

Hello everyone. We hope that you are all keeping sane and well during lockdown. There is no shortage of news to report this month from the first steps towards a new Local Plan to several major planning applications in West Ealing and Southall that have just been submitted. We start with the borough-wide news.

## **RED BLOCK REBELS AND EALING MATTERS LAUNCH *EALING – THE SKY’S THE LIMIT* VIDEO**

Following on from our April newsletter, which reported on the enormous number of towers sprouting up across the London Borough of Ealing, the Red Block Rebels together with Ealing Matters created a short video tour of those that have been built or are currently under planning consideration. Called [\*Ealing – The Sky’s the Limit\*](#), the film uses 3D modelling technology similar to that used by architects to ‘build’ each development and superimpose it on Google Earth views of the borough. The images are underpinned by figures from our database, which lists large scale developments that have either been recently built or are in the planning system. At the film’s launch on 19 May the database included 181 developments with blocks rising to 10 storeys or more and containing almost 40,000 housing units. As of 21 June 2020 *Ealing – The Sky’s the Limit* has been viewed almost 7,000 times.

## **EALING COUNCIL EMERGENCY PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS**

Following the Government’s decision to introduce emergency arrangements to allow planning services to continue under the lockdown, there was concern among the Ealing Matters membership about what that would mean for Ealing specifically. Following exchanges by the Ealing Matters working group with the Chief Planning Officer, David Scourfield, a virtual Planning User Group (PUG) meeting was convened by him and Councillor Peter Mason on 16 April to discuss Ealing’s response. Since PUG meetings are not minuted, we organised [a survey of the Ealing Matters membership to assess resident group reaction to the plans](#) and to the video conferencing technology that is integral to them.

As a result, the Council re-worked their [Planning Position Statement](#) confirming that the suspension of site visits will be only temporary, that there will be no further delegation of decision making powers, that ward councillors should be considered a route to the planning department for their residents, that developer ‘micro’-websites will be set up to coincide with the submission of planning applications, that the Council will produce a ‘how-to’ guide on the ‘Search for a planning application’ page (currently chasing) and that Planning Committee meetings will be recorded and made available to the public to view online.

Separate to these points, we are pleased to report that the Council has responded to complaints that the Ealing Gazette newspaper is almost never available these days making it impossible to view the public notices, e.g. about planning applications and highway works. The Council is now publishing them on its own website. Find them at:

[https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201033/council\\_and\\_local\\_decisions/641/public\\_notices](https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201033/council_and_local_decisions/641/public_notices)

However, other comments remain unaddressed.

- The consultation period for planning applications has been extended from 21 to 42 days, but these will continue to be communicated via site notices and neighbour notifications, which our survey found to be inadequate. The request to provide press notices on Ealing Today has not been implemented.

- Those without access to the web will be disadvantaged in terms of finding out about and responding to consultations, planning applications etc. While Ealing Council will register residents' associations and community groups for notification of planning applications in their area, several member groups have commented that notifications are the Council's responsibility and should not be delegated in this way.
- There has been no remedy for the current suspension of site visits on the basis that these are not a statutory planning requirement.

## **EALING'S FIRST VIRTUAL PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING**

Despite Ealing Matters' reservations about the Council's lack of experience with virtual meetings as expressed in the PUG survey, [the first virtual Planning Committee meeting](#) took place on 20 May 2020. Given the technical issues there had been with the PUG meeting, we were surprised to find that the agenda included no fewer than seven planning applications, all large scale, six had representations from objectors and three with representations from ward councillors. In the event the meeting overran by an hour raising questions about the level of scrutiny accorded to some of the applications. The effect of the technology was that the public was unable to observe the whole Committee (three of whom dropped out due to technical problems at different points in the meeting), and members could not see the public and were thus shielded from public sentiment. There were procedural breaches with individual applications that went unchallenged by Committee members. In the event, all seven applications were approved.

Following the meeting, Ealing Matters and all the objectors who spoke on the night composed [a letter of complaint](#) to Councillor Manro, Chair of the Planning Committee, which was sent to him on 7 June. [His response](#), received on 17 June, rejected most of the co-signatories' criticisms and concluded that 'the Committee remains as accountable as ever and is very well aware of its duties as evidenced by the length and thoroughness of the debate on items and issues where they considered this to be necessary.'

