



NEWSLETTER

5/99

September 1999

EDITORIAL

Following the single subject Newsletter in May, this one updates on the Millennium Marker and Beckenham Place Park as well bringing in several items of general interest. Also included are some planning reports which may be an indicator of renewed interest by developers in speculative development.

Dates for the Diary

Thursday 4th November, Members' Meeting, 8.0 p.m. Bromley Court Hotel.
Thursday 6th January Members Meeting, 8.0 p.m. Bromley Court Hotel.

Peter Pain (Editor)

MILLENNIUM MARKERS

At the Members' Meeting on the 1st July, Leslie Tucker was given approval to proceed with the firm which had submitted the second lowest tender (see May Newsletter). He has written them a "Letter of Intent" to the effect that an order will be placed with them subject to their confirmation of various points of detail. A satisfactory reply has been received. There remain a few matters to agree with Bromley regarding fixing the markers before the order for manufacture can be confirmed. We are delighted to have received the Mayor's acceptance of our invitation for her to unveil the markers on Sunday 9th April 2000. With the date now fixed, planning of the unveiling event can proceed. Watch this space!

BECKENHAM PLACE PARK

Management Plan

Lewisham's Leisure and Environmental Services Committee met on the 22nd April to consider and approve the revised Management Plan. Because the officer submitting the Plan was unable to get the Plan typed and submitted in full, he elected to submit only the amendments. By chance there was a Working Party meeting at the same time and we were given copies of the papers being presented to the Committee. To our horror about one third of the revisions were missing. Several frantic telephone calls later the Committee agreed to consider the Plan as the last item on the agenda instead the first. In the meantime the officer managed to get a fresh paper put together which incorporated all of the amendments. They were duly approved.

Tendering to take over the contract from David Lloyd Leisure

Tender documents were sent to interested parties in late May, these included not only the Planning Brief but also the fully amended Management Plan. Unfortunately the maps were missing. However, we learnt at the last Working Party meeting that none of the tenders had been accepted and fresh tenders would be invited. Meantime David Lloyd Leisure is continuing with short term extensions to the old contract. But, from visits to the Park it would appear that they may be losing interest.

PLANNING

9 Spencer Road (junction Spencer and Oaklands Roads)

An earlier Newsletter reported an application for 6 town houses on this site. The original building has now been demolished, building work has started and is at 1st floor level.

31-33. Downs Hill (Plan App. Ref.. 99/02462)

There has been a planning application by Berkeley Homes to demolish the existing house at No. 31 to give access to its large rear garden and to part of the garden of No. 33. No less than 10 new detached houses - 7 with 5 bedrooms and 3 with 4 - are shown packed into the site. Well over 100 trees would have to be felled to make way for these and the 30 car parking spaces proposed. Downs Hill has been designated as a Conservation Area since 1989 and such a development, if approved, would strike a serious blow at one of the principal characteristics which the designation was intended to protect - namely, spatial standards. It would create a very dangerous precedent. The proposals are a gross over-development and we have objected strongly. Residents of Downs Hill have mobilised in opposition and will already be

aware of the issues - others who recognise this as a concerning matter of principle should also write individual letters to Bromley without delay. For more details contact Leslie Tucker (464 4734)

3/3a/5 Spencer Road

A planning application has been submitted to put a block of 24 flats in place of these 3 detached houses. The proposal appears to be a gross over-development of the site, most notably the number of habitable rooms per hectare. The site also falls within the area of Tree Preservation Order No. 9. The Society has written objecting to the development.

The Synagogue, Highland Road

The latest of several proposals has been submitted for planning approval. Because of its bulk, a decision was deferred pending a discussion with the applicants about reducing the size.

Holwood Estate

Although well outside of our area. we have kept a watching brief on this site because of its proximity to Keston Ponds. We now learn that the London Development Corporation no longer have an interest in the Estate although they still own some properties on the periphery. The Estate has now been acquired by Crest Homes. They have submitted an application to change the mansion from offices to a single residence with 38 acres of land, this change of use has been approved. However that represents only one quarter of the estate and it is not clear what Crest Homes intend for the rest.

Bromley South Station

Again this is outside of our area, but will be of interest to many members. The proposals envisage a large development comprising 226,000 square feet over 3 floors. It includes a 12 screen cinema complex, 8 restaurants, a night club, 10 shops at ground floor and 2 'family entertainment centres'. It has been estimated that it could accommodate up to 5,000 people. The outline plans appear to leave access to the platforms much as at present i.e. 2 bothway staircases to the 4 platforms. Railtrack say that this is adequate, but we suspect that many people who use the station in the rush hours would disagree. It certainly seems to be a lost opportunity to materially modernise and improve the station.

TRANSPORT

Permit Parking, Bromley Town Centre

Consultation is taking place about extending the permit parking areas.

Bromley hope to finalise the proposals by the end of 1999 and implement them in the spring of 2000.

