



No. 19 Autumn 2008

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. It is appearing just before our annual meeting on 9 October (see back page for details) so, as is customary in the autumn issue, the main feature is our chairman's report on the past year's activities. This reveals not just how much is going on in our borough, but also how much work the Historic Buildings Group does. We hope you will attend the annual meeting to find out more, and then publicise our activities to your friends and neighbours. We would love more residents of the borough to be involved in what we do, even if only as members supporting us with subscriptions. We would also welcome contributions to the newsletter from members. If you have any ideas or suggestions for articles, please feel free to contact the editor or any officer of the Group – contact details on back page.

Chairman's Report

MAIN ISSUES

Many of the issues that I reported on last year continue to concern us – the changes to the planning legislation, threats to historic buildings, large advertisement hoardings particularly in conservation areas, and the effect of tall buildings on historic areas – but there are some positive changes as well as some new threats. We are encouraged that the new mayor of London, Boris Johnson, seems to have more sympathy for the historic environment than the previous mayor. We welcome the borough's positive support for our historic open spaces. On the other hand a major threat has emerged recently to the borough's only ancient monument, the moated site of Fulham Palace.

Fulham Palace Moat

Fulham Palace, a home of the bishops of London for 1300 years and the original manor house of Fulham (the manor roughly covered the whole of the modern borough) used to be surrounded by a moat. Sadly it was filled in during the 1920s. The palace is a Grade 1 listed building and the area within the moat is a scheduled ancient monument, the only one in the borough. The old palace site is the largest moated site in London and the old moat is claimed to have been the largest medieval

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moat in England. Excavations within the palace grounds since 1972 suggest that the moat and its earthworks may be even older.

A development scheme proposed for the Territorial Army site in Fulham High Street includes a large Tesco supermarket, housing and a new church hall for All

Saints church. The developer proposes to build a car park to service the supermarket under 'the paddock', part of the church land round Fulham Palace. This would destroy the route of the moat.

Although there has been some building within the area of the moat, its whole route is still intact. In the Fulham Palace landscape plan, it is proposed to dig out the moat on either side of the moat bridges and bluebells are being planted elsewhere along the route of the moat so that in spring it will be possible to see where the moat used to be. The Group has supported this imaginative idea and the long-term aim of one day re-opening the moat.



An 1876 photo of the moat at Fulham Palace. Beside it is Bishop's Walk, a path from Bishop's Avenue to Pryor's Bank.

To destroy part of the moated site now for a car park would be a terrible precedent and a worse act of vandalism than the earlier one. The site of the moat should be safeguarded for the future.

All Saints church

The proposed Fulham High Street development would also provide a smaller hall and other facilities for All Saints church and is linked to the proposals for a new church annexe as part of a 'property package'.

All Saints, the parish church of Fulham, is an outstanding church, listed Grade II* GV. The church was rebuilt in 1881 to designs by Sir Arthur Blomfield, but retained its medieval tower and incorporated earlier memorials. It is a landmark in the beautiful and historic setting of its graveyard and is greatly valued by the community.

We understand that requirements for the practical use of an historic building change. However, proposals for additions should be subservient to the building and as unobtrusive as possible. We consider the annexe as proposed is too big and too high.

We question that all the uses proposed for the annexe necessarily have to take place attached to the church. We have suggested that a more flexible approach should be taken to the location of the new facilities in order to minimise the damage that would be done to the historic church and its setting. It is disappointing that the present church hall site should be reduced by a third, which results in a larger extension to the church. If anything, the reverse should be the case.

The floor level of the proposed annexe is higher than that of the church. This will increase its dominance and additionally result in a need for steps and ramps inside the church to link the two, something that would be very damaging to the church's listed interior. We hope this will now be reconsidered.

REDEVELOPMENT SITES

As I reported last year, in addition to the Fulham High Street site there are a number of other large sites around the borough where development is being planned and we are concerned that historic details and context should be respected in each case.

We continue to argue that as part of the **Hammersmith Embankment** development the locally listed section of the riverwall by the exit of the culverted Parr's Ditch should be conserved and restored together with the parish boundary stone, dated 1865.

