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Issue 2/2015

RVPS Newsletter



www.rvpsbromley.org

Editor's Update

The second edition of 2015 is concerned largely with two topics: the recent spate of planning applications and the status of tree preservation and regeneration.

As indicated on page 4, we are looking for volunteers to help with both these activities and also for

input on our logo and content for future newsletters.

Do please get involved to help us expand the scope of the society and increase the membership to all households in the catchment area.



Chairman's Corner

We continue to have a busy time with regard to planning and have a mixed picture to report. On the plus side, the appeal to demolish Oak Dene in Oaklands Road and replace it with a large block of flats has been dismissed which is very gratifying. The Inspector specifically referred to our objections and agreed with them. We are also very pleased that the council refused permission for the redevelopment of 74 Madeira Avenue - more about this below. On the downside, the council gave permission for the development of Sunset Hill in Hillbrow Rd which is a very unwelcome result.

An appeal is still in progress at 61 The Avenue whilst a new application has been submitted to the council for the development of 2-4 Riverpark Gardens. See website for details.

I am pleased to tell you that a longstanding member, Richard Thomas, has agreed to monitor planning applications in our area and respond to the council as necessary. HOWEVER, the Society will NOT be providing personalised assistance to individual members (for example, about the proposed development next door to them!), as we have done previously, unless another volunteer is forthcoming.

Please do consider volunteering yourself – our two previous Planning Officers, Leslie Tucker and myself, both held the post for a long time demonstrating that it is very rewarding. In the meantime, members who have concerns about planning applications can find some self-help materials on our website under the 'planning tab'.

AGM news

At our AGM, members approved a new constitution for the society which can be obtained from our website or by request to the Chairman at 38 Warren Avenue for a paper copy.

We also learned at the AGM that specific proposals for the restoration of the landscape at Beckenham Place Park will be available this summer when comments from the public will be invited. See the item on page 4 for related comment.

Planning Issues

74 Madeira Avenue

Our new planning officer, Richard Thomas, will be monitoring these and any new applications, but see the note in Chairman's Corner if you can provide further, personalised, help

We are delighted that a committee of Councillors ignored the council's own Planning Officer and refused permission for the development of 74 Madeira Avenue, the previous home of our late Vice Chairman, Peter Pain.



However, an appeal or a new, slightly smaller, application is all but guaranteed. Official objections for the development were wide ranging and can be found on our website.

4 Oaklands Road

Remember you can lodge your own objection to any of these which will help reinforce the chance that they will be turned down by the Council



This fine old building might soon be demolished and replaced with a block of flats. We have objected and at the time of writing await developments, possibly in more ways than one.

14 Highland Road

We expect that many residents will be pleased that 14 Highland Road has been restored and we are no longer confronted with an eyesore.



The redevelopment did not comply with planning permission with regard to a number of issues and following a formal complaint, a revised planning application will be submitted shortly to address those issues. One of these was that there are too many windows in the north elevation which allows overlooking into the properties opposite.

Trees

76B The Avenue

On 5th February 2015 on behalf of RVPS I spoke to object to a planning application to fell the London plane tree adjacent to 76B The Avenue. This was something of a test case for RVPS as it was the first application to fell a tree for insurance reasons after our successful campaign with the oak trees at 10 Crab Hill. We hoped for a positive outcome as the independent report said that other courses of action should be taken. It was therefore both surprising and disappointing that there was a majority vote from councillors to consent to fell on the threat of financial liability from the insurance company. We have been supported by Councillor Mellor who continues to pursue the principles involved and seek a much closer and correct adherence to the significance of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). It is a travesty to lose trees such as the London plane which are renowned for their longevity, impact on pollution and aesthetic value. This particular tree is believed to be between 150 – 200 years old. Plane trees do not die of old age.

LBBRF Statement

A statement supporting the preservation of trees has been issued by the London Borough of Bromley Residents' Federation. It is titled "A Statement on Insurance-led demands to fell trees protected by a (TPO)".

If you are in dispute with an insurance company the statement may help you to argue your cause. A copy is on our website or can be obtained from Monica.

Tree Friends

At the London Borough of Bromley Tree Symposium on 18th March, Residents' Associations were invited to participate as 'Tree Friends' to help look after street trees in their area. This would include things such as:

- Monitoring the health of existing street trees
- Removing basal growth
- Watering trees during drought
- Suggesting where a street could be enhanced by the addition of trees
- Loosening ties on staked young trees
- Identifying missing trees and assisting in the selection of replacement trees
- Reporting dangerous trees
- Assisting in the survey of our ancient trees
- Planting herbaceous plants and bulbs in tree pits



A newly planted tree in our Community Project



Examples of trees in need of 'basal pruning'



Please note that volunteers are requested to help our efforts on preserving trees.

As tree officer for RVPS, I will co-ordinate where volunteers within our area are looking after trees. Training seminars and garden tools will be provided by the borough. So we need some volunteers! This will not be onerous and the general message from Councillor Smith was that this is nothing firm, they are just politely asking! Please let me know if you would be interested in becoming a tree friend volunteer on trees.rvps@outlook.com and I look forward to hearing from you.

Monica Wiltshire
Tree Officer, RVPS

General News

Society Logo

To date, our search for a new logo has not been successful. If you would like to submit a proposal we will be very happy to give it our full attention. Your design should be: distinctive; recognisable at low magnification e.g. on a browser tab; able to fit in a square box. Please send suggestions to chairman.rvps@outlook.com or deliver to 38 Warren Avenue.

Newsletter Items

In similar vein, if you have news, views or photographs that you believe will be of interest to our members please send them to editor.rvps@outlook.com or deliver to 35 Downs Hill. The plan is to publish four newsletters a year, three of them for members only in this format plus a roundup for all households to be circulated in July, probably in the tri-fold printed format used last year.

Beckenham Place Park

A campaign to save the golf course seems to be gaining ground. Articles in support have been published in the *Daily Mail* and the *News Shopper*. Sydenham 66-year-old David Hansom, a keen golfer, has announced he will be standing as an independent for Lewisham West and Penge in May's election on behalf of the Save the Beckenham 18 campaign.

The choice of the last of the four options presented to the various public consultations by Lewisham has obviously created a good deal of heated debate with those who do not wish to see the end of the 18 hole golf course leading the assault. However, the constitutional remit of the Beckenham Place Park Joint Working Party, on which we have been represented since its founding in 1994, is to address the current proposals which happen to omit all golf from the park. We have been considering and supporting the current proposals to ensure the best possible outcome for the proposed restoration of the park. Should Lewisham (and the Heritage Lottery Fund) be persuaded to change their minds on this due to public pressure, then the new brief would be on the table for our consideration..

Whether the golf or the no-golf option is chosen in future there is one thing that everyone is quite determined to ensure and that is that the planning status of the Park as "Metropolitan Open Land" (MOL) must be protected at all costs. MOL is the urban equivalent of the Green Belt but can be considered to be more precious and worth fighting for.

Society Officers

Officers

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