

Greetings from the Ealing Matters working group. We hope that you are keeping safe and well in these extraordinary times. Despite the current health crisis, Ealing Council's planning juggernaut keeps rumbling on (see below). This is a brief summary of the latest news from around the borough.

STOP THE TOWERS – 174, THE LATEST TALL TOWERS TOTAL

Over 200 [Stop the Towers Ealing](#) demonstrators assembled outside Ealing Town Hall prior to an LBE Council Meeting on 25 February 2020. It was captured on video and can be viewed at [Exposurebox.com](#).

[Stop the Towers](#) started in June 2019 when local residents were horrified to find that two tower blocks were proposed close to each other and West Ealing Station. One is 25 storeys and the other 26 storeys. Just over one mile north of the station local residents were similarly shocked in October 2019 to discover details of a planning application for a six-tower block on and around the Gurnell Leisure Centre site (although redevelopment rumblings go back to 2015). Since then Ealing Matters and Save Gurnell have worked together to identify, document and create a computer simulation of this explosion of approved and planned tower blocks throughout Ealing. Only Northolt so far is untouched by the outbreak – Acton, Central Ealing, Greenford, Hanwell, Park Royal, Perivale, Southall and West Ealing are all to be blighted. North Acton and the centre of Southall will perhaps become two of the most tower-dominated suburbs in the UK.

According to the latest (not yet exhaustive) figures from the Save Gurnell/Ealing Matters' database, the 10+-storey tower blocks recently built, being built, within the planning system or developer announced in the London Borough of Ealing number 174. 36 of these are or will be 20+-storeys high. Absolutely staggering.

Ealing Matters is in the process of adding quick reference detail about these developments to the [Development Info section of the website](#), starting with those at the early stages of the planning process. These pages include the location of the development, the number and type of housing units and the amount of affordable housing included in the scheme together with artist's impressions.

NEW EALING LOCAL PLAN

Analysis of all 33 London boroughs shows that [Ealing's Local Plan is the most out-of-date in London overall](#). Ealing has failed to monitor delivery of the plan since 2013/14, something that it is required to do annually. It has also failed to bring forward a timetable for making amendments to the plan in the light of existing national and regional (London) policy, which would involve at least two stages of public consultation. All efforts by Ealing Matters and others to discover or even participate in the drafting of a new Local Plan for Ealing have come to nothing. Local residents' groups last meeting with Ealing's planning supremos on 9 October 2019 was somewhat acrimonious. Attempts at meetings this year in January and then on 3 March floundered. The latter meeting apparently failed because the Chief Planning Officer said he could not find a venue.

The Government has delayed approval of [the draft new London Plan and expressed dissatisfaction with aspects of it](#). Changes to national planning guidelines are being proposed. All the uncertainty around national and regional planning guidelines, allied to the Council's pre-occupation with Covid-19 mitigations, will no doubt fuel further Local Plan delays.

