of 3 courses for £25 per person; drinks for personal account. A booking form has been sent to all members who have

provided e-mail addresses and a further copy is enclosed with this newsletter

Copy date for our next newsletter is February 5th, 2017. The views expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily those of the chair, the editor, or the Society's adopted policy.

Islington Society: What we do

- we support conservation planning work to preserve the borough's historic fabric and individual buildings of distinction
- we campaign for a high standard of design in new buildings
- we encourage best practice through awards for good architecture in new or refurbished buildings
- we organise a varied programme of events including talks, walks and site visits
- we campaign for better public transport and for priority for people travelling on foot or by bike
- we produce publications that celebrate Islington's history and its social and cultural diversity
- we publish neighbourhood walking trails to foster exploration awareness and pride of place
- we build links between residents officials and councillors
- we send advisers to Council groups dealing with development, the environment and transport
- we are represented on the London Forum of Civic & Amenity Societies, which takes up cross-borough issues and is a member of Civic Voice
- we publish a regular newsletter

The copy date for our next newsletter is June 6th, 2016. The views expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily those of the chair, the editor, or the Society's adopted policy.

Our web site is www.islingtonssociety.org.uk

Society publications [available from the Society at 3P, Leroy House, 436, Essex Rd., London, N.1 or local bookshops]
Twentieth Century Buildings in Islington, by Alec Forshaw, £14.99, photographs by Richard Leeney, ISBN 0-9541490-0-9
The Story of Day Flats in and around Islington, by Andrew Bosi, photographs from C.F. Day Limited and Oliver Craxton, £5, ISBN 0-9541490-1-7
An architect in Islington, by Harley Sherlock, £14.99, ISBN 9-78-0-9541490-2-4

Books from our President and Vice-President

Suicide of the West, by Richard Koch & Chris Smith, £14.99 and available on Amazon, ISBN 0-8264 9023-9.
A History of Islington, by Mary Cosh, published by Historical Publications at £18.95, ISBN 0-948667-974
53 Cross Street - the biography of an historic house by Mary Cosh & Martin King, photographs by Pauline Lord, published by the Islington Archaeology & History Society

Society ends fifty-five year convention

The Society has hitherto studiously avoided entering into politics to the extent of advocating on behalf of one candidate over another. Current councillors have not been invited to join the Committee.

All this has changed following an uncontested decision of the Committee this year. It has been agreed that we should lobby for the election of Harley Sherlock. Each year there is a plebiscite to determine the recipients of three "People's plaques" and this year one of the nominations, made by the Islington Society and the Canonbury Society, is for Harley Sherlock.

Voting for the Islington People's Plaques started on Thursday 22nd Sept. The voting cards have been available for the public to fill in at the

Islington Libraries, Local History Centre and Museum.

People can also vote online via this link:

<https://survs.com/survey/dxwot69kw3> .

The Council has issued the following press statement. "Voting has begun for 2016/17's favourite person, place or event to receive an Islington People's Plaque.

"Last time over 6,300 people voted for their favourite nomination, and we'd love to do better than that this year.

"People can pick up a voting card in any Islington library and Islington Museum or you can vote online through the [Islington Life website](#)

"Voting closes on Wednesday 30th November at midnight."

School Developments

Although the new government is pressing for a return of grammar schools (and presumably secondary modern schools), current developments reflect the previous political climate.

A shortage of primary places in the north of the Borough is to be addressed by a £14m. development of Tufnell Park school, which will double the size of the school from one and a half form entry to three. Those half forms are notoriously difficult to organise and so there will be some efficiency saving to the school, as well as meeting the rise in demand.

As yet, there is no shortage of secondary school places, so the scheme for a Free School on the old Ladbroke site of North London University has not received any rapturous reception from the headteachers of Highbury Grove and Highbury Fields schools. The Archdiocese of Westminster plans to close Mount Carmel School and replace it with a non-denominational co-educational Academy. The girls currently in years 7-10 could transfer to the new school, or seek a place at a Girls' school elsewhere. The plan is subject to consultation.

