



NEWSLETTER (4/92) 26 November 1992

Editorial

Every year we produce at least one Newsletter which is distributed to members and non-members

alike. This is it.

Apart from updating everyone on our activities, we hope that this Newsletter will encourage those who have not yet joined, to do so. One of the purposes of the Society is to "retain the best and improve the rest". Inevitably this requires considerable involvement in planning and development issues - but by no means exclusively - as you will find out when you read on.

In essence this Newsletter is a review of the Society's activities over the past year, successes, failures and continuing commitments. If after having read it, you support the sort of things we are doing or want to know more and you have not yet joined us, do not hesitate. Just pop the enclosed form through the letterbox of your friendly Road Representative and we will do the rest. If you think there are issues that we should be addressing but are not, please say so. Without feedback from local residents the officers of the Society can only do what they think is in the best interests of the neighbourhood. All feedback is welcome.

Dates for the Diary

All meetings are held in the Bromley Court Hotel.

Thursday 7th January 1993, Members meeting, 8pm, Farnborough room.

Thursday 4th March 1993, Annual General Meeting, 8pm in the Wellington room.

For the first part of the AGM we normally have a guest speaker talking on a local or general interest subject. If anyone has any ideas for this year's speaker, please let either the Secretary or the Chairman know as soon as possible.

Peter Pain (Editor)

PLANNING ISSUES

In view of the current constraints on the property market, this should have been a quiet year. One way or another it has turned out to be anything but.

Oaklands Court, Oaklands Road. Despite our objections at the time, planning approval was given in 1989 for a block of 16 flats and 24 garages. Nothing happened for several years until recently when there were 2 further applications. Both sought to increase the density of the development on the site. We objected to both applications on grounds of over development and both were refused.

The Coppice, 42 Highland Road. Approval was given in 1989 for 5 town houses to replace the existing property. Again nothing happened for several years until recently when a fresh application was made to increase the number of houses from 5 to 6. That was refused. A further application has now been submitted to replace the integral garages with forecourt parking and that has been approved.

29a/31 Oaklands Road. Planning applications for this site go back to 1986. The site was cleared in 1988 and in 1991 approval was given for a block of 14 flats, but building work was not started. Recently a developer submitted plans for 9 town houses and approached us and nearby residents for views. The plans are still being studied, but initial reactions are that although houses are generally preferable to flats, the proposed houses at just 13 feet wide are an overdevelopment and are not in keeping with the character of the surrounding area.

Christ Church, Highland Road. For reasons of growth and increased communal activity, the church sought approval in 1990 to extend sideways. The proposal was unsympathetic to neighbouring properties and was rejected - among other reasons - on grounds of over development of the site. Subsequently a second application was made for an extension, marginally smaller than the original. After a site visit by Bromley's Planning Committee, this was also refused on similar grounds to the first application. A third set of plans have now been submitted which although reducing the ridge height and the building footprint, increases

the bulk of the building and brings the upper storey nearer still to adjacent property. In the considered view of the Society this still represents an over development of the site, exacerbated by Bromley's earlier omission to fully consider the parking implications. At a recent Planning Committee after a very serious and balanced debate, Bromley decided to refuse this third application.

When considering our stance on an application by a body such as a local church, there is always the danger that the Society's motives will be misrepresented or misunderstood - either by accident or on purpose. Many may feel that because it is a church which is perceived as doing good, then the controls and constraints required of a commercial developer, should not apply. The reality is that they do apply to all regardless of the motives for the development. The Society's officers have been punctilious in addressing the issue solely on planning considerations. To do otherwise would undermine our reputation for responsibility and reduce our credibility, both of which are essential if we are to continue to have an influence on events in the neighbourhood.

Cedarhurst, Elstree Hill. Another long running saga, over 5 years. Planning permission exists for 11 houses on this site, but like so many other sites nothing has happened except clearance. A recent planning application to increase the number of houses to either 16 or 18 was finally refused after an appeal and a Local Inquiry by a DoE Inspector. Subsequently the developer obtained approval from Lewisham for 14 houses funded by a Housing Association. However the parking allowance was small and only reflected what was thought to be appropriate for rented property. The "right to buy" legislation appeared to have been overlooked. This led to a further application for more parking spaces to be approved, but the proposed siting is in conflict with the DoE Inspector's report from the last appeal. The Society's approach has been to point this out and say that Lewisham has not the authority to gainsay the Inspectors report. Despite this and Bromley's refusal (the boundary runs through the site) Lewisham have approved the revised scheme.

