



HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM HISTORIC BUILDINGS GROUP

Newsletter



No 1. October 89

THE GROUP & ITS BEGINNINGS.

The Group was launched two years ago with the aim of protecting buildings of local value as well as those covered by the Government's historic buildings 'listing' scheme and to involve local people more in that work. There is growing concern about the disappearance of buildings which have been part of the local scene for generations and the often unattractive buildings which replace them.

This is the first in what is hoped to be a series of newsletters to bring supporters up to date about the Group's work and to stimulate greater vigilance about threatened development.

THE LOCAL LIST.

Over the past year the Group has compiled a borough-wide list of buildings of historic, architectural and townscape value which we believe should be protected. The principle of a Local List was recently given valuable endorsement by being included by the Council in the Borough Local Plan together with more than 1,000 of the buildings we suggested. Although without statutory backing, the List does give an added layer of local protection. The Hammersmith Society and many other amenity bodies have given their backing to the Group and helped in the detailed work of drawing up the List. By the time you read this, copies will be available in the borough libraries. Anyone who wishes can buy a copy at the cost price of £4 50p.

FUTURE ACTION.

More detailed research is now planned into each building on the List and we intend to continue to persuade the Council to add further buildings, particularly some of the attractive and unspoilt terraces and parades across the borough. Another future objective is the drawing up of specific lists of churches, warehouses and industrial buildings, pubs and inns, wharves and piers and post boxes.

CURRENT ACTION.

The Group is constantly active, vetting planning applications, challenging unacceptable developments to public inquiry stage where necessary and alerting the Council to unauthorised changes where they are brought to our notice.

The following are some of the recent actions:

Fulham Centre redevelopment.

We have objected to this scheme because it involves the virtual demolition of Jerdan Place and Vanston Place and a scale of rebuilding at odds with the Council's guidelines on restoration and conservation in the Borough Local Plan. Modest Victorian buildings which form an organic group and neatly set off the church of St. John, recently cleaned by the Council, will be totally obliterated by offices and a shopping mall.

Fulham Palace.

The former residence of the Bishops of London, dating back to 1480, this is the only Grade 1 listed building in the borough. Its important status should be reflected in any work there. Thus, the Group is concerned about a half-circle of modern lights installed around the front lawn by the Council without planning permission, listed building consent or scheduled monument consent. Retrospective permission is now being sought by the Council's architects department and we have objected to the quite unsuitable design of the lights and protested that the work was done without prior sanction. There are further matters which cause concern.

English Heritage has recently been forced to write to the Council protesting at damage to the building and grounds. The Palace is not only a listed building but its grounds are a scheduled ancient monument, yet heavy lorries have been driven over them for Council-sponsored functions with possible damage to buried archaeological remains. Pillars at the entrance gateway, themselves listed Grade 2 and a scheduled ancient monument have also been damaged by lorries.

We are alarmed that English Heritage should have to pressure a local authority and require undertakings on basic matters to protect the foremost historic building in its area, especially when the authority is custodian of the building. We welcome the Council's intention to encourage community use of the Palace but such use must be compatible with both the building and site and cause no damage to either. We believe everyone in the borough will share our concern and endorse the demand that the Council takes urgent steps to make sure that such damage does not occur again.

Dorcas Parade, Hammersmith Road.

This fine parade (opposite the old Cadby Hall) has, sadly been in decline for years. Because of inadequate protection since the shops closed, doors and other period items have disappeared. Now, after changing hands several times, it is to be restored with shops and offices. Following objections by ourselves and other groups, various damaging and unsympathetic features are being modified by the developers.

188, Hammersmith Road.

An 11th hour intervention by the Group succeeded in getting development plans for this Georgian building deferred for further consideration.

THE FUTURE OF CHURCHES IN HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM.

There is growing concern about the fate of churches in the borough, beset by static or declining congregations and soaring maintenance costs. The Church of England authorities have indicated that they see a large number becoming redundant in the next few years. Many are not listed and if they are not within a conservation area, risk being demolished.

Adapting cherished landmark buildings to alternative uses poses major problems. Not everybody wants to see them converted to housing (as with St. Mary's, Stamford Brook) or sold to non-Christian religious sects.

We are proposing to carry out detailed research into threatened churches and would welcome any help with this. The Group supports the Hammersmith Society in its view that a starting point for any discussion on a redundant church is that it should not be demolished and that planning officers should explore with church officials what alternatives are possible.