Roads within our area which could be included are:

Bracken Hill Close (all), Bracken Hill Lane (all), Chart Close (all), Farnaby Rd (about halfway on the section between Beckenham Lane and Bromley Ave), Grasmere Rd (all), Highland Rd (the remainder between Park End and Beckenham Lane), Meadow Rd (all), Ravensbourne Ave (between Downs Hill and Beckenham Lane).

Nearby roads which could be included are:

Beckenham Grove (all), London Lane (part), Park Hill Rd (all), Shortlands Rd (part), Station Rd (all), and Valley Rd (all).

Those living in the areas immediately affected should have received a leaflet from Bromley describing the intentions. Those living in areas likely to be affected as long term parking is pushed further out may not have been consulted. If anyone wants to know more and make comments they should contact the Transportation Planning Division, Environmental Services Dept, Bromley. Telephone No 464 3333.

Buses

There have from time to time been complaints about local buses travelling too fast or stopping and starting in jerks. Metrobus and SelKent say that they do want to hear from individuals with complaints. Also London Transport remain responsible for safety and regulating standards. So if you experience a 'hair-raising' journey write to the bus operator and/or London Transport at 55 Broadway, London, SW1H 0BD. As much detail as possible should be given such as Bus No., time, day and location. If you are on the bus it is also helpful to take the drivers PSV No. - worn on the lapel.

Abandoned Vehicles

Latterly there have been a couple of abandoned cars locally. If you have reason to think that a car has been abandoned, it should be reported to the abandoned Vehicles Officer, Telephone Nos. 313 4236 or 464 3333. If the vehicle is in Lewisham and not Bromley the officer will give you a contact in Lewisham.

Beckenham/Croydon/Wimbledon Tram Link

It is reported that the Tram Link trials are going well and operational services should start in November. Initial schedules show that they will run every 10 minutes and the overall journey Beckenham to Wimbledon should take 45

minutes. Fares will be in line with London Transports zone ticketing system and concession rates.

Road Humps

If anyone uses Blackbrook Lane as either a primary route or only occasionally, they may like to know that the Council is proposing to install speed humps. At present the proposals are at the consultation stage. Fifteen humps are planned at a cost of £5,250 each.

SECURITY

The Police have drawn our attention to two scams currently operated in the South East. The first concerns **Bogus Builders**. Generally they target older people, draw attention to an imaginary problem with the house - usually the roof - but it could be paint-work or walls and offer to do the job cheaply and quickly for cash in advance. Once they get the cash they are never seen again. Apart from saying 'No Thank You' outright, one approach is to ask for a formal written quotation, specifying what they propose to do. It is unlikely that you will get one. However, if you feel pressurised call the police on 999.

The second is **Bogus Surveys** usually on behalf of a public utility such as The Post Office. They target businesses and in particular female employees pretending to represent say the Post Office. They then ask for the company's postcode, having got that, they then tell the employee that they are eligible for free vouchers and ask for the employees name and address so that they can post them to them. If they get the address, the house is targeted for burglary. Again be vigilant and contact the police if you get such a call.

Bromley's Crime and Disorder Strategy

Last November there was a joint Bromley/Met Police publication which gave a crime and disorder profile for the borough (see January Newsletter). Local community groups such as ourselves plus many others were asked for structured comments. Those comments have now been brought together into a strategy and will form the basis of the individual plans for the main agencies involved. i.e. Police, Council, Probation Service and Health Service.

The Priorities for Action are:

- Reduce youth crime.
- Reduce drug-related crimes.
- Help communities most affected by crime.
- Create safe town centres.
- Strengthen local communities.
- Support victims and vulnerable groups.

Each of these priorities is led by one of the above Agencies. For example Bromley Health will lead the Drug Action team and Bromley Council the Town Centre Management team. A set of 'Actions' for each team is also published.

In case anyone feels that all of this activity means that Bromley is a high crime area, this is not so. It is one of London's safest boroughs and crime of all types has reduced steadily over the past decade. However it is interesting to note that over 40% of Bromley's crime is committed by people living outside the borough. And, despite a drop in numbers, burglary and vehicle crime remain the ones that most concern the public.

If any reader wants to know more, the full report is available from Bromley Council Offices and is on their internet site :

www.bromley.gov.UK/crime/default.htm.

ENVIRONMENT

Slugs

Slugs actually do some very important jobs in the garden. They are also one of the most common and successful of all garden pests. Their secret is that they are hermaphrodites, so each one can lay eggs even when the temperature is as low as 3°C. Some of the useful things they do is clearing up dead and decaying plant and animal debris and making the soil more fertile. Although they cannot be completely eliminated they can be reduced. One technique which should not be used is the blue slug pellets commonly sold in garden centres. These contain metaldehyde which dehydrates the slug and slows down their feeding, but in wet weather they soon overcome the effects. The poison can also be passed on to the slugs predators, beetles, toads, hedgehogs and song thrushes. So the problem can get worse, not better. In the South East the song thrush has declined by 70%. Better control methods are aluminium sulphate tablets (Fertosan) which is less harmful to other animals or a beer trap - a small pot sunk in the ground full of beer.

Happy gardening.