



Young's Ram Brewery : Why all the fuss?
come to the meeting on Wednesday 11th March
... and find out

The **Wandsworth**
Society
Newsletter March 2010

Planning matters

... no peace for the wicked

The planning group must have been terribly wicked in the not too distant past (we will not tell you what we get up to at our meetings!), as having just got over the Planning Inquiry for the Ram Brewery and Cockpen House sites in early December, and having a short break over Christmas, the New Year hit us with a vengeance. We realized that we had only about three weeks to complete our response to a consultation paper on the Core Strategy and a site specific allocation document. The Core Strategy is a planning document that, after due consultation and consideration, will be adopted by the Council as the blueprint for the Borough planning strategy for the next eight years or so. The site specific document is an assessment of land use and density/height proposal for individual sites throughout the Borough should any of these sites be presented for redevelopment. The Society has only concerned itself with sites within our immediate area, leaving for others sites such as Nine Elms with

the proposed new American Embassy and the redevelopment of the New Covent Garden Flower Market, to say nothing of the revised proposals for Battersea Power Station.

Central government has implemented a revised planning framework with which all planning authorities have to comply. The timescale imposed has left little time for reconsideration of submitted documents and the Council are intent in complying as far as possible with the statutory requirements. A Public Inquiry into the revised Core Strategy was held during the first week of February at which the Society was represented, particularly commenting about the tall buildings policies.

The site specific consultation document has also been extensively analysed and comments made.

Hereward Cooke

Just before Christmas we received the sad and very unexpected news of the death of our past Chairman Hereward Cooke.

Hereward was our Chairman from 1987 till 1989 when he and his family moved to Norwich. At the time of his death he and Diana had been living on the north Norfolk coast at the lovely village of Blakeney. If this move, from the bustling county town to the winter peace but equally bustling touristy summer, was intended to be retirement, it was typical of Hereward that he continued to put heart and soul into pursuing the concerns that had driven him through life.

To Norfolk folk Hereward was the Reverend Canon Cooke on the one hand and Councillor Cooke and one-time Deputy Leader of Norwich City Council on the other. In both capacities he was extraordinarily active in a considerable range of rôles within the church and politics. Politically he was a LibDem and had stood for election in Wandsworth where success escaped him. The LibDems were more successful in Norwich and he was elected in 2000, standing down in 2008.

While Chairman of Wandsworth Society he was particularly interested in environmental matters and this became a passion which drove him to undertake a 150-mile fundraising cycle ride across Denmark to the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. This proved to have been more than just a considerable undertaking for a 70-year-old, albeit a fit one and a keen cyclist, and Hereward died in his sleep soon after reaching Copenhagen.

Tributes flowed in from many sources recalling Hereward's enormous contributions to the lives of others so it was no surprise to see the truly vast number who attended his funeral at the church of St Nicholas, Blakeney.

Having spent a happy morning with Hereward and Diana a year ago in their fine new home, we had planned to repeat the occasion at New Year this year. Instead we made a 5-hour trip to help give Hereward a send-off worthy of him. We should have got there in 3½ hours but pigs on the motorway created a slight delay. I suspect that Hereward is still chuckling about it.

Iain K S Gray

Planning matters

... continues

Other matters that have been given attention over the last few weeks include a hearing of an appeal against an Enforcement Notice by the Council on the new building known as Skydeck in Earlsfield Road (corner of Heathfield Road). The Society has presented evidence to the Inspector of a number of matters that we consider do not comply with the consent granted for this building. This matter has been rumbling on for almost three years, it will be interesting to learn of the Inspector's views and recommendation for remedial action, if any.

Sainsbury's Garratt Lane

An application was submitted to the Council for the redevelopment and extension of the store to provide an increased shopping area, together with an hotel over part of the new building, with parking on two levels to the rear of the store. We made representation on members' behalf in respect of the orientation of the hotel and the concern of adjoining residents over security and loss of amenity from parking at a higher level than just ground level. The Council have yet to decide on the application.

Enterprise Way/Osiers Road

An application for a twenty-one-storey new build residential development was approved early in January for this site. We objected to the height and massing of the proposals and cannot understand why the Council approved the application as it did not conform to the draft new site specific allocation height criteria. There are concerns about the ability of the public transport system to cope with the increased demand, to say nothing of the pressure on the infrastructure close to the site to deal with traffic generation, and the loss of employment space for diversified uses, which we consider essential for a well-balanced community. You may soon have to go to Croydon to have your car serviced!!

Ram Brewery/ Buckhold Road

The Planning Inspectorate is expected to report to the Secretary of State with their recommendations before the end of May. We have received little or no feedback, as is expected, but we are hopeful that the Inspectors will follow a similar line to the recent recommendation at Ealing for a refusal on a scheme which has many similarities to the Ram Brewery.