CURRENT OFFICERS

President : Lord Smith of Finsbury

Vice President: Mary Cosh

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Society responds to Council consultations

Urban Design Guide

1 We met, with others, with you earlier last year prior to the issue of the SPD for wider consultation. We are pleased that we were able to assist in formulating the guidance at an early stage and are gratified to note that most of the comments we made then have been incorporated into the final draft. Thank you for that.

2 As such, we believe that the SPD is as a well-formulated guidance document and we do not wish to comment on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis except to object to the detailed design guidance for dormer windows.

3 We have received a number of representations that the guidance is in places too prescriptive. That is not our view. While we may quibble with some of the statements and choice of illustrations, we note and agree with your comments, particularly in paragraph 1.2.2, reflecting that the SPD is *guidance* and may not be appropriate in some individual cases. We would like to see in para 1.2.2 or elsewhere the commonly recognised phrase “judged on its merits” to emphasise the point.

4 We think that there should be a stronger link between this document and the Conservation Area Design Guidelines (and forthcoming Conservation Area Assessments). This should be stronger than the mere inclusion of “Conservation Area

Guidance” in Appendix B, References. We recommend adding a new paragraph 3.0.2 setting out the significance and importance of the Conservation Area Design Guides.

5 There is no reference to the damaging effect that can be caused by the thoughtless application of Permitted Development Rights and in particular to the Council’s efforts to control the proliferation of inappropriate permitted developments through Article 4 Directions. We recommend adding a new paragraph in Section 1.3 drawing attention to Article 4 Directions.

6 Although there are references in the body of the text to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) it is not included in Appendix B, References. We recommend including the NPPF in Appendix B.

Application of section 106 agreements

We wholeheartedly support the Council’s continued use of Section 106 obligations for site-specific infrastructure mitigation in addition to the application of CIL obligations to achieve sustainable development.

Other than that, we find ourselves unable to comment in detail on the technical policy and implementation arguments in the SPD. We have every confidence in the Planning Obligations Team in this regard.

King's Cross scheme gets the thumbs up

Transport for London say that their in principle proposals to make King's Cross safer for pedestrians have received public support.

Most people will support in principle measures to improve pedestrian safety. However, these proposals involve removal of the contra-flow bus lane on Pentonville Road, with consequent delays to buses. Many bus users are not resident or working in King's Cross and are unlikely to have responded to the consultation. Some will already have migrated to the Northern line on account of the increase in journey time caused by roadworks and

congestion elsewhere on the routes.

Hitherto, congested bus routes have benefited from additional buses so that the waiting time to board the bus is not reduced. With the reduction in bus subsidy this is unlikely to be an option in future. If the buses take longer to run end to end and back, the frequency diminishes, fewer people choose the bus and the level of subsidy rises per passenger. Bus priority measures, of which contraflow bus lanes are the most effective, are a means of countering this vicious circle of decline.

Reviewing Islington's locally listed buildings

The Building Exploratory, working with Islington Council, Historic England and ourselves, is promoting voluntary support literally to keep an eye on our locally listed buildings.

Launched in 1996, the Building Exploratory is a learning and engagement organisation that helps communities to discover the secrets of their local area. It works across London with schools, families, residents, older people, local authorities and businesses to engage them in researching and celebrating their built environment, its heritage, people, buildings and public spaces. The Building Exploratory aims to improve access to information and give those who may not have a voice, opportunities to share their views about the neighbourhoods where they live and work. To date the Building Exploratory has delivered projects in twenty London boroughs, training

more than 750 volunteers and engaging more than 50 communities in documenting and sharing their heritage. *Our Eyes on Islington* is being managed by the Building Exploratory in partnership with Islington Council and Historic England. The project builds upon previous work carried out by the Building Exploratory including *Places of Worship 2009*, which surveyed listed places of worship in Hackney and Tower Hamlets; and *Panorama East 2012* which looked at buildings in Whitechapel, Mile End and Bow, both highly successful projects involving teams of local committed volunteers.

A Volunteer Handbook has now been published to facilitate volunteers in their work. Anyone wishing to volunteer should contact katie@buildingexploratory.org.uk. One of the locally listed buildings thought to be at risk, in Parkhurst Road, is pictured below.



Islington out of step with the country – continued

After the referendum on electoral reform and the General Election result, Islington has done it again with an overwhelming vote for the losing side in the referendum on continued membership of the EU.