Beckenham Place Park. Although this is the last and most recent planning application we have had to deal with, it is probably the most important in its potential to impact on the local area and in the principles which are at stake.

In the last Newsletter it was reported that something was stirring on this front and we were finding out what we could. The last 3 months have seen a flurry of hectic activity as more and more was uncovered until we realised just how far reaching were Lewisham's intentions for the Park. Most readers will be familiar with the proposals, not least because of the thousands of leaflets we have distributed and the coverage in the local press. The News Shopper has been particularly good although in this context, coverage has varied between the different editions which cover Lewisham, Beckenham and Bromley. Unfortunately our attempts to get TV coverage have fallen on stony ground, although we were more successful with local radio.

What follows is a summary of a file which is now nearly 2" thick. The Mansion House (a grade II listed building) needs some remedial work to keep it weatherproof and central government requires local government to introduce competitive tendering for park maintenance by Jan '93, with leisure services by Jan '94. Lewisham claim that they cannot afford to repair the Mansion House and that the Park is run at a loss. They therefore looked around for someone to pay them to take it off their hands. The someone they preferred was David Lloyd Clubs. But, to make it commercially attractive for David Lloyd Clubs, the paid for activities in the Park had to be increased. That resulted in proposals to :

- lease over threequarters of the park to David Lloyd Clubs for 99 years.
- alter the existing 18 hole golf course to create a beginners 9 hole course.
- use low lying land to make up for land lost to the 9 hole course, as a result what was an all season 18 hole course could be unuseable when it is wet.
- build a 2 storey 36 bay golf driving range with 30' high fences and floodlighting.
- convert the Mansion House into a club.
- build an indoor tennis centre with a swimming pool and shops which together create a building the size of 3 football pitches looking like a huge factory, surrounded by security fencing
- convert the stable block for housing and build 3 more houses, all for sale.
- build new car parks for 450 vehicles, with the access roads.

If this is allowed to happen then there can be no doubt that the park as we know it will be irrevocably changed and effectively lost as a freely accessible open space with a high visual and amenity value. To enjoy the facilities proposed it will be necessary to join the club. At other David Lloyd Clubs individual membership is over £800 for the first year and nearly £600 for subsequent years. Having joined you can expect to pay at least £10 an hour to play tennis.

To make matters worse, the park is designated Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and this is analogous to Green Belt, except that it is in a built up area. There are many separate documents giving guidance on what may or may not be done on MOL. Lewisham has faithfully reflected them all in their new Unitary Development Plan. In brief some of the key features of MOL are :

- it is of strategic importance to London as a vital lung in an urban environment.
- its open nature, accessibility and visual amenity must all be retained.
- only outdoor recreation is allowed.
- any developments should only be ancillary to the outdoor activity and should be both small and unobtrusive.

By no stretch of the imagination do the Lewisham/David Lloyd Club proposals fit these constraints.

This Society in conjunction with 6 other local associations and hundreds of individuals is vigorously opposing the proposals. Happily Bromley as an adjoining Authority had to be consulted and has also vigorously opposed the proposals (a small part of the park also falls within the Bromley boundary).

Lewisham held one abortive planning meeting when because of the large number of protesters present, they had to defer the issue until a later date. At the second Lewisham Planning Committee meeting they approved both schemes amid a great uproar of protest. Fortunately by then the lobbying of MPs and the DoE had resulted in the DoE issuing a Holding Directive, which meant that whatever Lewisham decided, they could do nothing until the DoE said they could. Since then our efforts have been directed to getting the Secretary of State to hold a Public Inquiry, instead of referring it back to Lewisham to get on with. Bromley have also been making similar representations.

It is too early yet to know whether or not a Public Inquiry will be held. But we hope that the sheer weight of all the letters that everyone, including the 4 local MPs, have written will produce that result. Of course a Public Inquiry will not be the end. There will still be a lot of work and expense as we have every intention of giving evidence using all the professional skills available to us as a Society. Hopefully, to plagiarise Churchill, it will be the beginning of the end. The key issue must be to get it recognised that the developments are not appropriate to MOL. This will not only safeguard Beckenham Place Park, but also similar areas in London.

