



THE WEST CHISWICK & GUNNERSBURY SOCIETY

Public Meeting: 30th September 2024
Held at Age Concern Hall, Chiswick W4
At 7.30 pm

MINUTES

In Attendance:	Marie Rabouhans	(Chair)
	Adam O'Neill	(Vice-Chair)
	Charlotte Aldridge	(Treasurer)
	Rob Hare	(Webmaster)
	Kate Vicic	(Secretary)
	Paul Hayler	(Management Committee)

Together with Councillors Joanna Biddolph and Peter Thompson and 21 members, new members and residents.

1. Apologies and Welcome:

- The Chair welcomed the members, residents and councillors. Apologies were received from Stephanie Lang.

2. Minutes:

- The minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Monday 12th February 2024 (available on website: www.westchiswickgs.org) were reviewed with no requests for amendment and will be formally adopted at the next AGM.

3. Matters Arising (not elsewhere on the Agenda):

- None raised.

4. Update on current planning issues

The Chair raised the following:

- **Holly House (Chiswick Roundabout):** A legal agreement has been concluded and the application submitted for a Stage 2 scrutiny by the Mayor of London. The Mayor of London/GLA decision that “the Mayor is content to allow the LPA to determine the case itself” has now been issued.
- **250 Gunnersbury Avenue:** The Hold self-storage facility was approved by the Planning Committee in September. According to the plans this self-storage facility will be as tall as the Shurgard building next door. The Chair considered that allowing such facilities to be built in a Locally Significant Industrial Site (LSIS) such as Power Road undermined the Council’s employment strategy. Self-storage provided very little direct employment and claims made for their role in supporting small businesses were highly questionable.

- **Council estates infill developments:** The council was seeking space to build affordable housing and the land occupied by garages adjacent to current local authority housing was being used to build new flats. Developments have already been approved at Gunnersbury Close and Oxford Court – the former almost completed and the latter now well underway. Proposals for Beaconsfield Close are under consideration (application P/2024/3062) and open for comment.
- **Local Plan Reg. 19 Consultation:** This is the final consultation before the consolidated Local Plan is submitted to an Examination in Public by Planning Inspectors. The deadline is 28th October. There will be a consultation drop-in at Digital Dock, Brentford on Wednesday 9th October from 4-8pm. Documents are available on the London Borough of Hounslow (LBH) website under Local Plan Review. Members were advised that any comments must be within context and targeted and not just general opinions.

5. Gunnersbury Station/Chiswick Tower:

- From the WCGS point of view improvements to the station are the main focus. The new owners have published preliminary proposals and opened a channel to the public for comment in July. We await the next community consultation and hope for an exhibition to show how the development might go forward but there is no date for this yet.

The floor was opened for comment:

- **Parking issues:** a number of local residents were concerned that the development would provide no parking other than disabled spaces. Despite the fact that Hounslow would not be issuing parking permits linked to the addresses in the development, it was suggested that new residents would find a way around the rule or park in the evenings or at the weekend in local streets. These already experienced extra cars due to Brentford football matches or other local events. The Chair suggested that car ownership by co-living residents was expected to be low. As car-free development was expected by both the local planning authority and the GLA in this type of location, a request to provide car parking was unlikely to be successful. It was agreed that the no-permit rule should be made clear to prospective residents. If problems arise once the development has been completed changes to the current CPZ hours could be requested but it should be remembered that other residents may object to any such changes.
- **Building size/use:** Would the buildings be taller or cover a larger footprint than the current ones? We would see once the proposals are more advanced. The proposed uses for the buildings were: co-living units for about 400 people in the main tower building that will likely attract young professional people, flats in a 9-storey annex and terraced houses on the site of the current car-parks. In total perhaps 400-600 people could be housed in the development. One resident raised the issue of the use changing as has happened elsewhere – a local building originally destined for student occupation became luxury flats. The Chair pointed out that the nature of co-living schemes was such that they were a different use category. If planning

permission were to be granted for such a scheme, it would preclude other residential accommodation.

- **Effect on local services:** It was suggested that young, single co-living residents would be unlikely to overload local, health services or schools,
- **Gunnersbury Station improvements:** WCGS considered that as well as a lift to the platforms a second staircase was essential. WCGS committee members have had meetings with Andy Slaughter, our new MP, Hounslow Development and Transport officers and with the developers. Andy Slaughter MP was keen to resurrect the Gunnersbury Station Action Team (GSAT) to bring together the key stakeholders.
- The developers acknowledged that, in order to improve the station, some of the land that they lease from Network Rail might have to be given over to it. However they suggested that they needed detailed input from TfL and Network Rail in relation to the provision of infrastructure such as a staircase and lift. They hoped for co-operation with the transport providers in order to continue.
- Funding the improvements was a major issue. While there was some money available from Section 106 commitments, more would be needed from other sources such as CIL and transport grants.
- It was felt that support from the Chiswick Business Park, Sky and other local businesses with a large number of employees who use the station regularly and who are inconvenienced by the restrictions that are applied during peak hours, should raise the profile and increase the pressure to make the essential improvements.
- The Chair encouraged our members to use every opportunity to raise the need to improve the station as part of this development – responding to any public consultation, attending open days, commenting on plans etc. They can also raise with local Councillors and their MP Andy Slaughter. The committee were considering approaching Lord Hendy (Minister of State at the Department of Transport) and the new local member for the Greater London Authority, Gareth Roberts.
- One resident asked about widening the island platform and putting in a ramp instead of a lift. It was understood that widening the platform was unrealistic given that this would involve splaying the tracks where there is little room to do so, would be incredibly disruptive and also very expensive. A ramp down from the Wellesley Road end had been dismissed during earlier discussions due to engineering constraints.. WCGS has suggested that removing the bridge between the car-parks (which acts as a collar on the station concourse) would create space for expansion and that a lift and staircase might be provided by oversailing the platform.
- Other points raised included the likelihood of line closures, night noise and disruption and keeping open the paths from the station to Grange Road and Wellesley Road.

Conclusion:

The meeting concluded that improving the station by *inter alia* the provision of a second staircase and a lift would represent a major public benefit.

6. Conservation: Local List:

- In response to an invitation from the Council's conservation team we have submitted further nomination for buildings and structures to be included in the Council's Local List. Nominations included The Old Cinema, Turnham Green station, several war memorials and a couple of Edward VII post boxes. Those that are taken up will be added to the 116 entries for Chiswick published in 2019.

The Chair was delighted that Voysey House (a Grade II* Listed building), was now being used once again by Sanderson's, for whom it was built as an extension to their factory on the other side of Barley Mow Passage. She hoped to encourage them to create an exhibition illustrating their many links with Chiswick that could be shown in the local library. The older part of this latter building was the Sanderson's home which they donated to Chiswick for use as a library. Together with several other Sanderson's-related buildings the library was now included in the Local List, having been nominated by the Society.

7. Date of next public meeting:

- The next public meeting will be our AGM which will take place in February 2025. Date to be announced later.
- Building on the success of the summer get together at the Pilot pub in August we propose a winter one at the Gunnersbury pub. A date will be sent out later in the year.

8. Any Other Business:

Paul Hayler thanked the members and others for attending the meeting and for their thoughtful and very useful observations and contributions which had made the discussion so interesting and helpful. He also thanked the committee for the hard work that they put in to bring discussions to where we are now.