We certainly live in interesting times. After decades of the establishment always having its way, with ever fewer people bothering to vote, young people are interesting themselves in politics again and a significant number of voters are rebelling against perceived wisdom.

Ever simplistic, the press has portrayed the Brexit vote as a vote against immigration or net migration. There were so many reasons to vote Leave (or Remain) that the whole concept of referenda can be challenged. Can an issue like this be resolved by a simple majority vote on one of two alternatives? But the electoral system we have is based on voting for one of two alternative parties, and it leads to unsatisfactory results in seats where there are more than two contenders. Islington was one of five places to see that. On the other hand, a referendum before we entered the EEC, or before we signed the Maastricht treaty, would have offered a clear cut choice between two alternatives.

A friend recently commented that it was a pity Andrew Strauss had not gone into politics because then he would only be ruining the country, instead of undermining county cricket. There is a hidden truth in this tongue in cheek remark. People are more concerned with what

directly concerns them than the global economy or the National interest.

Person A takes a job no-one here wants, lives in straitened circumstances for six months, and takes the proceeds home to his hard pressed family. Person B settles here, takes another job no indiginous person wants, stays and spends their money in the UK. Person C takes a local job in a call centre, one of hundreds exported from the UK. Who appears in the net migration figures and who contributes most to the UK economy?

I still cannot decide whether “Project Fear” refers to the over-the-top claims of the Remain camp or those of the prominent Leavers. But I do not believe most Leave voters thought there would be £350m. for the NHS, or that most Remain voters were convinced there was no economic future outside the EU. The Prime Minister chose to have the referendum, and assured us he would campaign to leave if he could not secure appropriate terms of membership.

For all that Islington appears out of step with the rest of the country, if the government makes a hash of the Brexit negotiations there is every chance that for the first time, an Islington Member of Parliament will occupy number 10. But the chance will not come in 2017. A prime Minister who thinks it arrogant to call a plebiscite you “know you cannot lose” is hardly likely to call an unnecessary election she knows she is certain to win.

AB

Kate Pugh to retire

Kate Pugh O.B.E. is to retire as Chief Executive of the Heritage Alliance, a position she has held since 2003. The Alliance issues a fortnightly bulletin of heritage news and organises an annual Heritage Day in London, usually in the first week of December.

Transport News Round-up

Decline in bus use could lead to cuts

Despite the continuing growth in population, and in use of public transport within London, there has been a worrying decline in the use of buses in central London.

This is almost certainly the result of congestion. The benefits of the congestion zone have been eroded by construction work, some of it transport related e.g. Cycle superhighways and CrossRail. Some journey times which used to be comparable to tube travel are now closer to the time taken to walk, not just for short journeys suitable for walking but those taking over an hour.

The obsession with removing buses from Oxford Street thus has a new impetus. The new hopper fare removes the cost of changing buses, though not the inconvenience. Consequently, plans to change the 13 route which runs through Camden have re-emerged, and may be followed by plans to cut the 73 back to Oxford Circus. The problem on Oxford Street is buses terminating there (they are always empty and the beginning and end of the route), not the through routes.

The Mayor has to find savings and unsurprisingly this has meant the end of guards and open platforms on the 38 (and the few other routes that had them). Guards never achieved the popularity of bus conductors because their only function was to stop people doing what they wanted: to hop on and off.

No Barking/Gospel Oak trains until February 2017

The line through Upper Holloway and Crouch Hill is now completely closed until February as work continues to electrify the line. Regular users are promised a refund of any additional costs incurred as a result of being rerouted via zone 1. They will not be compensated for the added journey time. Occasional users will be expected to pay more, either in fares or through even greater journey times as the rail replacement bus wends its way between stations poorly connected by road.

There are two rail replacement bus routes, covering Gospel Oak to South Tottenham and Walthamstow to Barking. Passengers are expected to use the Victoria line for the bit in the

middle. Some of the stops are as much as 15 minutes' walk from the stations they seek to replace. The services are less frequent. All of which is likely to discourage use, which may lead to reductions in frequency and further reductions in use.

There is no change to the plan to wait twelve months after electrification is completed before introducing electric trains.

