

NEWSLETTER

5/2007

October 2007



EDITORIAL

In the last Newsletter we reported that our Chair, Elizabeth Davies, had moved to Devon and we sought volunteers to take over. So far there has been a deafening silence, which has been very disappointing.

At present the Vice Chairman, Peter Pain has been covering but he has no wish to continue after the AGM in March as he feels that he already does enough other jobs for the Society. To refresh your memories, he is also Newsletter Editor, which involves getting them printed and distributed to Road Reps. He is the Beckenham Place Park Working Party Representative (now called the Stakeholder Group). He is the meetings organiser, including arranging the visiting speaker at our AGMs. Finally he sets up and controls the public address system at the AGMs, then takes it all down again and stores it until the next AGM.

So come on, don't be shy or hope that someone else will volunteer. If you want to find out more just ring Peter Pain on 8460 2828.

By the way, if no one does volunteer the members' meeting in May could be a free for all. More seriously if no volunteers emerge then we would have to call an Extraordinary General Meeting to discuss the future of the Society as we would lack one of the named officers in our constitution. (Which are Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer).

This is a matter of the first importance for the future of the Society - if you think you might do the Chairman's job, at least ring Peter and discuss any reservations you may have. It would be ideal if members were given a choice of candidates so why not join the queue? Why wait to have your arm twisted?

Dates for the Diary

Thursday 3rd January 2008 - Members' Meeting 8.00pm - Bromley Court Hotel

Thursday 6th March 2008 - Annual General Meeting - 8.00pm - Bromley Court Hotel

Peter Pain (Editor)

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Martins Hill / Queens Mead & Ravensbourne River

The friends of Bromley's Parks and Gardens received a bit of a setback in their bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, Landscape Partnership Scheme. They have been told that their proposals were not suitable for a grant under that scheme because a) the area was too small, and b) it was in an urban area. However they were recommended to apply under a different scheme - "Heritage Grants". A meeting has been arranged with the Heritage Lottery Fund to further explore that option and plot a future course of action. We await the outcome.

PLANNING

126 Madeira Avenue: We are delighted to report that since the last Newsletter, the Appeal regarding the proposal for 8 townhouses has been dismissed. The reasons for the dismissal were so damning that the developer foresaw no possibility of even 6 townhouses being allowed so withdrew his application for that number. For the moment, the matter rests there though it remains possible that further proposals could be made for this site. A big thank you to all those who contributed to this success.

Hill Brow, 14, Highland Road: We understand that this building has now been sold and it is thought that the new owner intends to extend the existing house to the rear and convert the whole into 9 flats. This is a Locally Listed building having many fine period features and we remain vigilant as to the appropriateness of any future development.

113 Foxgrove Road: This is an unremarkable 1970's property but it is the first house within the Downs Hill Conservation Area. A proposal for its demolition and the construction of a block of flats was refused by the Council but has since been appealed - the appeal will be by way of "written procedure" - there will be no meeting to attend.

The grounds for objection include that this would be the only flattened development in the Conservation Area and therefore out of character with, and detrimental to the appearance and character of the CA. In addition it is a cramped over-development which fails to provide adequate external amenity space for residents. Additionally the layout of the carpark and access road is likely to lead to dangerous traffic conditions.

9 Ravensmead Road: This is a new application to demolish an out of character property and replace it with a pair of 3 storey semis. At the time of writing we are intending to object on the grounds that:-

At 3 storeys and being asymmetrical, it would be out of character with the rest of the road and it would also be a cramped over-development.

La Campannina, Grasmere Road: This bungalow is situated between Cameron House, Highland Road and Townend Court, Grasmere Road.

An application for demolition and the construction of a replacement block of flats was vigorously opposed by local residents and the Society for a number of reasons including, it would be too high, too wide, too dominating on the valley's skyline and too intrusive upon neighbours. We also initiated the serving of 2 new TPO's to protect two large trees at the front of the property.

The application was withdrawn but is almost certain to return on a reduced scale which we will scrutinise most carefully.

Generally: If anyone becomes aware of any substantial development proposal, please contact Clive Lees, the Planning Officer immediately on 8464 4699 or E-mail - clivelees@tesco.net it can make all the difference to the reaction time for responding to an application.

ROADS AND TRAFFIC

Crab Hill / Ravensbourne Avenue Bromley have approved in principle the proposal to make up and adopt the unmade section of Crab Hill and the unmade part of Ravensbourne Avenue between Farnaby Road and the junction with Crab Hill. However there will have to be further consultations with Transport for London (TfL) plus local resident and land owners.

We will be monitoring progress and hope we will have the opportunity to comment. Local views, especially if the 354 bus route is to be changed, will be mixed with some in favour and some against

Bromley Avenue, Grasmere Road and Oaklands Road: To date we have not had a response from Bromley on the issues we raised. They have been reminded recently.

Downs Bridge Road: Following reports of an increased use of this unmade road and railway bridge, especially by heavy goods vehicles, we have written to both Bromley and Network Rail. The bridge already shows signs of earlier cracks and repairs and does not appear to have a weight restriction.

BECKENHAM PLACE PARK

There was a recent meeting of "Stakeholders" to update them on the progress of the consultant's report on the Park and Mansion.

The report had been seen by the Sustainability and Development Sub-Committee who accepted the options and recommendations. Its next port of call will be the Mayor and Executive Cabinet who are expected to make a decision before Christmas.

To refresh memories, the report recommends:

- * Reducing the golf course from 18 holes to 9 and in so doing increase its difficulty and provide a good practice area. This would also free up land for general use by the public.
- * Refurbish the Stable Block and Hornesteads and build an additional wing. This would house the golfing facilities, catering (including a bar), toilets and an interpretation facility.
- * Remove the car parking from in front of the Mansion and relocate it near to the Hornesteads. With the new development these would not only be the new focus for the park but also the start and finish of the shortened golf course.
- * Improve the landscaping by removing recent inappropriate planting and replace with native species except near the Mansion where an attempt would be made to base new planting on the layout indicated on the 1860's Ordinance Survey maps.

Funding would be by means of a Heritage Lottery Fund bid.

The Mansion was excluded from the study because the cost of repair and renovation is beyond the Council's capabilities. It is proposed to try to market the Mansion with a long lease. Any future leaseholder must satisfy the council and English Heritage on the proposed standard of refurbishment and repair and on their resources to complete the job.

It is proposed to have a full public consultation in the spring of 2008 on the above proposals and a specialist company will be commissioned for that.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Trees and Tree Preservation Orders The Council's Tree Officer recently re-surveyed the northern end of Madeira Avenue with a view to protecting some of the trees which had grown since the existing blanket TPO was made in 1960. The consequence of that survey is that a number of new spot orders (relating to individual trees) are being finalised. Affected residents will be advised individually by the Council. During the survey the Tree Officer noted that unauthorised tree work had been carried out on a protected tree by a resident on the eastern side of the valley. This is being followed up by the Tree Officer. Residents are reminded that they should not carry out unauthorised work as it is illegal and can result in substantial fines.

Anyone who becomes aware of unauthorised work in progress should contact the Council's tree Officer - Coral Gibson on 8313 4516 or E-mail coralgibson@bromley.gov.uk.

If you want to carry out any work on a protected tree and want permission or want to know if you are affected by any of the many TPO's (blanket or spot), Coral Gibson is the person to contact.