More immediately, we are concerned about proposals to demolish the Fulham Christian Fellowship Church, Lillie Road and propose to alert the Council to its historic and townscape value.

PRINCE OF WALES'S VIEWS.

The Prince of Wales has articulated the views of many people who are concerned about many of the modern buildings appearing around them and the damage done to heritage buildings by unsympathetic creations either replacing them or going up alongside them. Unfortunately, we have our share of alien and amorphous glass and concrete in the borough.

Not surprisingly, Prince Charles has been attacked by the architectural establishment but the emphasis he has placed on preserving the best of the old while curbing the excesses of the new, delivered with Royal authority, can only benefit conservationists and groups like our own and add weight to our campaigns.

BOILEAU GROUP EXHIBITION.

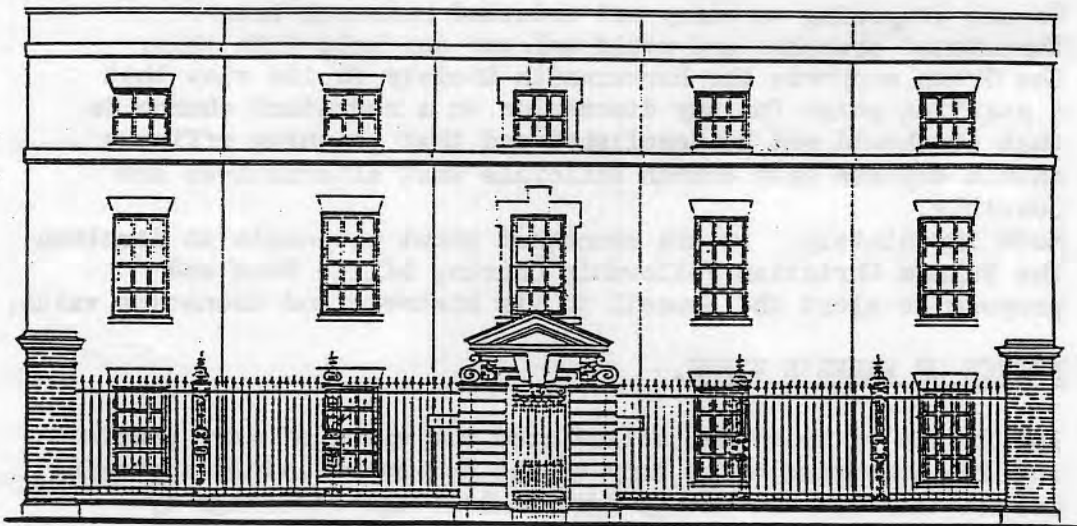
Three local artists, Jan Pienkowski, Jane Walmsley and David Walser, who comprise the 'Boileau Group' are staging a display of their work at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith Nov7-Dec3 entitled 'Endangered Spaces'.

Their subjects are all local buildings, views or open spaces which they consider make a great contribution to the environment but are under threat from development.

Attached is an invitation to the Private View on Nov 6, at which the Mayor, Cllr Ian Gray will open the exhibition at 4.30 pm. The artists are donating part of the proceeds to our work in the borough and we have suggested a number of buildings and views they might consider as subjects for their paintings all within a mile's radius of the Lyric.

FULHAM HOUSE - RESTORATION NEARS COMPLETION.

Fulham House, c 1720, close to Putney Bridge and the home of the Fulham branch of the Territorial and Army Volunteer Reserve, was for years obscured by a modern building on the front and a wooden fence. Some years ago when the TA applied to develop the site, local conservationists urged a process of restoration which is about to be completed. All the fronting buildings have now been removed and the fence has been replaced by wrought iron railings and a classical stone gateway. Full marks to the TA for responding to local opinion. The restoration was set in motion before the Group was formed but it is an excellent example of what we are trying to achieve.

FUNDS.

Following many inquiries from supporters, the Group has set an annual subscription of £5, although any sum is welcome. A bank account has been opened in the Group's name and an application for Urban Aid grant of just over £1000 was successful last year. Much of this has been spent on compiling the Local List and far more is needed for a photographic record and further research into the List buildings.

HELPERS.

The Group always needs helpers, especially with research. Anyone who would like to help or has friends who might be interested, please contact the secretary.

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