277 rerouted at its eastern end

The 277 now goes to Crossharbour rather than Leamouth. The valuable links from St. Paul's Road to St. Joseph's hospice, a Lidl supermarket, Mile End and Canary Wharf, are not affected by this change. Bus blinds and Countdown have been changed to show "Highbury Corner" rather than "Highbury & Islington", at the instigation of TfL. The 263, which actually terminates and starts in Highbury Corner, continues to display the name of the station. Maybe there is still scope for savings that do not affect front line service.

Night tube

The 24 hour weekend service on the Victoria and Central lines commenced on August 19th. Most people have welcomed it, though there are issues about noise where the trains run out of tunnel - not an issue in Islington. There has never been a proper debate about intensification of use of roads or rails. Because there is no Land Value Tax, there is no system of compensation for this, just as there is no way of capturing windfall benefit when infrastructure changes add massively to house prices.

Drive to improve air quality

The new mayor is taking a more proactive approach to air quality than his predecessor, and Islington is joining in. Later this month they are launching a campaign to discourage idling by car engines when stationary. Before that training is being offered to volunteers who are willing to encourage better behaviour.

Another runway at Heathrow, though, would have more adverse impact on Islington than any amount of unnecessary idling. AB

Society Events

Current officers are listed on page 3, and What We Do is on page 2

Future Society events

The Society gives reminders by e-mail of meetings about a week before they are held. Please let the Secretary have your e-mail address if you are not on the existing mailing list.

Annual Dinner: This year's Dinner will be at Cote Brasserie, 4-6 Islington Green on Tuesday, 18th October at 7.0 p.m..

There will be a selection of 3 courses from the Set Menu to be pre-ordered at £25 a person. Wine for personal account.

Please send payment (cheques made out to Islington Society) to the Treasurer, Robert Coyle, Colman Coyle, Wells House, 80 Upper Street, N1 0NU. A Booking Invitation is included in this Newsletter.

AGM

The 2016 AGM will be at Islington Town Hall on Wednesday 9th November at 7.30 p.m.

The Agenda and supporting papers for the AGM will be sent to members next month.

Speaker after the AGM - Cllr. Richard Watts, Leader of Islington Council

Other Events in or around Islington:

Archaeology & History Society (7.30 p.m. Islington Town Hall)

Non-IA&HS members welcome, donation invited. Further information in the web site.

Wednesday 19th October. "Six Hundred Years of the Old Red Lion".

Speaker Damien Devine, Executive Director Old Red Lion Theatre.

King's Head Theatre

The Book Club by Roger Hall (Tuesday 11th October to Saturday 5th November)

5 Guys Chillin' (Saturday October 15th - Saturday November 5th)

Pinocchio (Thursday December 1st - Saturday January 7th, 2017)

Heritage Alliance

The annual Heritage Day takes place on Thursday December 1st at the Freemasons Hall, London,

W.C.2

London Forum of Civic & Amenity Societies

020 7993 5754

Tuesday 25th October. AGM London Forum

Wednesday 30th November. Open meeting about changes to planning policies.

Monday January 30th, 2017

Wednesday March 29th, 2017

Meetings at 77, Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ at 6.30 p.m.

Islington Museum & Local History Centre

245, St. John Street. tel. 7-527 2837

Wednesday 12th October, Talk 12 midday - 1.0 p.m. "Getting the Most from the Society of Genealogists".

"Inter Faith Week" from Remembrance Sunday 13th November until 20th November.

Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art, 39a

Canonbury Square

Normal Opening hours Wed. to Sat. 11 a.m.- 6 p.m., Sunday 12 noon - 5 p.m.

Closed for major renovation until December 2016.

Almeida Theatre,

Almeida Street, N.1 tel: 0207 359 4404

Monday-Saturday 7.30 p.m., Saturday matinée 2.30 p.m.

World Premiere of new play "Oil" by Ella Hickson, directed by Carrie Cracknell.

7th October - 26th November 2016.

Monday-Saturday 7.30 p.m. Saturday matinee 2.30 p.m

Sadlers Wells Theatre

Rosebery Avenue, London, E.C.1

www.sadlerswells.com/whats-on/list

Islington University of the Third Age (U3A)

Islington U3A has about 500 members with at present 48 special interest groups, mostly meeting in members' homes. Monthly meetings at 10.30 am, The Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Road: details and membership www.IslingtonU3A.org