The **Janet Adegoke site** in Bloemfontein Road W12, has recently received permission for an improved scheme which does not reduce the size of Wormholt Park. There has been a pre-application consultation on a development on the **Earl's Court car park site** in Seagrave Road. A tall building or buildings was suggested which would severely damage the setting of the historic Brompton Cemetery. We hope this will be reconsidered.

Plans for the **White City Opportunity Area**, north of the Westfield shopping centre, are being reviewed and it is expected that the council will be consulting on a revised planning framework for the area later this year. We hope to have more information at the annual meeting. We continue to be concerned for the future of the BBC TV Centre, a key building in the area. Last year the Group proposed that the building should be listed and we sent in our research on its significance. We are delighted that English Heritage has recommended it for listing and that this is supported by the council. We await the decision of the secretary of state.

The proposals for the **Hammersmith town hall site** were reported in detail in our last newsletter. The Group welcomes the proposed demolition of the obtrusive town hall extension and the restoration of the original north front to King Street with its ceremonial steps rising from a civic square. But we are concerned about the height and detailed design of the proposed new buildings, particularly their relationship to King Street. The present plans sadly involve the demolition of two locally listed buildings, the striking Cineworld cinema (see illustration on page 3) and – with its ornate façade facing King Street requiring a bit of a clean – Cromwell Mansions.



Attributed to architect H M Newlyn and built in 1900, Cromwell Mansions provides six spacious flats over three floors and shops below which have been converted to successful restaurants. The facade with its mass of intact detail including pilasters, balcony fronts and fascia brackets culminates with an interesting skyline of scrolled parapets and ornate chimneys. Whether closing the view from Dalling Road or seen from the tube station it is a significant building.

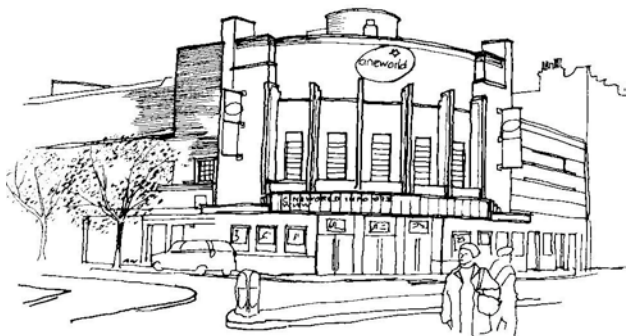
We oppose the idea of raising the level of Nigel Playfair Avenue leading to a bridge over the A4 with descent ramps into Furnivall Gardens. This would damage the listed town hall and encroach on a very popular park.

We support the Hammersmith Society in their long-standing proposal to have a ground level crossing to Furnivall Gardens. Until recently this had been supported by both the council and Transport for London.

The recent local contribution to this year's **London Festival of Architecture** was a three-day investigation into ways of overcoming the A4 barrier and reconnecting

Hammersmith with the river. Local architects led by Alex Lifschutz of Lifschutz, Davidson, Sandilands and including Group committee member Tom Ryland of CP Architects, worked alongside the Historic Buildings Group and other local organisations on the project. The long-term solution proposed was to sink the A4 from Hogarth roundabout to the flyover. The short-term solution was a ground level crossing at the town hall!

The future of **Furnivall Gardens** has been further complicated by the recent reports that Thames Water are now considering using the gardens as their main western entry point for the new sewage tunnel under the Thames. We hope to have more details by the annual meeting.



Built in 1936 to designs by William Glen, the Cineworld cinema at the corner of King Street and Nigel Playfair Avenue – formerly the Regal and the ABC – replaced the 1912 Blue Hall Cinema, demolished in 1935.

BUILDINGS AT RISK

One new building in the borough has been added to this year's English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register: the **West London County Court** in North End Road which has remained empty for some time. In 2006 the Council resolved to grant planning permission for an office and residential conversion subject to a section 106 agreement, but issues with the legal agreement remain unresolved.

