

NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2019

BAYSWATER
RESIDENTS'
ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 30 April 2019

**COLLEGE PARK SCHOOL
GARWAY ROAD, LONDON W2**

**7:00 pm to 9:00 pm
(Doors open 6:30 pm)**

**Entry is free for members
New members are very welcome**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Marco Masciolini
Joel Schweitzer
John Yiannakis
Christopher Wright –*Secretary*
Robert Jarman
John Zamit
Christopher Coulcher – *Treasurer***

AROUND THE GROVE

In 1976 the Paddington Mercury reported on the campaign by BRA, Newton Road Residents Association and Westbourne Neighbourhood Association to save the character of Westbourne Grove from destruction due to several large modern office block schemes being proposed by developers involving the destruction of many of the historic buildings in the street. BRA and the other Residents' Associations supported by the local councillors and the Victorian Society pressed for the street to be made a conservation area and for several of the significant buildings to be given listed status. Westbourne Grove was described at the time as 'one of the dirtiest and most dilapidated streets in London'. The campaign was ultimately successful and the street was brought within a conservation area and several buildings were listed. A number of historic buildings however were lost such as the old cinema on the site which is now where Sainsbury's is, the block on the corner of Monmouth Road where the office of the slum landlord Peter Rackman used to be, and Westbourne House which was a classical style building housing the Westbourne Building Society. It was also reported that the street was blighted by late night licensed premises one of which was famously raided by the police dressed up as call girls!

Today thanks to the protection afforded by its conservation area status Westbourne Grove retains much of its late 19c character with several of its important buildings sensitively restored.

However the financial pressures on the retail and restaurant trade, high rents and business rates has lead to many local businesses failing and vacant units blighting the street.

- Byron Burger restaurant at 105 has been closed for over a year and the premises is still vacant.
- The large unit on the corner of Monmouth Road has been empty for over two years.
- The large unit at 37-41 (formerly Gautier the furniture shop) at the Queensway end has also been empty for over two years.
- Will Paperchase at No 108 reportedly under financial pressure survive?

On the bright side!

- The upmarket paint shop Craig and Rose now occupies the premises vacated by Artisan Chocolat at 81.
- Gail's Bakery and cafe on the corner of Hatherly Grove is a very good addition to the street and appears to be very popular.
- The art gallery at 82 seems to have changed hands and has a sign saying Under Offer.
- There is a new Sicilian restaurant at 84 which had been closed for years.
- There is a proposal to convert 84-96 (the site of Sainsbury's Local) and 28-34 Hereford Road into an hotel with over 150 rooms! This is at an early stage and no detailed plans have yet been produced.
- The Co Op food store has opened in 108 and maybe positioning itself if Sainsbury's has to close for redevelopment. The Sainsbury's site has planning permission for a full redevelopment and bringing forward the frontage to align with the adjacent buildings. Incidentally this was a major fight in 1976 to prevent the demolition of the existing building, the site of one of London's oldest cinemas and the setting back of the frontage of the building.

- Royal Mail is to take over the former Nat West Bank offices at in Westbourne House for its Mail collection services as its lease of the Post Office premises in Queensway in due to come to an end soon. We understand that the Post Office itself will remain in Queensway.
- A planning application for 66 has been submitted for use as a private gym. The premises have been empty for years (it used to be called the Greek Farmer) and has been the home of rough sleepers, so we are pleased to see that it will be occupied although we have objected to the proposed new modern shopfront as the present shop front is quite attractive.
- At 105 (formerly a toy shop) a beauty salon is due to open soon. Across the road at 96 (formerly Starbucks) is another salon called Muscan which has relocated from Whiteleys..
- Thanks to the council's Arboricultural Department we have three new trees on the north side outside Kenyons the undertakers and two more on the other side of the street!