EALING COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE

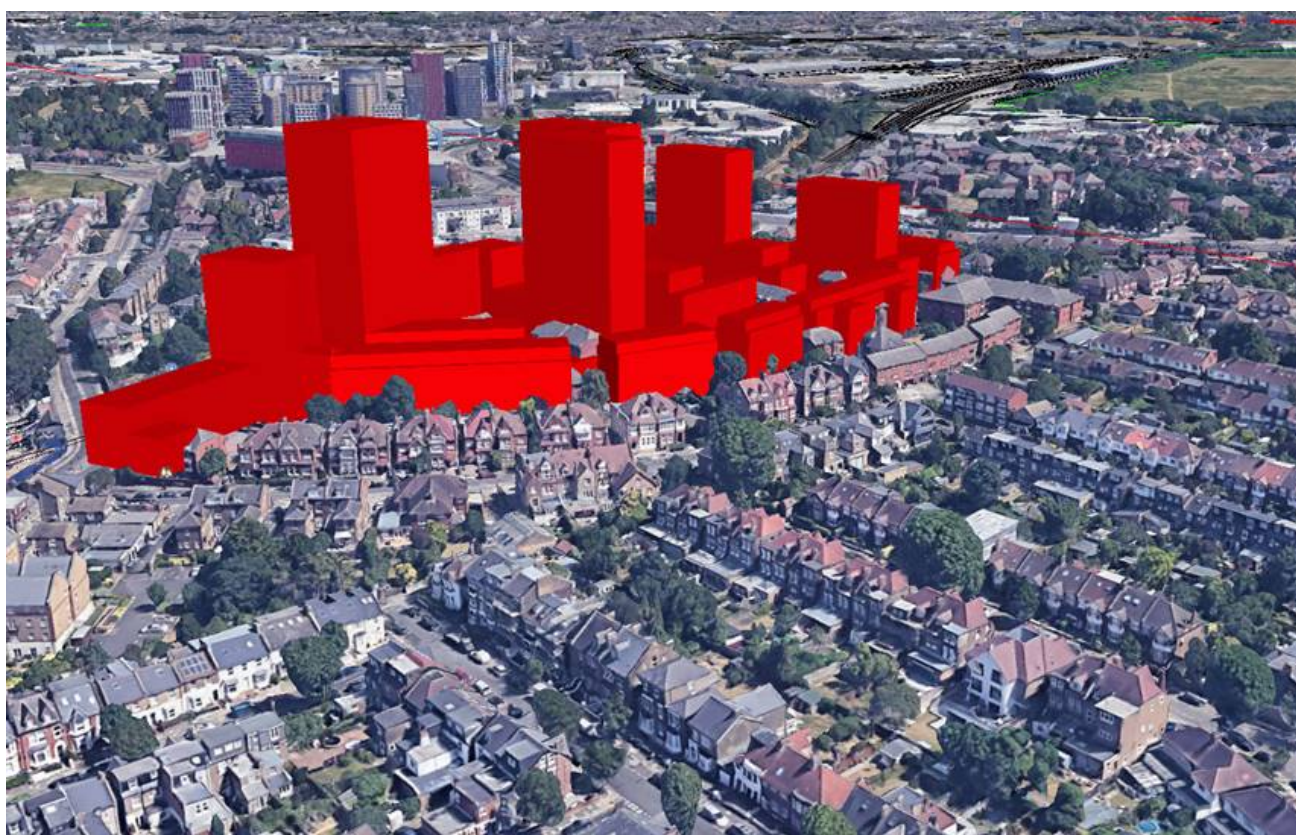
The Ealing Council Planning Committee meeting scheduled for 18 March 2020 took place as planned despite the current health crisis. A recent email from David Scourfield, Chief Planning Officer, announced that the Planning Committee meeting due to take place on 15 April has been cancelled, but that the 20 May meeting is planned to go ahead 'through the use of a digital platform' subject to revised legislation from the Government. This raises questions about community participation.

Below is a round-up of what has been going on in individual areas across the borough.

ACTON

Friary Park redevelopment

Built in the 1980s and close to Acton Mainline station, Friary Park is a low-rise residential estate with 225 homes. In November 2019 Ealing Council granted the estate's owners, social housing providers Catalyst Homes, planning consent to redevelop the site to provide 990 apartments in six towers of up to 24 storeys.



The scheme raised huge local controversy. Assured that they would be rehoused within the new scheme in better homes, Catalyst's tenants largely supported it, whereas leasehold owners were against, fearing they would be inadequately compensated for the loss of their homes. Nearby residents whose Edwardian and 1930s houses and gardens will be dwarfed by the neighbouring towers were also strongly opposed. They said they did not object to a redevelopment of Friary Park but believed what is planned is a very serious over-development and totally out of context with the area's suburban character.

The scheme is with the Mayor of London for final approval. Central Acton Neighbourhood Forum (CANF) have been leading the objections. They are lobbying the Mayor to withhold his approval and are demanding explanations from the Council about irregularities in their processing of the application, including the absence of the required Environmental Impact Assessment. More on the [CANF website](#).

CENTRAL EALING

Victoria Hall

Friends of the Victoria Hall still await the outcome of the Charity Commission's independent review. This long running review began on 8 January 2020. The Commission is pondering comments made by Friends of the Victoria Hall and others about the Commission's Scheme which would allow Ealing Council to erroneously dispose of Victoria and Prince's Halls. More at <https://savethevictoriahall.weebly.com>.