However, it is good news that three buildings have come off the Register. The **Dimco** building in Wood Lane, formerly the Central Railway generating station, has been repaired as part of the Westfield development and its sturdy industrial silhouette can now be admired from Wood Lane. The **tomb of Granville Sharp** in All Saints Fulham churchyard has been restored. Sharp was the 'Father of the Abolition Movement' and the Group was delighted to be part of the working party that raised the money and arranged for the restoration. The former **West Kensington post and delivery office** in Blythe Road W14 is now occupied.

There are still eight buildings in Hammersmith & Fulham remaining on the Register. However, we are hopeful more will come off in the next year or so as there are plans in hand for the restoration of some of them.

The lottery bid for the next stage of Fulham Palace includes the restoration of the **walls of the old garden** at Fulham Palace with the **vinery** and **bothy** and the **Tudor-Gothic lodge** beside the entrance gate. Work has

started on the restoration of the 18th century **Kent House** beside the river at Lower Mall W6. There are plans to restore the **listed tombs at St Paul's church** as part of the works for the new extension.

We continue to be concerned about the remaining three entries on the register. The **Odeon** at Shepherd's Bush Green has permission for a hotel conversion, but this has not been implemented. The building has been left empty for some years and appears to be deteriorating. The monuments in **St Mary's cemetery** are sadly neglected – as we saw again on the recent Historic Buildings Group walk – and there appear to be no plans to carry out repairs. **34 Black Lion Lane** is a charming early 19th century cottage which has been left empty by its owners for many years and allowed to decay. There is permission for restoration, but no work has started. An application from the owners to demolish, strongly opposed by the Group and the local St Peter's Residents Association, has recently been withdrawn. We understand that the council has secured extra supports for the building and is investigating the potential to take further enforcement action under the listed building legislation.

This year for the first time English Heritage has widened the Buildings at Risk Register to include landscapes and ancient monuments at risk. If the proposal to build the car park under the **Fulham Palace moated site** – as part of the proposed Barton Finch development on Fulham High Street described in more detail above – is not dropped, the Group will request that this ancient monument be added to the Register.

Damage to historic buildings continues from neglect and unauthorised work. Members are reminded of the telephone number of the enforcement team at the council if they see unauthorised work taking place: 020 8753 1083. On a Sunday the number to call is the out of hours emergency number: 020 8748 8588. Dated photos of the work in progress help.

PLANNING LEGISLATION

I have reported before on the Group's concerns about the effect on the historic environment of the many changes to the planning legislation. We were fearful of the effect of the new powers granted to the London mayor, but the new mayor, Boris Johnson, has stated that he intends to use them sparingly and he appears to have a good deal more sympathy for the historic environment than the previous mayor.

In July he published a consultation document called *Planning for a Better London* – the first stage in his intention to amend the London Plan. We welcome the aim 'to protect and enhance London's historic environment', the greater weight to be given to the local context and character in considering proposals for tall buildings (had this change come earlier, it might have saved us from the Lot's Road twin towers), the protection of open space including domestic gardens and the review of the Views Framework to strengthen the protection for historic views.

We understand from the council that they will be consulting on the **Local Development Framework** core strategy in February and March 2009. (This will be in accordance with new planning regulations that came into effect in June this year and follows on from the last consultation exercise in 2007.) Further consultation on the core strategy is planned for late 2009, with an examination in public likely in 2010 and adoption in early 2011. Until then, the UDP will remain in force along with the London Plan.

PUBLIC REALM

The council's streetscape guide, *StreetSmart*, winner of the Hammersmith Society's Environment Award in 2006, continues to have a good influence on the streetscape by bringing about greater consistency in design and materials. Areas of the riverside walk that were renovated by the council during the year were to *StreetSmart* standards. The **riverside walk at Imperial Wharf** still does not comply with *StreetSmart* standards. It has been 'annexed by design', without planning approval, and looks like part of the private development there rather than a public footpath.