## **NEW EALING LOCAL PLAN**

Ealing's Local Plan, whose core strategy document was adopted in 2012, is one of [the most out of date of all the London borough Local Plans](#), and is now regularly ignored both by the Council and developers. Councillor Peter Mason, Ealing's Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Transformation mentioned at the 16 April PUG meeting that work on a new Local Plan has started.

### ***Local Development Plan Advisory Committee (LDPAC) meeting, 3 June***

Following a further PUG meeting on 1 June to brief residents' groups on the process, [a meeting of the Local Development Plan Advisory Committee \(LDPAC\)](#) dealing with much of the same material took place on 3 June. The agenda document pack for LDPAC contained 'an update on the emerging proposals for a new local development plan for Ealing's Local Planning Authority and proposes a programme for future meetings for comment.' Appendix A (p18) also contains the Draft Ealing LPA Local Development Plan Timetable, which scopes out the stages of activity including public consultation between now and April 2022, when the Council hopes to be able to adopt the new Local Plan.

The first section of the LDPAC meeting was a talk by Tony Travers, a Visiting Professor in the London School of Economics (LSE) Department of Government, whose key research interests included local and regional government, elections and public service reform. Professor Travers' talk highlighted the growth and resilience of London despite current difficulties, the downside being the lack of any easy solution to the need for more housing and its role in cross-subsidising public services. His observation that it is the job of local politicians to explain these trade-offs to their communities struck a chord in the context of residents' groups' difficulties in getting the Council to engage with them at all.

Ealing Matters took the opportunity of the LDPAC to try and accelerate delivery of the Authorities Monitoring Report (AMR) for 2014/19, particularly those sections relating to housing delivery. The purpose of the AMR is to measure the Council's progress in delivering the current Local Plan, and it (or the elements

that make it up) should be published annually. Despite requests dating back to 2016, the last published AMR for Ealing relates to 2013/14. Since the AMR measures where we are now, we consider it essential to have this information as soon as possible and before deciding where we want to go and how we plan to get there.

#### ***Public Local Plan meeting with Councillor Peter Mason***

At the LDPAC meeting, Councillor Mason made the offer to engage directly with Ealing Matters' member groups about the Local Plan. We are therefore planning to convene a virtual meeting at which local communities will be able to express in their own way concerns about planning and development over the last 10 years to him as well as, ideally, to members of LDPAC and the Planning Committee, while he would have the opportunity to explain the Council's objectives and priorities as well as their position on contentious issues (as Tony Travers suggested in his talk).

Councillor Mason has in principle agreed to such a session, and we are in the process of agreeing a format and a date and time (probably end of June/beginning of July). We will be in touch once we have firmed up the session, but in the meantime please start thinking about questions that you would like him to answer about the Local Plan as input to the development of the new one.

## **CROSSRAIL**

Work has re-commenced on building the new stations at Acton Mainline, Ealing Broadway, Southall and West Ealing. No completion dates are available.

Despite the fact that more than £35,500 has been spent on consultation since 2011, there is still no coherent plan for the public realm changes outside Ealing Broadway station. There are some concerns whether TfL funding for these will still be available.

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

## **ACTON**

### ***Friary Park redevelopment***

In our last newsletter we reported that, following approval by Ealing Council in late 2019, the 990-flat Friary Park scheme was with the Mayor of London for final approval. Despite lobbying by Central Acton Neighbourhood Forum (CANF) for the Mayor to withhold his approval and demands for an explanation from Ealing Council with regard to the absence of the required Environmental Impact Assessment, approval for the scheme was granted on 14 April by the GLA's Deputy Mayor Jules Pipe (though only communicated to local activists 17 days later).

### ***Planning application for land adjacent to Underground tracks, Bollo Lane (2013790UT) out for consultation***

An outline planning application has now been submitted for development of the long, narrow strip of land

that borders the northern side of the rail tracks behind Acton Town station opposite the South Acton Estate. This follows two public consultations, one in October 2019 and another in January 2020. The latest plans comprise 852 flats across 11 blocks ranging from 4 storeys at Acton Town to 25 storeys at the Chiswick end. The consultation ends on 5 August 2020.