QUEENSWAY

Are there green shoots of the regeneration of Queensway beginning to appear at last! WHITELEYS which is key to the regeneration of the street is well into the demolition stage starting with the car park in Redan Place. Massive steel supports are being erected along the retained facade so that it is propped up while the structures behind are demolished. So far the movement of heavy vehicles taking away waste material has seemed tolerable. The latest variation of the consented plans (May 2017) the developers wish to make are mostly internal but importantly the developers are offering affordable housing in some of the apartments to be built in Redan Place. We are keeping close contact with the developers and their architects Foster and Partners who have been very keen to keep local residents updated on their plans. Towards the Bayswater Road end of Queensway Bourne Capital which owns a large section of the buildings on both sides of the street have been installing new and much improved shopfronts to a number of their retail units which is a welcome improvement. More controversially they have submitted plans to build two additional stories on top of Queens Court. This is of great concern to the leaseholders especially those in flats under the new additional floors.

GMS Estates which owns a number of properties in Queensway between Porchester Gardens and Moscow Road stretching back to the east side of Queens Mews have recently applied for permission to redevelop the garages on the east side of Queens Mews.

Westminster Council is continuing with improvements to the public realm with expected contributions to the cost from the large estate owners. The pavement between Moscow Road and Porchester Gardens has been renewed and widened and is a great improvement. The plans are to widen the pavements along the whole of the south end of Queensway narrowing the carriageway and removing the parking bays from that end of the street.

A COMMUNITY VICTORY !

On the day (14 March) that a petition with 6,470 signatures was about to be presented by our local councillors to TfL against their proposal to move part of Victoria Coach Station (VCS) operations to Royal Oak, TfL announced that it was abandoning its plans! This was a great victory for all Bayswater residents who were horrified by the proposal and was strongly opposed by our local councillors Westminster City Council local residents' associations particularly

SEBRA and PRACT (Paddington Residents Active Concern on Transport). Ironically it was the scheme some thirty odd years ago to move Victoria coach station to Paddington Basin which led to the formation of PRACT by five local residents' associations to fight against the scheme which was ultimately successful. The indefatigable John Walton the secretary of PRACT coordinated the opposition to the Paddington scheme and used his skills and knowledge to present the strong arguments against the Royal Oak proposal. Our local councillors Richard Elcho, Emily Payne and Maggie Carman worked tirelessly to oppose the scheme. It was a victory for common sense as moving even part of the VCS operations which serves 14 million passengers involving 240,000 coaches a year would overwhelm our local roads hugely increase congestion and air pollution. The Royal Oak site is the strip of land next to station platform and the Westway flyover and would mean that TfL would have had to build a huge tower block to accommodate the coach station and passengers. We will however have to remain vigilant as TfL are considering a mixed use development on the site.

YOUR EARLY MORNING WAKE UP CALL !

In January Heathrow Airport issued a consultation on a scheme it wants to implement to increase the number of flights into the airport in advance of any consent it receives for a third runway. The proposal put forward is to use both existing runways for landing planes at the same time called Independent Parallel Approach (IPA). Heathrow hopes to increase capacity by up to 25,000 flights a year. The incoming flights could start as early as 6am. The consequence for the Bayswater area and indeed all Westminster and boroughs to the west would be that when the wind is from the west as it usually is the incoming flights would come over Westminster, possibly at a height of 3,000ft creating noise at 60plus decibels (quite enough to wake you up!). Areas further west on the flight path would suffer even more. We and the local residents associations through PRACT along with the Council are strongly opposed to the scheme. Given the importance and current paucity of information about the affect of the scheme on affected areas particularly noise levels, Heathrow has been asked to extend the consultation period (scheduled to close early March) and clarify precisely the effect of the proposals on every area affected by overflight. You can find out more details on the Heathrow website, heathrowconsultation.com.

PUBLIC SPEAKING RIGHTS AT PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Westminster has brought itself in line with most other councils to allow interested members of the public to speak for or against planning applications referred to the planning sub-committee for determination. Each speaker will be allowed to address the committee for three minutes. On major applications four speakers will be allowed two for and two against. On minor and householders applications two speakers will be allowed, one for and one against. The deadline for application to speak is the Friday before the Tuesday meeting. If more people want to speak than the number allowed they must choose a speaker or ballot for a place. In addition to members of the public local councillors and recognised amenity societies will have the right to speak. The public speaking right was introduced on 26 February.