We have considered and commented on many other applications over the last few months: we are slightly surprised, in view of the current economic conditions,

how many applications are still being submitted to the Council. If you have a matter of interest or concern please let us know in good time, as we cannot deal with matters properly if we only have a day or so before the Planning Applications committee's meeting.

Finally the Planning Group would like to thank the members of the Society (although you may not have known!) for kindly hosting a most enjoyable dinner at the Alma in Alma Road on the 5th January. We discussed the presentation of the evidence to the Ram Brewery Inquiry and how the Society should go forward, the strategy for attracting new members and whether the present committee is going in the right direction for the future.

The AGM is on the 17th March please come along and tell us what you want. Following the formal meeting there will be a presentation by Dale Ingram who spoke most eloquently and forcefully at the Ram inquiry about the Listed Brewery buildings on the Ram site and their significance to Wandsworth.

P Whyte



The Skydec Inquiry - decision received

We have just received the decision from The Planning Inspectorate on the Skydec appeals, and are pleased to report that the Inspector has upheld the enforcement notice and dismissed the appeals. This means that the building owner has to reduce the height of the main building and reshape its roof, and reduce the height of the car-lift building.

This is really good news. The building has been a blot on the landscape for too long, at least now it will be a smaller blot, with hopefully a less dominant and more attractive roof.

6,000 cycles and 10,000 trees, or

... a very personal view of the Mayor's Transport Strategy

Surely one of the most important areas of policy for a London mayor is his approach to the development and control of transport in the capital. Ken is remembered for improved bus frequency and the introduction of the congestion scheme, for which policies will the present mayor be remembered?

The newly released Mayor's Transport Strategy outlines the present mayor's plans for the next 20 years and these are as individual and visionary as the man himself. They are also, as characterises Boris and his election promises, based principally in Northern London and the Outer Suburbs.

Transport policies have a vital role to play in the accessibility and environmental health of Londoners. Boris addresses this in his foreword, mentioning electric cars, the bike hire scheme and the encouragement of a shift to walking and public transport. He rightly includes "reducing the need to travel" as a way to tackle transport problems and backs a package of investments for suburban rail services. For South London, the plans include a commitment to Thameslink and a Surrey Quays to Clapham Junction extension, both by 2012. The 2012 date is a significant one in the strategy document as one of the Mayor's 10 major goals is supporting the delivery of the London Olympic Games and their legacy.

The other major policies are as follows:

- a "revolution in cycling"
- Crossrail
- major upgrades on the underground
- improved links and interchanges on the rail network
- East Thames river crossings
- improved travel information
- more use of the river
- electric vehicles
- and traffic control systems.

Further plans include "tube cooling where feasible", the consideration of road user charging systems and the fact that the mayor "is minded to remove the Western Extension to the Congestion Zone". I highlight the above as characteristic of the Strategy, where encouragement, enhancement and promotion are the main features, rather than actual changes.

In order to test whether there are in fact new policies written into the Strategy, I looked at all the short-term funded schemes for Roads, Rail, Underground, DLR, Buses, Cycling, Walking, River Services and Other – all described in the Implementation Plan. I summarise

these policies here, though they can be found on pages 275 – 87 and 330 – 346 of the document.

Roads - the plans are: a permit scheme for road works, the removal of the Tottenham Hale Gyrotory (is there hope for Wandsworth ??!), ongoing maintenance, electric vehicle recharging points, 300 LED traffic signals with re-phasing, road pricing options, plus the encouragement of speed camera technology, of car clubs, of the Low Emission ZoneZ and of charges relating to emissions.

Railways – Crossrail 1 (Heathrow to Shenfield), 12 car trains to Stansted (encouraging cheap air travel?), 10 car trains in South and Central London, train lengthening on services to Cannon Street and Charing X, 16 trains per hour for Thameslink (great!) plus enhanced overground services through Inner London.

Underground - Upgrade of the Jubilee, Victoria and Northern lines (good) to provide additional capacity and improve journey times, modernisation – i.e. "congestion relief" - at Victoria, Tottenham Court Road, Bond Street, Bank and part of Paddington Stations (super) and cooling (in the proposals this is listed as funded and to be introduced progressively from 2010: cool!)

DLR - extension from Stratford to Canning Town.

Buses - an Ilford to Dagenham Dock link, the phasing out of bendy buses, the creation of "a new iconic bus", real time information at bus stops, plus bus priority measures.

Cycling - 6,000 bikes for hire, 66,000 additional cycle parking spaces, 2 trial radial cycle "superhighways".