## CENTRAL EALING

### *Victoria Hall*

On 7 April 2020 the Charity Commission wrote to [Friends of Victoria Hall \(FoVH\)](#) with its [Review of Ealing Council's application](#) to take control of the assets of the charitable Trust that owns the Victoria Hall and Prince's Room. The Review blocks the Council's current proposals for selling the Hall, along with other Trust property and the rest of Ealing Town Hall so that the site can be turned into a boutique hotel. The Charity Commission verdict means that the Council's deal with hotel developer Mastcraft cannot proceed unless the Council substantially revises its proposals.

FoVH has now written to all nine councillors on Ealing Council's General Purposes Committee (GPC) to draw their attention to their responsibilities as Trustees of the Victoria Hall charity and to call upon them to consider what is in the best interests of the Charity and its beneficiaries – the people of the London Borough of Ealing – rather than those of the Council as a landowner. The [GPC will meet virtually on Monday, 29 June 2020 from 18.00 to 20.00](#), and the future of Victoria Hall is expected to be the main item on the agenda. FoVH is encouraging as many people as possible to attend and will [publish details](#) of how to do so.

### *Premier Inn Hotel extension*

Outline planning permission has been granted for a 15-storey extension of the Premier Inn Hotel to be built in front of the existing hotel. This will comprise 14 floors of hotel accommodation with 91 rooms, together with a flexible penthouse floor to be used either as a restaurant/bar or an additional 6 bedrooms. This, as with the nearby Perceval House application, further undermines the 2012 Local Plan's intention 'to develop a "boulevard" along the Uxbridge Road...'

## HANWELL

### *QPR abandons Warren Farm deal with Ealing Council*

As reported in our April newsletter, Hanwell Nature secured a Judicial Review of Ealing Council's decision not to carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment before granting consent for Queens Park Rangers (QPR) FC to take over and convert its 61-acre Warren Farm into a training centre for the football club. On 6 May 2020, before Hanwell Nature were due to face the Council in the High Court, the news broke that QPR had walked away from its 200-year lease deal with the Council. This is a victory for local residents, who have been campaigning against the deal for over seven years and raised more than £84,000 to fight the proposals.

## OLD OAK AND PARK ROYAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (OPDC)

### *Old Oak Common – HS2's west-London super hub*

On 19 May 2020, the OPDC granted planning permission for HS2's west-London super hub, Old Oak Common, the largest newly built railway station in the UK. It will be located on the site of the Old Oak Common traction maintenance depot where HS2 meets the Crossrail/Elizabeth Line. The station will have 14 platforms, a mix of six high speed and eight conventional service platforms, and carry an estimated 250,000 passengers per day. The projected cost is £1.3 billion, and the station is expected to open in 2029.

## PERIVALE

### *Hoover Building/Tesco car park*

The 'Wiltern', 278 build-to-rent flats in a block of 10-16 storeys proposed for the rear of the renowned Art Deco Hoover Building, was the first development to be approved via video conference at the first virtual Planning Committee meeting that took place on 20 May 2020. An earlier application to build 305 flats in a block rising to 22 storeys which came before the Planning Committee in September last year had failed, but although more Committee members objected to this second application than to any other on the night, it was approved by eight votes (including the Chair) to five.

## SOUTHALL

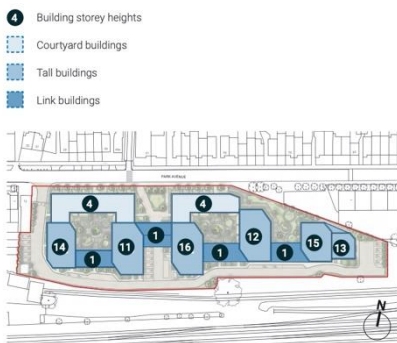
### ***CASH challenge to Council Leader Julian Bell***

On 10 June following the Black Lives Matter protests, Councillor Julian Bell posted that he has commissioned [a review of diversity across Ealing's public realm](#) similar to Sadiq Khan's London-wide version. One proposal is to change the name of a section of Havelock Road in Southall to Guru Nanak<sup>1</sup> Road.

In response, [Clean Air for Southall and Hayes \(CASH\)](#), whose [issues with air pollution at the Southall Waterside site](#) we highlighted last year, have published an [open letter to Ealing Council](#) pointing out the fact that 'Ealing's anti-racism initiatives won't prevent (Southall residents) from choking on airborne carcinogenic chemicals from the Southall Waterside site.' CASH will be hosting a virtual public meeting on 16 July to give Councillor Bell, GLA member Onkar Sahota and Virendra Sharma MP the opportunity to answer their questions.

