

Wandsworth Society

Newsletter October 2018

Living in your pocket

The striking new building on Mapleton Crescent was designed by architects Metropolitan Workshop and is described by the developers Pocket Living as a:

... 27-storey building clad in striking green glazed-terracotta tiles. Arranged around a unique triangular core, some of the homes overlook the gently flowing River Wandle while others offer panoramic views across London. There are 53 one bedroom Pocket homes on floors 1 to 11 (with 36 two and three bedroom 'open market' Pocket Edition homes higher up).

On 29 August eleven Planning Group and other Society members were taken on a rapidly organised 'Pocket' tour led by Lucian Smithers, the Marketing and Sales Director.

Peter Farrow reports

There are good reasons to admire the Pocket development. It's the tall, slender green tower, an innovative, stylish and well-designed building; it is a bold concept – and it provides a considerable amount of affordable housing.

The Society has generally objected to tall building in the town centre, but, when first presented with the scheme in 2014, we considered the design far better than any other application for a tall building we had seen previously. We did, however, object to the building because of its height, but the proposal all but overcame an antipathy for tall buildings in the town centre. The favourable impression was generated partly by admiration for the sheer nerve of

contemplating developing such a small site, but principally by its design and appearance and for what it provided, 73% of the flats were to be affordable.

In the 'as-built' scheme the percentage of affordable housing has been reduced to 63%, which remains commendable, more than double the requirement of the London Plan. That is one good reason to admire the building. Another is the way it serves the needs of its intended inhabitants, single people and couples in their 20s and 30s, by



... from page 1

providing social spaces, a common room, a roof garden, cycle storage with a repair and maintenance tool station, lockers for helmets and outdoor clothing, management of the building that encourages integration and cooperation. The building provides 53 affordable one bedroom 'Pocket homes', all now sold to 'first-time buyers who live or work locally', with conditions which ensure the flats will remain in the discounted affordable sector.

And – what has been done has been done well. It is an elegant building, materials and finishes have been carefully chosen. The layout and planning are simple and coherent. There's a new section of the Wandle riverside path. What's not to like?

Well, it is very, very tall, but perhaps another time ...

Terry Brown commented:

At very least, for me, it is a good demonstration that tall buildings are not per se undesirable. This one is both elegant and attractive. If you're going to rise high, best be slim! I know this was dictated by site constraints and market demands, but the result is incredibly attractive, especially with the well thought out and executed green ceramic cladding.

The social dimension to the Pocket Living organisation is convincing and commendable. It seems to operate with integrity in a sector where integrity is much needed. And who else is so enthusiastic about addressing the social housing demand?

Wendy Cater had this to say:

Returning to your Pocket dwelling after a hard day's grind would be a restorative experience. Whether yours was an "affordable" one-bedder or a market-priced two-or three-bedder you would enter the same stylish lobby and your flat would have floor-to-ceiling windows and be cunningly designed to convey a sense of space.

Everywhere there is quality of finish and a care for practicalities - ample provision for bikes and their maintenance for instance - and conviviality: a spacious residents' lounge and handsomely appointed roof terrace encourage a sense of community.

Thumbs up to Pocket Living!



The windmill

The eponymous windmill of Windmill Road has been partly restored. You may have noticed the patchy black preservative on the timbers. Regrettably the parts yet to be restored have been waiting to be completed for far too long. In early September the contractor said they hoped to be able to complete the works in the 'next couple of weeks' – as many will be aware in the terminology of builders a couple of weeks is a period of time somewhere between fourteen days and ... a bit longer.

And talking of terminology, there are those who think the structure is more properly described as a wind-pump, as its purpose was to pump, not to mill, as in 'grind'.

We disagree. There is no dispute (we trust) that mill comes from the Old English *mylen*, based on late Latin *molinum*, from Latin *mola* 'grindstone, mill', from *molere* 'to grind'. However, words become detached from their roots, and mill has developed a meaning as a place in which mechanical processes are carried out, as in steel mill and cotton mill. And also as in the Windmills of Old Amsterdam, be comfortable thinking of our windmill as a windmill.

Peter Farrow

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Editorial

Wandsworth heritage

Appropriate 'preservation' and 'conservation' of our local 'heritage' (all debatable concepts) has always been a key Society concern since our start in 1971. Of course, not all old buildings should be preserved, and our 'open spaces' are inevitably subject to change. The Society can be proud, however, of its efforts to protect the local built and natural environments, to support high standards of new architecture and redevelopment, to open up the River Wandle and to ensure that Wandsworth Common is sensitively managed, and preserved in part as a 'country' space, open to all (it is not a 'park').