On the opposite page is a map showing the park and our understanding of what has been proposed, based on the information available.

The latest from the DoE is that the proposals for the Tennis Centre and the Mansion House have been withdrawn. Only the proposals for the golf course and the driving range are now before the DoE.

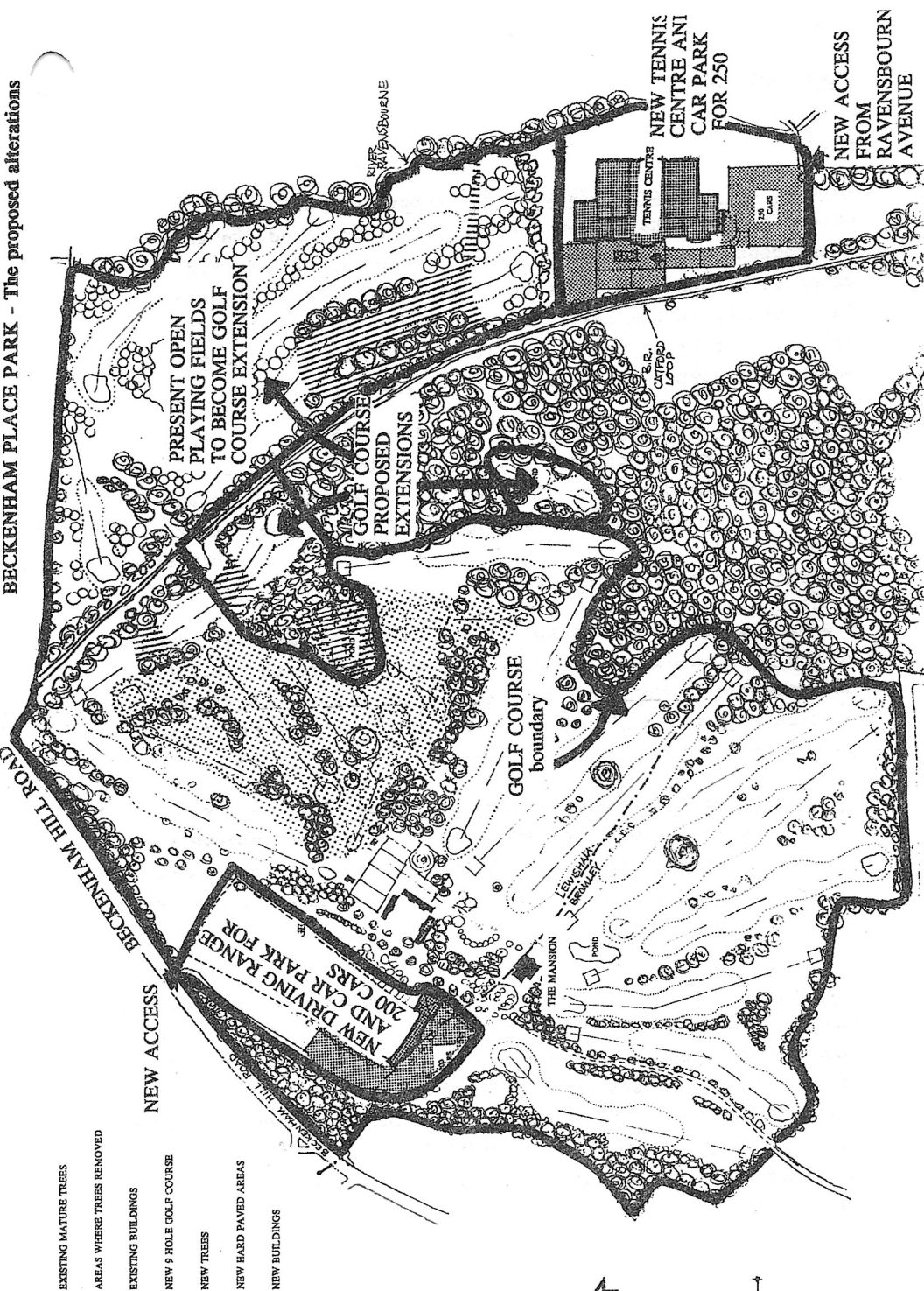
Unitary Development Plans

Bromley Having attended the Local Inquiry and formally presented our evidence supporting our 6 objections to the plan, we now await the DoE Inspectors report which is expected to be available in February next year.