Walking - 10,000 new trees and enhanced environments at Brixton, Exhibition Road, Oxford Circus and Woolwich.

River services - promotion and encouragement

Other - integration of the Oyster System, the development of a low emission taxi and completion of a Smarter Travel Programme for Richmond (can we have one of these too? It's Proposal 95), CCTV expansion plus an initiative to tackle antisocial behaviour.

So what's new? Great news for cyclists, very good news for tree-lovers and a lot of welcome encouragement for programmes already initiated. And soon, ("anticipated end of 2011"), no more bendy buses.

Linda Ulrich

Young's Ram Brewery : Why all the fuss?

find out at the AGM on 11 March

When the Ram Brewery development proposals were called-in by the Secretary of State for his own determination, there was a very mixed response in the local community. Edward Lister at Wandsworth Council fumed and local amenity groups and activists rejoiced, if somewhat mutedly. The Public Inquiry which took place over five weeks in November and December in 2009 heard a great deal of evidence both for and against the Minerva/EPR scheme, with the charge ably led by Chairman of the Wandsworth Society local architect John Dawson, supported by Shirley Passmore and others. Dale Ingram presented a substantial paper during the public submissions day focusing on the conservation elements of the scheme, with particular attention being given to the effects on the conservation area, the setting of the Brewery complex and on the Stables, fabric and setting.

... potentially the most important brewery complex remaining in Britain

Great Britain has led the world for a hundred and seventy years in the arts and sciences of volume brewing. Integral to those, we developed a specialist niche in the architecture and process design of the necessarily large and complex buildings needed to deliver volume brewing to a world thirsty for our national drink. Consequently, brewing and its related heritage is a highly significant cultural icon. But it is vanishing rapidly, and only by giving special status in the form of a 'Listing' can brewing buildings and their settings be protected. Part of the Ram Brewery complex was listed at Grade II in 1955, and this was revised by English Heritage to Grade II* for the whole complex in 2005. In addition, the brewery stables were newly listed at Grade II at that time. In the significant assessment carried out for the Public Inquiry by Dale, our Ram Brewery was identified as potentially the most important brewery complex remaining in Britain.

Changing fashions have led to a fall in beer drinking, and with it, the requirement for breweries. The conservation challenges relating to the appropriate reuse of

redundant brewery buildings and the large, often urban and suburban sites they occupy, are not many but they are very substantial and not to be dismissed lightly.

This lecture comprises lots of talking and illustrated with slides, maps, pictures and a short documentary film, will look firstly at the history of brewing in England, with particular reference to the evolution of brewery buildings, and will then move on to consider the conservation challenges and opportunities posed by them. The primary case study will be that of the Ram Brewery itself, but others will also be used to

demonstrate good (and bad) conservation, and the potential issues surrounding the success- and occasional failure- of other schemes in recent times. It ends

with an overview of the future of brewery buildings and some predictions."

Dale Ingram MSc. is an historic buildings consultant, WandSoc member and Wandsworth resident since 1998, having moved to the borough from Wimbledon where she lived previously for 12 years. Her previous career included time as a member of staff at SAVE Britain's Heritage, the heritage campaigning charity and working for a conservation architect. She is passionate about the historic environment and its conservation. Dale acts as Conservation representative for the Tooting Local History Group, resisting inappropriate or damaging schemes relating to historic buildings in SW17 and represents TLHG at the Conservation Areas Committee at Wandsworth Council. Her company does not offer commercial services in the Borough to avoid conflicts of interest.

Traffic and the public realm: a wind of change?

a report of the talk by Colin J Davis at our meeting on 28th January 2010

Colin began his talk by illustrating the history of the street – reminiscent of Mike Grahn’s excellent presentation a few years back. From Wren’s plan for London after the fire, which never came to fruition because the landowners stood firmly against it, resulting only in wider streets - compromise.

Lovely images of St Paul’s of 1750 floating above the rooftops, Somerset House (the first purpose-built office block) on the waterfront where now we see a road built over the wharves, beneath which lie sewers. Doesn’t look so romantic but good to have sewers – compromise.

Times change and we must accept it. Canals and railways impacted enormously, then new trains running under ground. Some road improvements in the 1890s such as the Strand and Aldwych. Electrification in the 30s brought clean air and a series of beautiful new underground stations.

Then the war and opportunities for rebuilding without having to compromise for example London Wall and the Barbican. What got were roads built for cars from which pedestrians must be protected so the introduction of walkways. Difficult to get across the roads. (We could of course have had spaghetti junctions like LA or Tokyo). So fences and crossings appeared and signs; then more cars and more signs. (Though we could have had spaghetti junctions in our town centres like LA and Tokyo - we saw a road cutting through building in Tokyo!)