In the last newsletter we congratulated the council on its more robust approach to the removal of large advertisements which were damaging the streetscape. Unfortunately we must now castigate them for giving themselves permission for several **large advertisement hoardings** in conservation areas, contrary to their own UDP policy. The worst one is on St Paul's Green. This damages the view of St Paul's church (which is soon to lose its shrouding we hope). English Heritage as well as the church and the Group objected to it, but to no avail. Unfortunately these advertisements bring in seductive amounts of money.

The recent improvement works in the town centres have been based on the guidance in *StreetSmart* and have made a great difference to the street scene. However, the council has recently installed a **flurry of advertising banners** on lampposts in the town centres and along King Street and Fulham Palace Road. These are a retrograde step and clutter the streetscape. They are against the aspirations of *StreetSmart*, which aims to 'declutter the urban landscape of Hammersmith and Fulham, making sure that the only things we see on our own streets are things that need to be there', and we hope they will be removed as soon as possible. The Hammersmith Society has rightly given them a wooden spoon award.

OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPE

We welcome the council's recently published draft parks and open spaces strategy. We support the higher priority to be given to our historic parks and we have made a number of detailed comments. A fuller report on this will appear in the next newsletter.

We opposed the erection of a memorial in the middle of **Ravenscourt Park**. It is now obvious how inappropriate its position is. We hope a better position can be found for

it soon. The alterations to **Frank Banfield Park** – part of the section 106 agreement on the Hammersmith Embankment office park scheme – are at an advanced stage. Sadly, the out of date plans were not reconsidered as we suggested and the scheme is a wasted opportunity. The plans for **Shepherd's Bush Common** are moving forward. The Group continues to argue for a 'less is more' approach to this historic common and is pleased that this seems to be a shared aspiration. We await news this autumn of the lottery bid for the improvements to **Bishop's Park** and **Fulham Palace grounds**.

We have recently had a meeting with **Westfield** and were very disappointed to learn that most of the expected landscaping shown in the application was not going to be carried out: no landscaping to increase the green corridor along the railway line as required by the UDP policy and as shown on the scheme's illustrations ('not enough space left', 'Railtrack objects'); no new trees in Wood Lane so it lives up to its name ('no space because of services'); and hardly any tree planting on the internal roads in the site ('not safe'). The Group has protested strongly about this and asked for greater efforts to comply with the original landscaping proposals. This sorry story must not be repeated on any future developments within the White City area.

I reported in the last newsletter about the threat to the **views across to the wooded tow path in Barnes**, a rare and much appreciated stretch of almost rural landscape in an urban area. We are pleased that the PLA has now appointed consultants to survey all the trees along the tow path from Putney to Kew and to draft a tree management plan for the next 10–20 years. This will consider how best to avoid damage to the stone bank and also look at where new trees could be planted to maintain the 'green edge'. We look forward to a public consultation on the report this autumn.

BRIEF UPDATES

The Ramshackle, 4 Fulham High Street This splendidly flamboyant pub – originally the King's Head – has a history of unauthorised alterations and unsympathetic proposals. There have been two planning



The Ramshackle in Fulham High Street, a listed pub built as the King's Head in 1906 in a sort of Scottish baronial style, is currently affected by two unresolved planning applications.

applications in the last year. One is for a four-storey building on the vacant site on the north side, with flats over ground floor shopping. We have objected to this joyless building as being a poor neighbour to the lovingly detailed and listed pub. The other application is for conversion of the upper floors of the pub, including the roof space, to flats. We have no objection to this in principle, but we do have reservations about the design of the staircase tower at the rear. At the time of writing neither of these applications has been determined.

Baptist church in Shepherd's Bush Road This has been badly damaged by fire. We hope this handsome, locally listed building of 1907, designed by P W Hawkins, will be repaired as soon as possible.

Whiteley's Cottages are part of the original Whiteley's Depository and laundry buildings. Built between 1892 and 1901 to designs by Alfred M Rudge, they are locally listed and in the Avonmore conservation area. The Group has argued for many years for the restoration and reuse of these former stables, which are in a prominent position and signal the history of the complex. We have opposed the application to demolish and replace them with a larger building, lacking in any charm or sense of place.