Heritage Wandsworth, the 'local history and historic environment partnership for the Borough of Wandsworth' provides an excellent service with limited resources. Its well organised Heritage Festival this summer had 'Parks and Open Spaces' as its theme - many people attended some 50 different events (including the Society's talk about Wimbledon Park).

Two long-serving Council officers who played substantial roles in the conservation of local heritage are retiring. The decision taken that the Council's Parks and Leisure Department should be privatised in 2019, its head, Paul McCue, bravely took the lead in forming 'Enable' as a 'staff mutual'. It will soon be competing with private sector bidders to win a contract to run a wide range of services (including the management of Wandsworth Common). Barry Sellers, a conservation officer for most of his career, has an enormous knowledge of our area. Both Paul and Barry have been good friends of the Society and we wish them well.

Local history - and local memories - are important to the Society - hence several events announced in this Newsletter, including a joint meeting with the Wandsworth Historical Society, and articles about Wandsworth's now 'Moving Museum'. And hence our Executive's recent commitment to organise some 'Wandsworth Town heritage' walks, designed to show a wider audience some local listed buildings and the impact of new building developments..

David Kirk

How goes the Battersea Arts Centre (BAC) and its Moving Museum?

Christina Dawson reports.

It was a treat last spring to join other former Friends of Wandsworth Museum at the BAC – to view and share thoughts on its exhibition, ‘*Hope - how our past might speak to the future*’, put together by the Moving Museum and Sheila Ghelani. The museum is of course the successor to the Wandsworth Museum; we were all keen to see this first real attempt to use the existing collection and display some of its artefacts.

The exhibition was displayed all round the Battersea Old Town Hall that is now the BAC. Its curators were a range of people involved with the BAC – staff, volunteers, attendees at BAC activities... The underlying concept was what ‘hope’ means to individuals, each display carrying personal stories about the choice of objects and how they brought hope.

There were interesting and intriguing things: military panels combined with a group of tin soldiers and bookmarks advertising Pear’s soap; a personal letter to Pat Astley-Cooper, former Curator of Wandsworth Museum, and allied photographs; the section of wooden drain; the tiny piece of rail dated 1801; tea cups and candle-making; a pianola roll; a baby bath ...

The displays prompted animated conversations – largely about the objects themselves rather than the reasons offered for their presence. There is obviously a subjective element in any exhibition; the labels here gave the thoughts of the people making the choices. We would have liked some information about the pieces themselves – what was represented in the panels? where did the section of drain come from? where do the details sewn into the beautifully embroidered map fit into our

history? We would have liked some historical facts – the ‘curators’ were (understandably) not available to debate their choices or give more details. We needed the emotional and “academic” context.

But the exhibition was an enjoyable experience, which has laid the ground for the museum’s future. There is a wealth of material in the museum’s collection – surely, a rich source of inspiration for many more, fuller exhibitions.

Wandsworth Museum on the move!

Wandsworth Museum, *Sheila Allen writes*, has now successfully transitioned to a Moving Museum, as an integral part of the BAC, which curates and cares for the Wandsworth collection. The Museum is well ‘embedded’, but has not perhaps delivered as generously as we had expected, in terms of exhibitions and “moving around” the borough. Without doubt, the devastating Grand Hall fire of 2015 impacted on BAC’s ‘output’. Happily, things are well and truly now “on the move”. The BAC’s ‘Phoenix Season’, celebrating the reopening of the Grand Hall, has featured much to gladden the heart and inspire.

Details of the BAC’s current programme of events and activities can of course be found on its website. These include popular volunteer led tours of the building; its current theatrical programme (a lot of theatre); and events for schools organised by the Museum. A new programme of the popular series of Town Hall Talks (which I recommend) has been launched – it includes figures such as Lena Ashwell, Jeanie Nassau Senior and John Archer (London’s first black mayor). And the Museum is updating its archive of previous Talks (there is a link to the recordings on the BAC website).

The “Time Keeper’s” Museum workshops for primary schools continue to be in demand, following the support given by the Councils’ (Richmond and Wandsworth) Director of Children’s Services. Volunteering will be extended, with a new co-ordinator



dedicated to this key aspect of the Museum's work. The 'accreditation process' continues, as does the cataloguing and conservation work on the Museum collection. The focus of new activity will be on how to share objects publicly in the newly refurbished building.

