



THE STABLES: THE DISPUTE GOES ON

To bring you up to date with the endless conflict between Hounslow and the Gunnersbury Park Joint Committee....

We left it in April/May - Hounslow had lost the arbitration but had refused to accept its failure and had proposed an alternative: that Hounslow's Planning Department should draw up a "planning brief" for the site so that the Planning Authority (Hounslow) could express its views on acceptable uses and developments, and that its officers should also investigate alternative schemes (special needs housing or craft workshops).

The meeting of the Gunnersbury Park Joint Committee in June was a shambles of the sort we used to see in the early 1980s. Some of the councillors were new to the problems and had not been briefed. The majority on the committee were in favour of going ahead with the "Swakeleys" scheme, as they had been before the election, and voted to do so. (But Swakeleys themselves will not put in an application with Hounslow in opposition - it would simply be a waste of money).

In July Hounslow's Leisure Services Committee voted to go ahead with their idea of drawing up a "planning brief". This will now be done in time for the next meeting of the Gunnersbury Park Joint Committee on September 21st and it should therefore be available for our Public Meeting. It will make interesting reading.....

THE PARK AS A CONSERVATION AREA?

When the Gunnersbury Park Joint Committee met in June it considered a report on the proposal to make the Park a Conservation Area.

As the discussion progressed it became obvious that this proposal was being used as a device by Hounslow to block the "Swakeleys" scheme for the rescue of the Stables. From the way the Officers and the Councillors from Hounslow spoke they thought it would make it almost impossible to build in the Park in the future.

So on the vote the Committee rejected the proposal to make the Park a Conservation Area.

We have reprinted the consultation papers in this Newsletter and you are free to make your own comments to the officer named at the end - the address is the Civic Centre, Hounslow.

We have not reprinted the map that accompanies it - the boundary includes all the houses that back onto the park, together with all the houses within the Gunnersbury Triangle Estate. The Residents Association on this estate want the Conservation Area because they hope it will assist them with various difficulties they are having.

The consultation period was so short as to be insulting (it suggests an attempt to hurry it through) and I am sure the Planning Department are still interested in the public's views.

The proposals will be discussed at a joint meeting of the two Community Councils for Brentford and Chiswick on 26th September and the Planning Department will be preparing its report in the subsequent days - so it would be best to regard that as the deadline.

The Friend's Committee will be preparing its comments soon and would welcome any members' comments - there will also be time to discuss it at the forthcoming Public Meeting.

PROPOSED GUNNERSBURY PARK CONSERVATION AREA

DRAFT POLICY STATEMENT

The main objective of conservation in this area is to preserve and enhance the open land character of Gunnersbury Park, Kensington Cemetery and other open areas to protect and enhance the setting of listed buildings within the area, and to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the residential part of the area through careful design and the retention and centralisation of existing interesting architectural features.

Policies

1 The Council will seek to preserve the open land character of Gunnersbury Park, Kensington Cemetery and other adjoining open spaces, and discourage the loss of any open space within those areas.

2 In the exceptional circumstances where new buildings in the Park and Kensington Cemetery are proposed, they should be designed to enhance the setting of listed buildings in the Park, where appropriate, and respect and enhance the character of the conservation area.

3 Any development on the perimeter of the Park should pay careful attention to the design, forms and size of development in order to ensure that the views from or on the Park are not harmed.

4 Planning applications for development within the area will be considered on their merits in the light of the following:

a) Any development within the Conservation Area should enhance the appearance of both the existing buildings and the Conservation Area itself.

b) Extensions of residential properties within the Conservation Area should make use of materials which match existing development and have a corresponding level of detailing appropriate to buildings within the Conservation Area.

c) In particular, residential extensions should take care to protect and retain existing attractive architectural and decorative elements and features within the area - specifically:

- the retention of existing chimneys
- the continuation of the half timbered effect on front elevation, when appropriate
- developments should make use of traditional materials and styles of doors and windows to ensure that any new extension gives the impression of being integral to the new building
- roof extensions should be small scale and respect the style and shape of the original roof
- the preservation and restoration, where appropriate, of the original wall around the Gunnersbury Estate
- extensions should pay particular regard to their relationships with adjoining buildings and the street scene.

HOW A CONSERVATION AREA AFFECTS YOU?

1 As a resident in a conservation area there will be a restriction on your permitted development rights as outlined below:

Planning permission will be required for:

- a) an extension to any dwelling house which exceeds the original cubic content by 50 cubic metres.
- b) exterior cladding of any part of a dwelling house.
- c) any alteration to the roof of a dwelling house.
- d) the provision or alteration of a building larger than 10 cubic metres in volume, within the curtilage of a dwelling house.

2 Anyone proposing to demolish any building within the area will be required to obtain Conservation Area consent from the Council before doing so. This is not the case for any building with a total cubic content less than 115 cubic metres or any part of such a building and for any gate, wall, fence or railing less than 1 metre high where abutting on a highway or public open space, or 2 metres high in any other case.

3 Anyone proposing to do work on trees in the area is required to give six weeks notice to the Council. If trees are already covered by a tree preservation order, an application to the Council for approval of the work is required in any case.

4 Planning applications for development which would affect the character or appearance of the area must be given publicity by the Council. Any comments received in response must be taken into account by the Council in deciding on the applications.

(This was written by Hounslow's Planning Department and sent out with the Draft Policy.)

The Gunnersbury Park Joint Committee asked for a report telling them what were the implications of this change to Conservation Area status. The Planning Department replied:

- 1) Six weeks notice would have to be given to Hounslow of any works to trees.
 - 2) Consent would have to be obtained from Hounslow for the demolition of any unlisted buildings.
 - 3) Any new development in the conservation area would be required to enhance the conservation area.
 - 4) Loss of open space within the Park would be discouraged.
 - 5) New buildings in the Park would only be allowed under exceptional circumstances, and they would be required to enhance to character of the Park and the setting of the listed buildings, where appropriate.
 - 6) The preservation and restoration of the original Gunnersbury Park estate wall would be encouraged.
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Hounslow's Planning Department has asked for replies under the following headings:

- The principle of declaring the area a Conservation Area.
- The boundary of the area.
- The content of the policy.
- Any other matters.

Mr D Singh, the officer dealing with this (081-862-5951), sent out the information on 3rd July and asked for replies by 1st August.

The New Gunnersbury Park Committee

Ealing has nominated the following Councillors:

Tory: Cllrs Atkinson, Green, Painting & Yerolemou

Labour: Cllrs Dunkley & Johnson

Hounslow has nominated the following Councillors:

Tory: Cllr Langton

Labour: Cllrs Sharma, Collins, Dodkins, Hopkins & Pauling

Cllr Sharma is the Chair; The Friends have two observers - Messrs Hawkes & Wisdom.

Papua New Guinea in the Park

Cultural Cooperation organised a "Music Village" in the Park for musicians and artists from Papua New Guinea in June. The three evenings were nearly ruined by the weather. It was so cold and wet that the artists could hardly continue, though on the Sunday there were about 700 people in the audience and they saw the full programme. The organisers had been hoping for perhaps 2,000 every night. The Friends helped out with stewarding on the site and in the car park.

Although there were a few hitches, the organisers found everything at Gunnersbury was very satisfactory and they are intending to return next year. The theme will be the culture of Rajasthan. I would welcome any comments to pass on to the organisers.

This Newsletter has been edited by James Wisdom, 25, Hartington Road, W4 3TL (081 994 4231) - comments and news are welcome.