EVENTS

This year we have organised further local walks and run our second treasure hunt. Group committee member John Goodier led a walk in the industrial north of the borough, John Sheppard guided people round St Mary's cemetery and we had a sell-out tour of the BBC TV Centre (see report opposite). Devised and organised by John Goodier, our treasure hunt in Hammersmith started at the Plough & Harrow in King Street (one of the oldest sites in Hammersmith) and took in the locally listed cinema, the listed town hall with Father Thames statue and the riverside. Participants of all ages said how much they enjoyed it. We plan to have another next year in Parson's Green. We are extremely grateful to John for finding the quirky and informative clues, and we must also thank those local organisations who donated prizes: the Lyric Theatre, Fulham Football Club, Fulham Palace Museum, Anglesea Arms, Fuller's Brewery and the Emery Walker Trust at 7 Hammersmith Terrace. More interesting events are coming up – see the back page for details. Besides being enjoyable and informative, these events help raise vital funds for our work.

OUR ANNUAL MEETING

Our annual meeting takes place on Thursday 9 October at the BBC White City conference centre, 201 Wood Lane. Our theme is 'The White City, Past, Present and Future'. The BBC has generously agreed to host this year's meeting and Andrew Fullerton, the BBC's Head of Environmental Planning, will speak about the BBC's plans for the future of their sites. We hope also to be able to update you on the council's latest plans for the White City Opportunity Area.

The meeting will be preceded by a guided tour of the adjacent media centre, winner of the Hammersmith

Society's 2005 environment award. Designed by Allies and Morrison with landscaping by Christopher Bradley-Hole, it was built on land originally part of the White City Franco-British exhibition and was the site of the 1908 Olympic stadium. The finishing line of the 1908 marathon is marked on a pedestrianised street, and the final medals table is displayed on an adjacent part of the building. There will be an exhibition about the 1908 Olympics provided by the borough's archive and local history centre. There are full details in the mailing and we very much hope you will be able to come.

Our Work

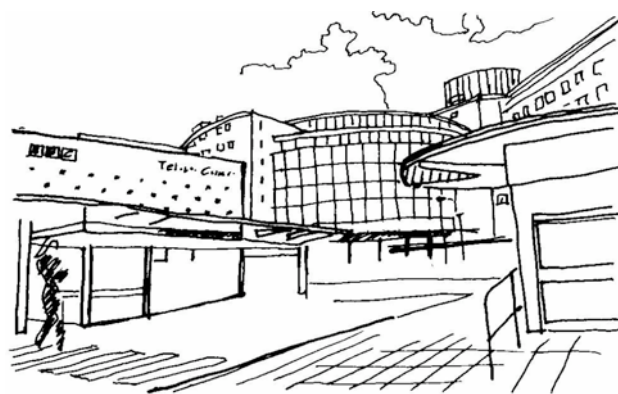
As you can see, our work is varied, considerable and interesting. I am deeply grateful to all the members who contribute to the work and to committee members and the surveyors who work on our *Local List* of buildings. We are always delighted to hear from anyone who wants to join us and help with any aspect of our work.

Angela Dixon

Angela Dixon, Chairman, Historic Buildings Group

VISIT TO BBC TV CENTRE

On Saturday 12 April the Historic Buildings Group organised a well-attended tour of the BBC TV Centre at White City.



The BBC's television centre at White City W12, the world's first purpose-built television 'factory'. Although the main section was opened in 1960, the last stage of the original design – by Graham Dawbarn of Dawbarn and Norman – was not actually completed till the late 1990s.

After passing through rigorous security our two guides, Andrew and Simon, gave us a rundown of the origins of the centre. The first broadcasts were from Alexandra Palace in 1936 but these were abandoned on the outbreak of war. When service was subsequently resumed, it was realised that more suitable accommodation was required and it was then that the present site was purchased and building work begun. The Centre was officially opened in June 1960 and was one of the world's first purpose-built TV centres.