### ***Planning application for Southall Sidings (201888FUL) out for consultation***

A planning application has been lodged for a major development of the Southall Sidings, just to the north of Southall Station. This will comprise 460 flats to be built in five towers of 11-15 storeys in height. One local resident has written to Ealing Matters saying that: 'These developments are clearly just developers taking advantage of the Crossrail and exploiting Ealing's poorest areas to buy land cheap and make millions. This has nothing to do with the housing crisis.... The area I live is predominantly ethnic minorities who have no idea how to engage in democratic processes and whose first language is not English.' Consultation on the application ends on 15 July.



## WEST EALING

### ***Planning application for Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) at Gurnell (201695FUL) out for consultation***

Ealing Council wishes to replace the Gurnell Leisure Centre, claiming that 'having been operational for over 38 years it has fallen into a state of considerable disrepair and requires extensive modernisation to bring it up to modern standards'. Notwithstanding the fact that the facility sits on Metropolitan Open Land (the London equivalent of the Green Belt), Ealing Council says that it can only afford to part-fund the replacement facility, and is looking to a housing development of seven blocks ranging from five to 17 storeys and containing 599 flats (mostly not affordable) to pay for the rest. As the landowner, the Local Planning Authority and the developer (through Be:Here Ealing Ltd), the Council is hopelessly conflicted. Objectors believe that this development is wrong on a multitude of levels. Visit [www.savegurnell.org.uk](http://www.savegurnell.org.uk) to find out more including how to object.

### ***Planning application for 51-56 Manor Road and 53-55 Drayton Green Road (corner site next to West Ealing Station) (202231FUL)***

The planning application for this development is now out for consultation prior to going before the Planning Committee. The shape of the development has changed since the public consultation last summer from a

<sup>1</sup> Guru Nanak was the first Sikh Guru. Sikhism is based on his teachings and those of the nine Sikh Gurus who followed him. Henry Havelock was a General associated with India, particularly the suppression of the 1857 Indian Rebellion.

single building with 9 and 26 storeys to one with effectively 12 and 18 storeys above double-height ground floor retail, reducing the accommodation by five units to 144 flats, all designated affordable (94 classified as London Shared Ownership and 50 at London Living Rent). Visit [Stop the Towers](#) for more information about the development and how to object.

#### ***Green Man Estate – Phase 4 ‘adapting to new surroundings’***

The ratcheting up of building heights and densities continues with Phase 4 of the Green Man Estate. When originally specified in 2010, 184 flats were to be built in blocks of up to 7 storeys. [The second public consultation](#) that took place as a webinar on 6 May 2020 (and is still open for comment) referenced recent developments along Singapore Road from 9-15 storeys to help make the case for building higher in Phase 4. The representative of Conran + Partners, the architects, argued that ‘the context provides an opportunity for an area where the Local Authority encourage any height to be located and therefore help to deliver more new homes on the estate.’ So the latest plans for Phase 4 are for up to 380 flats in towers ranging between five and 15 storeys, with a planning application expected in Summer 2020. By our calculations this will increase the total units from the 706 approved in the original masterplan to 915, almost twice the number on the old estate (464).

#### ***Chignell Place***

The planning application for a block of five up to eight storeys containing 66 ‘shared living’ studio flats (i.e. single en suite rooms with communal kitchens and lounge areas) scheduled to be decided at the 18 March 2020 Council Planning Committee meeting was deferred to a later date at the last minute. It will be interesting to see whether and in what form it re-appears.

#### ***Woolworths building***

The demolition of the classic Art Deco façade at 96-102 Broadway (one of the high-rise developments name checked in the Green Man Estate webinar) has now commenced.

#### ***Dean Gardens***

On 22 May 2020, Ealing Council stated that the £9 million Transport for London (TfL) West Ealing Liveable Neighbourhood project is one of £114 million worth of such projects across 18 London boroughs to have been suspended due to TfL’s ‘financial predicament’, and which may now be subject to wider review. The suspension includes the £1.4 million transformation of Dean Gardens, which has been delayed until at least Autumn 2020. West Ealing Neighbours Committee agreed on 4 June 2020 that better lighting and a cycle path in the southern part of the gardens were the only changes it felt were necessary.

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