How can we now civilise our streets?

We must accept that a certain amount of traffic is essential. English Heritage and other similar bodies have done well in the last 40 years to preserve and conserve buildings but what about the traffic?

Kensington High Street was rid of islands



... before



after ...

Spot the difference :

- No railings or guard rails
- Neater traffic light arrangements.
- Far fewer traffic signs.
- Street lights fixed to buildings, rather than on lamp columns

- Neater litter bins
- Neater direction signs, fixed neatly to buildings rather than on separate posts
- No redundant posts or bollards
- Pavement slabs that are neat and tidy.

guardrails all in one go, the traffic lights synchronised and suddenly all is clearer and easier to manage. Traffic turning left knows to do it from inside lane with signs or road markings. Guardrails are also gone from the Strand. Now we know they are not needed. TFL have done likewise in Clapham High Street, at Balham and Tooting Bec tube stations. Daniel Moylan deputy leader of Kensington & Chelsea is now on Mayor Boris's team and perhaps his influence is beginning to show.

70% of people cross the road when they think it is safe to do so; only the less able and those with baby buggies use crossings. People know how to be safe – we do not need guard rails. Roads are safer when people are encouraged to think for themselves and so are drivers. We do not need KEEP LEFT signs on a two-way highway – we know to keep to the left so get rid of the sign and the bollard!

We know there are too many signs for drivers to read so we can get rid of many of them. Signs can often be smaller so that they do not obliterate our treasured buildings. No planning permissions are required for any authority to put up signs but the Council is empowered to demand they be small, better placed, less obtrusive. Should there be planning permission for signs? The debate goes on. The questions that need to be asked are:

- 1 Is the sign necessary?
- 2 Is there too much information?
- 3 How big does it need to be?
- 4 Where should it be placed?

Drivers are legally bound to give way to pedestrians, they do not need to be separate but we have to work with and around what we've got. We are unlikely, for example, to see a speedy end to the dreadful one-way system in Wandsworth Town Centre but much could be done to improve the High Street, to ensure signs do not interfere with our enjoyment of our environment. We have good buildings but cannot always see them. Lighting can go on buildings, signs on railings, not always on posts – we must persuade our Council to get rid of the clutter.

See www.publicrealm.info, Colin Davis's website for more inspiration!

Forthcoming events for your diary:

15 April
Parliamentary Election
Hustings

3 May
Bank Holiday Monday Soirée:
Schubert played by Madeleine
Easton, violin, with fortepiano

27 May
Talk by Joy Melville, recent
biographer of Diaghilev – the
Society's contribution to
Wandsworth Arts Festival

2 June
Shirley Passmore will
talk on the history of
Wandsworth Common – the
Society's contribution to the
Wandsworth Heritage Festival

and on Sunday June 20th at
6.30pm
The Midsummer Soirée for
bubbly in the garden, and
Haydn Trios - played by a
young ensemble who are
currently recording the entire
canon.

Wednesday 11th March

7.00 prompt for annual reports, a review of the Society's work and the election of officers and Executive Committee at West Side Church Melody Road

the church is on the corner opposite Alvering Library, so just imagine you're going to the old place, but turn right, or left if you're coming the other way

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

followed by

Young's Ram Brewery : Why all the fuss?

A talk by Dale Ingram MSc, Historic Buildings Consultant (and WandSoc member) - lots of talking but illustrated with slides, maps, pictures and a short documentary film.

Complete the form at the bottom of this page with your idea of who would be useful to the society – probably a good idea to ask them first!

The Society needs people with skills and/or ideas in a variety of areas such as publicity, web design, how to safeguard and improve our green spaces, Roads and Transport matters and Events not only inform but also encourage social opportunities within our membership. As a member of the Society you have an interest in these matters – why not join one of our committees and find out more?

The Society is keen to meet interested people who can bring fresh ideas and lend their support to our aims of safeguarding the local environment. Please use the slip below for your vote and nominate someone or offer yourself.

Nominations for the Wandsworth Society Committee 2010 - 2011

Nominee – name and signature

Nominator – name and signature

Seconder – name and signature

Please hand in at AGM or send to Sheila Allen, 13 Earlsfield Road, London SW18

or telephone Valerie Taylor on 8767 3814 if you would like a chat about the implications of volunteering.

Post script

This is the Newsletter of The Wandsworth Society, a registered charity no 263737. The Society is concerned with the quality of life and the environment in Wandsworth town centre, Wandsworth Common and adjacent areas. If you are not already a member and would like to join please contact the Membership Secretary Gill Gray, details on page three.

Please address Letters to the Editor, any comments, or, even better, contributions to -

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