The architect in charge of the venture was Graham Dawbarn. The style he used for the layout of the 13-acre site was very much in accord with other developments of the period such as the South Bank complex. The overall design, from the air, resembles a question mark. Over the years additions have been made to the original to accommodate increased output. There are now eight studios in the complex, with the first being the largest.

Works of art at the centre include an abstract mural by John Piper and a statue by T B Huxley-Jones of the sun god Helios with two reclining figures representing sound and vision, the components of television.

In 2012 we were told the BBC will be closing the centre and the various departments will be relocated to other sites, with the news centre (providing material for TV, radio and, increasingly, the internet) being transferred to Broadcasting House.

Lavender Hastie

BROOM HOUSE SWEEPED AWAY

In his history of Fulham published in 1900, Charles James Fèret described Broom House as 'perhaps the most elegant mansion to be found in Fulham'. He was writing at a time when the much revered Miss Charlotte Sullivan, the then owner of Broom House, was alive, so it is just possible that his was not a totally objective view. Nevertheless, photographs confirm that Broom House, standing on the west side of Broomhouse Lane in nine acres of grounds fronting the river, was a most desirable residence.



Broom House, Fulham. This late 18th century riverside mansion stood on the west side of Broomhouse Lane. When it was demolished in the early 1900s, the Hurlingham club absorbed its site and most of its manicured gardens and grounds.

It is thought that the house was built in the late 18th century for the ladies of the Chauncey family. In 1805 the estate passed into the possession of Sir Evan Nepean, sometime colonial governor and secretary to the Admiralty. In 1823 his executors sold the property to Laurence Sullivan, whose family remained there for the next 90 years.

Laurence Sullivan was a senior civil servant who held a high position in the War Office. His wife, Elizabeth, was extremely well connected, being the sister of the prime minister, Lord Palmerston. He was a frequent visitor to Broom House, riding down from London on Sundays. It was said that the plan of the Crimean War was formulated on the lawn. A newspaper report in 1911 stated that 'one could scarcely imagine a more convenient spot to retire to for the serious thinking-out of state problems than that still lovely house by the river side in Hurlingham'.

Charlotte Antonia Sullivan, the youngest daughter, born in 1824, inherited the estate on her father's death in 1866. As well as being a great benefactor to Fulham, she continued Laurence Sullivan's improvements and enlargement of the house by adding a beautiful hall. The extensive garden, with its lawns sweeping down to the river, was featured in an article in *Country Life* in 1901. Some notable trees in the grounds included a very large copper beech, cedars, oaks, cypresses and a tulip tree.

After Miss Sullivan's death in 1911 the Broom House estate was broken up and sold by auction. The Hurlingham Club bought two of the most valuable lots, including the house. The house was then demolished and the site incorporated into the grounds of the club.

Anne Wheeldon, Hammersmith & Fulham Archives and Local History Centre

A new book about Charlotte Sullivan – The Best Friend We Have, written by Sue Pierson and published by the Fulham and Hammersmith Historical Society – is available from the society or Hammersmith & Fulham Archives, price £5.00.

WALK ON THE WILLESDEN SIDE

On a cold, damp Saturday last March a small but enthusiastic group joined John Goodier, Historic Buildings Group industrial archaeology specialist, for a walk exploring the industrial area in the north of the borough. This is the region lying between Willesden Junction station and the Paddington arm of the Grand Union Canal.

We began by crossing the West Coast main line out of Euston via a footbridge forming a convenient pedestrian route from Willesden to the numerous industrial premises north of the canal. This is an area bounded and crossed by several railway routes. As such it was slow to be developed and still lacks any housing.

On Salter Street and Enterprise Way the industrial premises are largely modern. South of here, however, sandwiched between the West London Railway and the canal, are several examples of late 19th century buildings, particularly on the north side of Hythe Road. (One of them incidentally, retains its World War II fire-watching post, a small brick look-out shelter on the roof.) Car retailing is now the main activity in this area, with Car Giant in the old Rolls Royce building on the south side of the road being the largest single business.

We walked under the West London Railway bridges into Scrubs Lane to see a pleasing complex of two-storey, U-shaped, 'gritty' brick workshops with offices of about 1900. The workshops have their gabled ends facing onto the east side of the road; the two-storey domestic-style offices are at the end of the U on the 'inland' side of a forecourt.