There will be ten permanent installations in place by the end of November, accompanied by a timeline, with another three to follow. Plans for a garden on Town Hall Road should see work beginning this autumn. Artists have been chosen to develop Heritage trails around the building.

These developments will be launched next January and built around 'Moving Museum' stories.

We look forward to seeing you at the 'Moving Museum'. I congratulate the team on its exciting and innovative work.

The 'new' Grand Hall (see picture) was officially re-opened on 6 September. The Society was impressed by the plans drawn up for a 'new' hall, following the devastation wrought by fire. We are impressed by what has now been built. And we strongly recommend a visit.

**BATTERSEA
ARTS CENTRE**

**BAC MOVING
MUSEUM**

For more information about the Battersea Arts Centre and the BAC Moving Museum see their website <https://www.bac.org.uk>



These images illustrate the diversity of the objects in the Wandsworth Collection



Planning news

October 2018

Hope you all had a good summer. The Planning group did not meet in June or July (some sporting matter involving a round ball!!) In fact, no new applications of significance over that time, but our August meeting had some "catching up" to do.

Ferrier Street, off Old York Road - Proposals for redevelopment of land adjoining the Town station and rail lines. We welcome the increase in local commercial space but have concerns over height and are considering the Society's response.

No1 Armoury Way (Oddbins) - An application was made for No1 Armoury Way following the refusal of the previous application on grounds of height, overlooking and flood concerns. The new application was reduced in height (now four storeys) and massing, but would still overlook houses in Barchard Street. We submitted objections, including a comment that the site is within the blast zone for the gas holders.

Neals Lodge, Wandsworth Common - Following the Council's loss of its appeal against the High Court ruling, leave was not granted for an appeal to the Supreme Court. We await to hear more from the Council. A suitable use for the property needs to be considered further.

West Side Conservation Area Character Reappraisal - A meeting was held in August to consider alterations to the approved 'character of the area'. This issue arose because a requirement arose for an off road parking space to allow an electric vehicle charging area in the front garden area. A similar case had been considered in Westover Road in the same conservation area. Such issues will occur more often and the matter needs to be considered in planning terms. If such use is permitted, the character of areas may change; vehicles

may not be permitted to park on the roadside; the speed of vehicles, and risks to pedestrians and other road users could increase. The Council would like feedback from the public, so, even if you are not in the immediate vicinity, we should let the Council know our views. The Society is drafting a response to the consultation.

Council Paper 18-180 also considers the possible inclusion of an enlarged area of the Tonsleys in a Conservation Area. Society members living locally are encouraged to contact the Council to ask about progress and offer their views. The Society will also take an active part.

Jaggard Way - An exhibition of revised (and, we think, improved) proposals has been held. We are considering our response.

Air Quality - The planning group is kept informed of the current status of monitoring and is concerned about the apparent lack of progress which the Council is making on dealing with this aspect of the environment. Local groups have been formed and endeavour to monitor various "hot spots" in the borough. We are pleased to note that pollution has reduced significantly in areas such as Putney High Street, with the introduction of cleaner buses; other areas have suffered as higher polluting vehicles move to them. The Society continues to look for 'champions' who can help set up or assist others involved in this important work. Let me know if you are interested.

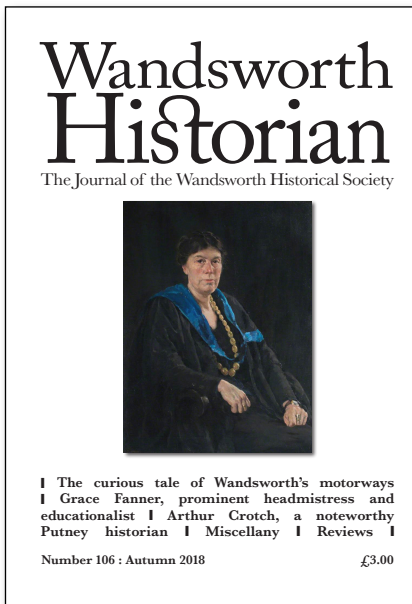
Communication hubs - We have mentioned this issue before. The Council only seems to be concerned if obstruction is caused to the pavement or sight lines for vehicle access. We believe that more stringent tests should be applied.

Any comments? Help on a planning matter needed? Please contact me or another Planning group member. We shall do our best to help.