For the record our objections covered :

- failure to designate Bromley Park as an Area of Special Residential Character.
- lack of density standards for sites less than 0.4 hectare (one acre). We had 2 objections on this subject.
- lack of amenity space standards for flatted developments.
- the method of calculating site area (which includes half the width of adjoining roads) and
- lack of protection for land abutting Metropolitan Open Land.

Lewisham Our objections to the consultation draft were made some time ago. We are now waiting to see whether they have influenced the next version, the deposit draft.



TRANSPORT ISSUES

Road

Farnaby Rd/Bromley Ave/Warren Ave junction Following our successful efforts to get the junction rearranged, we are disappointed to find that we have to keep on pressing in order to get the job finished. A small bed for plants was incorporated in the new layout and nearly a year later we are still lobbying to get it planted. As we have said elsewhere persistence is the name of the game.

Ravensbourne Ave/Downs Hill A petition by local residents for speed control measures was rejected by the Traffic Management Sub-Committee. However they have sought the aid of the police who will be setting speed traps. The matter will also be raised at the next meeting of the Police Consultative Committee on which we are represented.

A separate but related issue is the matter of commuter parking at the Shortlands end of Ravensbourne Ave. Here the Traffic Management sub-Committee has agreed to include Shortlands station together with others in their plans to reduce street parking near stations.

Traffic Signals Ravensbourne Ave/Beckenham Lane We are continuing to discuss/correspond in an effort to improve the sequencing of the traffic lights for traffic and to improve the lot of pedestrians attempting to cross Beckenham Lane at this junction.

Road works - Nynex An American communications company, Nynex, has secured the cable vision franchise for Bromley. This is a government approved scheme for opening up to private enterprise the previously closed areas of communication. More recent legislation also allows them to offer telephone service as well as cable TV programmes. Their initial plans envisage a tie up with Mercury Communications, the main competitor to British Telecom.

Nynex have started to lay their local distribution network and this has involved digging up pavements and roads in order to lay their ducts. Although they claim that their aim is minimum inconvenience, experience shows that their contractors Sirti are not always translating this into practice.

There have been instances when their road works guarding and practices fall short of the requirements in the Traffic Signs Manual or the Public Utilities Street Works Act.

If anyone feels that something is dangerous or is seriously inconveniencing them then in the first instance they should contact Nynex direct on 081-466 0550 and ask for Sean Bryan, who has a responsibility for safety.

If there is no action within two hours or so, or if the complaint is about the standard of reinstatement then they should contact Roger Day who is the Project Manager for the Bromley Borough Engineer, his telephone number is 081-313 4792.

Rail

Channel Tunnel Rail Link As reported in the last Newsletter the government has asked British Rail to define a route which will allow the construction of a track with freight capability and to continental loading guage standards. Although there is considerable pressure for an early answer, it will probably be some time before BR's report is available and probably even longer before it is built. Especially as the government has recently stated that there will not be any central funds for its construction. Meantime, about half of the Channel Tunnel passenger traffic is expected to be routed via Bromley South and thence over the "main line" after Shortlands junction. Current plans apparently still envisage the bulk of the goods traffic also being routed via Bromley South and then into London over the "Catford Loop" after Shortlands junction. After a gap of several months because there was nothing to report, the Bromley Channel Tunnel Rail Link Consultative Committee met a week or so ago. The main feature of that meeting was a report by a consultant which had been commissioned by Bromley. The report revealed that BR had already rearranged the commuter time tables to create slots for Channel Tunnel trains.

This confirmed earlier suspicions that the advent of Channel Tunnel trains would result in a worsening of commuter services.

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ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Tree Preservation Orders. (TPOs)

The last Newsletter included a map showing the Bromley TPO areas for our patch, (later issues will cover Lewisham TPOs). Due to lack of space a summary of the legislation was deferred for inclusion in this Newsletter. To remind readers of the area we are talking about, there are 3 TPOs which cover all of the area east of Madeira Ave, west of London Rd and north of Highland Rd.

A TPO is a standard document laid down by central government. It should define the position of the trees, must contain a map and can apply to a single tree, a group of trees or an area such as a woodland. Briefly it prohibits the unauthorised cutting down, lopping, wilful damage or wilful destruction of trees. It also prohibits the causing or permitting the cutting of trees without the consent of the Local Authority.