From here we walked onto the canal tow path, passing Mary Seacole Park (once a canal inlet) and heading west looking out over the former Great Western Railway's famous Old Oak Lane locomotive depot to the south of the canal. The depot is much less impressive in these days of diesels.

Crossing into Ealing borough we approached two railway bridges over the canal. The larger, with lattice steel 'hump-backed' girders, carries what used to be called the North London Line towards Richmond. The smaller, to the west, is of riveted wrought iron girders with attractive cast iron fascia beams, again hump-backed. Sadly, it is covered in graffiti. Between the bridges, on the north side of the canal, a new concrete wharf for waste refuse is an encouraging sign that the waterway is once more being put to productive use. To the west of the bridges the rotting timber gates of a stop-lock are a reminder of a wartime precaution to safeguard water supply and protect canalside industries should the canal be breached by bombing.

On the east side of Old Oak Lane, on the extreme edge of the borough, we saw the vestiges of a small London & North Western Railway (LNWR) housing estate, while over the boundary with Ealing is a larger LNWR housing scheme centred on Stephenson and Goodhall Streets. I first saw these neat two-storey terraces in 1968 when they were still tenanted – and at that time looking somewhat drab, it must be said. Nowadays the houses are mostly owner-occupied, as you can tell by the coach lamps, the grained Georgian-style front doors and the (sometimes over-gaudy) paintwork.

Standing at the northern end of the estate is the large two-storey purpose-built Institute, little altered but alas derelict, waiting – one hopes not vainly – for a saviour. Likewise, just south of the canal bridge, a similarly derelict seven-storey 1960s office block also awaits its fate. No doubt the office block was seen as 'just the thing' in its day, but one feels now that it has less chance of rescue than the Institute. From here it was just a short walk back to Willesden Junction station.

Michael Bussell

'DANSE' TO THE MUSIC OF TIME

By the early 1900s the rapidly growing population of Hammersmith needed new places of entertainment. One of these was the Brook Green Roller Skating Rink built in 1910 on a site that had formerly been part of Glover's Dairy in Brook Green Road (later renamed Shepherds Bush Road). A full military band at each session was promised, together with 'the only Palm Court in the district, where teas and light refreshments will be most

daintily served'. Advertisements for the rink continue to appear in the local newspapers until 1915, after which the building may have been devoted to wartime purposes.

After the war, architect Bertie Crewe converted the building from a roller skating rink into a palais de danse, with comfortable accommodation for 2,500 people. His internal decorations were based on a Chinese theme, featuring lacquered columns, fretwork and a pagoda roof with Chinese lanterns. The dance floor was made of Canadian maple. There were two dance sessions per day – in the afternoon and in the evening – and instructors and dancing partners could be hired. The Palais was considered to be the largest and most luxurious such establishment in Europe.



The interior of the Hammersmith Palais as it appeared after World War I following conversion by architect Bertie Crewe from a roller skating rink into a dance hall.

About this time jazz arrived in London, taking the capital by storm. In 1919 the Original Dixieland Jazz Band came over from the States for a residency at a club in Tottenham Court Road. Such was the band's success that it needed a new, larger venue. Its agents found it in the Palais. On the opening night in Hammersmith no fewer than 5,800 people turned up. As a book about the band says: 'The whole character of the Palais soon changed due to the new music, as an entirely different clientele replaced the original dance hall crowd. On November 22nd [1919] the Palais de Danse opened as a nightclub, complete with tables, drinks, waiters and brand new decorations'. The Original Dixieland Jazz Band, fronted by Nick LaRocca, played at Hammersmith till June 1920 (see picture on page 8).