Philip Whyte

Wandsworth Historical Society

Wandsworth Historian' for Autumn 2018



An outstanding headmistress and early twentieth century feminist; the Putney historian who carefully catalogued all the memorials in his local parish church; and the extraordinary proposals in the 1960s to turn Wandsworth town centre into a motorway hub... just some of the subjects discussed in the latest edition of the Wandsworth Historian. Other articles focus on the massive World War One savings drive still being promoted within weeks of the war's end, and a fascinating, recently discovered photograph of 1880s railway staff at Clapham Junction. All this and more... copies are available, price £3.00, plus £1.50 for postage and packing from WHS, 119 Heythorp Street, London SW18 5BT or by emailing 020neil119@gmail.com. Cheques payable to 'Wandsworth Historical Society'.

www.wandsworthhistory.org.uk

Thomas Cromwell

A man with Putney and Wandsworth Connections



The Society's October* meeting is a shared venture with the Putney Society and the Wandsworth Historical Society and is a talk by Diarmaid MacCulloch-

Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's chief minister

Thomas Cromwell (c.1485-1540) was born in Putney; his family lived in Putney and then Wandsworth. Cromwell implemented the break between the Church of England and the Papacy, the dissolution of the monasteries and many other changes in the 1530s. He fell foul of the king, however, over the latter's marital arrangements and was executed on Tower Hill in 1540. He is the subject of Hilary

Mantel's novel *Wolf Hall*.

Diarmaid MacCulloch is Professor of the History of the Church at Oxford. He is also well known from BBC TV programmes on Tudor history and the history of Christianity. His talk marks the publication of what is likely to become the definitive biography of Cromwell, overturning many established views. The talk will be given in the place where the young Cromwell received his religious education. If you were unable to get to the meeting the recently published biography of Thomas Cromwell by Professor MacCulloch may be of interest.

* Thursday 11 October 7:00 for 7.30 pm at St Mary's Church Putney High Street SW15 1SN - refreshments available, including a 'Cromwell Cake' at the adjacent Putney Pantry.

The Society walks and talks ... and parties

Sunday 14 October

A WALK WHERE YOU SOON (BUT HOPEFULLY NEVER) MIGHT FLY

11am, meet outside M&S Simply Food in Clapham Junction Station.

Now that a third runway appears to be back on the political agenda, we are holding a Sunday walk to view the potential damage it would cause to an urban village, country park and the Harmondsworth Great Barn. Our group will travel to West Drayton (via Paddington) and take a bus to Harmondsworth to see the Great Barn. We hope then to have lunch in one of the two local pubs, followed by a walk (optional) of around 3 miles to see what will go under the tarmac, and then a walk back to West Drayton Station. The return walk will include a short visit to Southlands, a Queen Anne-style Grade II* listed building which is open that afternoon.

No booking required; entry to the Great Barn is free.

Thursday 18th October, 11am

A RAM QUARTER TOUR

The sales team at the Ram Quarter will be holding a 'talk and tour' of the emerging 'Ram Quarter' – formerly of course the Young's Brewery – for the Wandsworth Society. Meet inside the Marketing Suite on the corner of Armoury Way and Ram Street, SW18 1TH. No booking required. The visit will take less than an hour.

Thursday 8 November

7.45 for 8pm, at West Side Church

GROWING UP IN WARTIME BATTERSEA

an illustrated talk by Carol RahnHear about local people's memories of World War II, vivid recollections of bombing and evacuation,



stories that would surprise today's children, of an everyday life almost unrecognisable now.

... and do not forget our

Christmas Party

Friday 7 December, 7.30pm

St Anne's Church Hall St Ann's Crescent
with supper and musical entertainment,
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined

A couple of visits

We hope to be able to repeat the Society's visit to the Pocket development and a more recent visit to the WRWA (Western Riverside Waste Authority Recycling Facility), to be reported in our next Newsletter. Please register your interest in one or both of these events with David Kirk or another Events team member.

A Battersea Society plaque

The Battersea Society has invited Wandsworth Society members to the unveiling of a plaque commemorating Caroline Ganley OBE (1879-1966), a suffragette and pacifist, Battersea Councillor and MP from 1945 to 1951. Lord Alf Dubs (former Battersea MP) has been invited to unveil the plaque at 5 Thirsk Road SW11 at 11am on Saturday 20 October. Marsha de Cordova MP, current MP for Battersea, has been invited as one of the speakers.