A TPO can be initiated by an individual, associations or the Local Authority. If after a survey by Council officers it is agreed that a TPO should be made it is authorised by the Chief Planner personally. Interestingly, there appears to be no way to revoke a TPO once made, except by the Secretary of State.

Within a TPO area there are exemptions, where consent is not required for pruning or felling. They are : if the tree has become dead, dying, dangerous or as far as necessary for the prevention or abatement of a nuisance. The definition of the last 3 categories can be open to interpretation and debate. It is always best to seek advice. There are also several other exceptions, such as where trees are directly affected by authorised development (equally there can be conditions attached to the planning which requires the preservation of trees on a site).

Cultivated fruit trees are also exempt.

TPOs can also be applied to public utilities. However if the land is operational then consent is not required for any work on any trees that may be on it. Perhaps a good example of this is British Rail's felling of trees along the trackside and especially in cuttings.

Generally if a tree is felled with or without consent, there is a duty on the owner of the land to plant a replacement and that duty can be legally enforced by the Council. Apart from requiring a replacement if a tree is felled without consent, there is also the liability of a fine up to £20,000 or in the case of unauthorised lopping up to £1000.

The message is if you live in a Tree Preservation Order area. then always consult the Council's Tree Officer before acting. For information the officer's name is Coral Gibson and her telephone number is 081-313 4516. If she is not there then normally the line is switched to a recording/answering machine so that messages can be left.

Police Consultative Committee

At a recent meeting, attention was drawn to the increasing amount of car break-ins by youngsters. The Hill car park in particular seems to attract the attention of young thieves. Police advice is; wherever you park your car, always lock it and set any security device. Never leave any property on view inside the car, as this could tempt someone to break a window and help themselves.

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On that precautionary note, the officers of the Society wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

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STOP PRESS

We have just learnt that the Council Tax register of valuation banding of property, should be available for inspection in the Council Offices and Public Libraries from the 1st December.

R.V.P.S. Officers

April 1993
(~~August 1992~~)

Arthur Barwell
14 Grasmere
Wally Carlsson
Karen Ct

Chairman	Peter Pain, 74 Madeira Avenue
Secretary	Leslie Tucker, 5 Bromley Avenue
Treasurer	Alan Marks, 78 Madeira Avenue
Auditor	Arthur May, 8 Windermere Ct, Oaklands
Planning Officer - Bromley	Bill Jamieson, 7 Bromley Avenue
Planning Officer - Lewisham	Paul Bennett, 12 Elstree Hill
Membership Secretary	Paul Bennett, 12 Elstree Hill
Newsletter Editor	Peter Pain, 74 Madeira Avenue
BR Link/Bromley Committee Reps.	George Hodson, 20 Ravensbourne Ave
	Tim McCarthy, 79 Ravensbourne Ave
Tree Wardens	Arthur Barwell, 14 Grasmere Road
	Tim McCarthy, 79 Ravensbourne Ave
Press/Publicity Officers	Noreen Baker, 39 Highland Road
	Grace Sheen, 39 Highland Road

Road Representatives

Bromley Ave/Karen Ct	Leslie Tucker, 5 Bromley Avenue
Grasmere/Highland Rds	<i>Mrs Payne</i>
Coniston Rd/Ullswater	Bronda Neve, 119 Coniston Road
Hawkshead Closes	
Downs Hill/Crab Hill	Barbara Brown, 34 Downs Hill
Elstree Hill/Hillbrow	Carol Davidson, 27 Elstree Hill
Farnaby Rd (1-108)	Roger & Iris Legg, 39 Madeira Ave
Farnaby Rd (109 +)	Jo Lightfoot, 136 Farnaby Road
Madeira Ave	Peter Pain, 74 Madeira Avenue
Oaklands/Spencer Rds	Joyce Varney, 1 Lavinia Ct Oaklands
Ravensbourne Ave (evens)	Ann Rowsell, 164 Ravensbourne Ave
Ravensbourne Ave (odds)	Tim McCarthy, 79 Ravensbourne Ave
Ravensmead Rd	Kay Lincoln, 12 Ravensmead Road
Warren Ave/Calmont Rd	Dennis Dyer, 7 Warren Avenue