WEBSITE

Remember Bayswater Residents' Association has established a website. The address is bayswaterresidents.org. Please take a look!

At this simple stage it is an introduction to the Association which gives a description of its activities, details on membership and the geographical area covered. By clicking on "follow this link" the application for membership and renewal form can be accessed. This form also includes the option of a bank Standing Order which enables automatic subscription renewal each year. Membership is not restricted to the area displayed and any person or business which has an interest in Bayswater is most welcome to join. We have simplified the membership categories with some small changes to the rates which have remained the same for many years.

We would be interested in any comments that members may have concerning the website and its improvement. If so please contact our Treasurer, Chris Coulcher – contact details at the end of the newsletter.

NEWCOMBE HOUSE NOTTING HILL GATE

In January 2018 The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea refused permission (for the second time) for a 19 storey tower to replace the Newcombe House tower slab block. The Mayor of London then called in the application for his determination and gave it his approval! In March following representations by RBKC and Hillgate Village Residents Association (HVRA) the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government decided to call in the planning application for his determination. The Secretary of State will hold a public enquiry to decide on the application. We are delighted that local Bayswater resident and BRA member Sophie Massey Cook has been appointed chair of HVRA. At the Mayors hearing on the application last September Sophie spoke against the proposals on behalf of BRA and SEBRA.

Frogmore (the developers behind the Newcombe House planning application) have bought 146-164 Notting Hill Gate, the M & S site and the adjacent properties. They have outlined plans to develop the site with an upmarket 175 room hotel. The overall development will significantly transform and modernise the neighbourhood and in the areas in front and behind the three residential blocks on either side of the existing M & S. The proposals form part of a wider vision for the area where Frogmore are working on improving their estate on three other sites, two of which are nearing completion.

PLANNING

Red Lodge – 51 Palace Court/Moscow Road

The internal work in fitting out this large property continues but must surely be near to completion. The courtyard behind the external walls on Moscow Road contains some building materials and equipment. Fortunately the building now looks grand and complete although unoccupied. Members may recall that it was in January 2013 that after its initial reconstruction Red Lodge was very badly damaged by fire. Internally the building has needed to be completely rebuilt.

154 Bayswater Road/6 Palace Court

This was the former Westland Hotel on the Bayswater Road. Permission was granted in 2014 to construct 15 flats whilst keeping the existing façades. Progress has been very slow and recently the main contractor, Interserve, has gone into administration. This is unfortunate but was to some extent known publicly and anticipated. It is hoped that arrangements can be made to continue with the project efficiently to complete the project.

Esca House – 34 Palace Court and 1-4 Chapel Side

In January 2016 the owners had received approval from the Westminster Council in principle to convert this former office building into 24 accommodation units. For technical and commercial reasons they have now altered their plans. It is anticipated that 34 Palace Court would be renovated for office use – either single or multiple tenants. One floor would be added to the existing three floors in Palace Court which is one less than the original consented plan.

As regards 1 – 4 Chapel Side 2 apartments on the 1st floor will be renovated and on the 2nd floor 4 existing apartments will be substantially upgraded. The existing facades in Chapel Side will be maintained.

This is a much simpler proposal and will reduce considerably the construction time and as well disruption to local residents.

Medical Centre – 14-18 Newton Road

Members may recall that in June last year The Diocese of London, owners of the current medical centre obtained approval for a new purpose built medical centre comprising two basement levels and a ground floor reception area all on the existing car park area. The existing building will then be refurbished with a single storey mansard and converted into new flats.

As of now no work has commenced on this project. It is the intention that the medical centre will continue to operate in its current location up until the new centre has completed and operational. The work on the existing site will then commence.

NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Forty-Third AGM of the Association will be held on Tuesday 30 April 2019 in College Park School, Garway Road, London W2 (from 7 pm to 9 pm) for the purpose of electing the Committee for the coming year. Anyone interested in becoming a member of the Committee should contact the Secretary, Chris Wright of 25 Monmouth Road, London W2 4UT, email chriswright25@gmail.com.

We have invited our local councillors, our MP Karen Buck, council officers and representatives of the Police to come to the meeting.

CONTACT THE TREASURER

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