Perceval House redevelopment

Working with its development partner Vistry, the Council is steaming ahead with its plans to redevelop its offices at Perceval House, even though they are less than 40 years old. A [recent exhibition of Vistry's latest thinking](#) shows a very high density scheme including residential blocks whose height they omitted to mention but is at least 26 storeys, or possibly even the 28 stated in their Environmental Impact Assessment application. Whatever the truth, the new blocks will overpower the old Town Hall which is so iconic of Ealing. Vistry has shown little interest in modifying their plans to take on board strong local objections. A planning application is promised shortly. It is impossible to know how objectively Ealing's planners will be able to assess its merits given the interest the Council has in making sure it goes ahead.

HANWELL

Warren Farm

The first stage of Hanwell Nature's Warren Farm Judicial Review (JR) took place on 2 April 2020. The locally based advocacy group is challenging the Council's consent for Queens Park Rangers FC to take over its 61-acre Warren Farm, without undertaking a requisite Environmental Impact Assessment. Warren Farm is one of the few remaining nature sites in the Borough and it is part protected as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. Presiding over this first hearing, the Hon Mrs Justice Elizabeth Laing DBE disregarded the Council's objections and ruled that a full two-day review of the Council's decision should proceed. No date has yet been announced. See www.hanwellnature.com for news updates.

Olde Hanwell CPZ

If the Council gets its way, the cul-de-sac that is Olde Hanwell will be the last piece in a jigsaw of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) in the Hanwell area. Since time immemorial Olde Hanwell residents have been able to park their cars on the pavements along the narrow streets. This arrangement has no doubt created some obstruction for pedestrians, but as the traffic is usually very light, they can generally share the road space happily enough with the occasional slow-moving vehicle. Few residents were aware there was any problem that needed solving.

This was until the Council ran a 'public consultation' in 2019 that very few people knew about. The consultation documentation told residents that a CPZ was required because non-residents and commuters were parking in the area. This was despite the fact that its own research showed that on the day of its survey 88% of the vehicles parked in the area were resident-owned.

If the CPZ is introduced pavement parking be allowed on only 5 out of 29 streets. Extensive double yellow lining will severely reduce the available space - by 256 spaces according to Olde Hanwell Residents Association calculations. With no free spaces adjacent to Olde Hanwell, where will residents now be able to park? A public meeting to discuss residents' concerns was turned down even before the current restrictions were introduced.

The closing date for comments on the plans was 25 March 2020 - of course after the restrictions were introduced. Ealing Council has not yet announced whether the date will be extended.

Exposurebox has aired the concerns of many local residents at <https://exposurebox.com/hanwell-town-centre-cpz/>.

SOUTHALL

Save the Tudor Rose

The Tudor Rose is an Art Deco building in the centre of Southall with a rich cultural, musical, performance and community-binding history. It opened in 1910 as the Southall Electric Theatre and was Southall's first cinema. It was the first cinema in the UK to show Bollywood films. For over 35 years now it has been a major African-Caribbean culture and music venue of international repute. It also serves as a cultural centre for Asian and Somali communities. It is the only Southall venue owned and managed by the African-Caribbean Windrush generation.

Ealing Council and the Peabody housing association want to demolish the Tudor Rose and replace it with a housing development. A Planning Application is expected soon. More at www.visitsouthall.co.uk/News/NewsDetails.php?recordID=1101

WEST EALING

Dean Gardens

£1.4 million is being spent to 'transform' Dean Gardens which was created in 1910/11 in the centre of West Ealing. Local residents were shocked when 30 mature trees were unceremoniously felled in February 2020. At recent Elthorne and Walpole Ward Forums, as well as at a West Ealing Neighbours public meeting, concerns were expressed about certain aspects of the draft plans. These included the loss of play equipment for toddlers, the removal of the 110-year-old heritage brick and iron railings and an unfenced community growing garden. Improved lighting in the park is being universally welcomed. The gardens are likely to be closed for up to a year from some time in early summer 2020. This project is part of a £9 million TfL/Ealing Council funded project to improve cycling, pedestrian and public transport facilities in central West Ealing. This project is variously called West Ealing Liveable Neighbourhood and Live-West-Ealing.

With the recent temporary exclusion of many school pupils and the enforced closure of many local businesses the potential, imminent closure of Dean Gardens seems clearly inappropriate. Albeit keeping their distance from others, people of all ages in central West Ealing will need the open space for walking, sitting and mum and toddler activities. More at www.livewestealing.org.

With thanks to Eric Leach for compiling the information for this latest issue. Contributions that you think would be of interest to Ealing Matters member groups are welcome.