After a decade of successful operation, the Palais had lost some of its sparkle and was in need of renovation. The management decided instead to install an ice rink, and the worn dance floor was taken up and replaced by a special advanced type of ice surface, the equivalent of a sprung dance floor. The ice rink was opened on 30 December 1929, but it lasted only a few years. In late 1934 the Palais again became a dance hall. Dancing continued all through the Second World War despite the Blitz, and carried on in the post-war era. Jazz concerts and ballroom

dancing events also featured, and in the 1950s TV programmes such as 'Palais Party' were regularly broadcast from the venue. The Palais always had a resident dance band. In 1959 Joe Loss and his orchestra filled the slot. That year was the 25th anniversary of the re-opening of the Palais in 1934. Since then it was reckoned that nearly 20 million people had visited the venue.



The Original Dixieland Jazz Band pictured at the Hammersmith Palais during their six-month residency in 1919-1920. Frontman Nick LaRocco is in the centre playing the trumpet. The letters on the players' top hats spell out 'Dixie'.

In 1960 the Mecca organisation took the Palais over. In the new era of pop music, the Palais was increasingly used for concerts by live groups, including, in the 1970s, punk bands and black reggae artists. Perhaps the best-known song connected with the Palais is The Clash's 'White Man in Hammersmith Palais' (1978). In 1987 the Palais was refurbished in an upmarket style, and, although live concerts were still put on, special theme nights and discos became more common. In 2000 the Palais, which had been acquired from Rank the previous year, became a nightclub called Po Na Na. The Schooldisco.com event at Po Na Na was particularly popular. However, there were public order problems, including physical assaults and drug taking, and in 2003, following another change of ownership, the Palais reopened under its original name. The renaissance was short-lived: in 2007 permission was granted to developers to demolish.

Jane Kimber, Hammersmith & Fulham Archives & Local History Centre

PALAIS POSTSCRIPT

We are very grateful to Jimmy LaRocca, son of Original Dixieland Jazz Band frontman Nick LaRocca, for information and pictures relating to the band and its historic residency at the Palais in those far off years after World War I. As he says of the ODJB: 'They changed forever how music would be interpreted...Wherever this band went or their records were released, they impacted the music and dance. The jazz idiom is in all of modern music today'. The Palais story continues in the next newsletter when television producer Richard Weller recounts his experiences making the recent BBC TV documentary on the Palais.

The Editor

HBG EVENTS

Thursday 9 Oct 2008: ANNUAL MEETING at BBC White City Conference Centre, Wood Lane W12. Theme: 'The White City Past, Present and Future'. Light refreshments served from 7.00. Exhibition about 1908 Olympics and guided tour of adjacent Media Centre and external areas from 7.15. Meeting starts 8.00 sharp.

Saturday 18 Oct 2008: GUIDED WALK

A two-hour walk entitled 'Work, Worship and Leisure' exploring various themes, including old municipal Hammersmith between Broadway and Brook Green, religion and education (St Paul's Girls School, the Roman Catholic colony, the Synagogue) and transport (Grove Road railway line to Shepherds Bush, the bus garage and nearby railway cottages). Led by HBG committee members John Goodier and Keith Whitehouse. Meet 2.30 in front of Hammersmith Station (Hamm & City Line). Cost £5, pay on day. Booking essential: email John Goodier on fsllibrary@btconnect.com or phone 020 7160 4739.

OTHER EVENTS

13 Sep: Great River Race

13-14 Sep: Mayor's Thames Festival

20-21 Sep: London Open House

23 Sep: Paintings and Works on Paper at Emery Walker's House, with Michael Hall, editor of *Apollo*. Booking essential on 020 8741 4104.

22 Oct: Fulham & Hammersmith Historical Society lecture on history of Bishop Creighton House by John Sheppard, author of recently published history. 7pm at Bishop Creighton House, 378 Lillie Road SW6 (near Fulham Palace Rd junction). Ring BCH to confirm time beforehand – 020 7385 9689.

8 Nov: Lord Mayor's Show

12 Nov: illustrated talk on history of Fulham Palace by palace museum curator Miranda Poliakoff. Booking essential on 020 7736 3233.

11 Feb 2009: illustrated talk on history of Fulham Palace gardens by palace museum curator Miranda Poliakoff. Booking essential on 020 7736 3233.

HBG PUBLICATIONS

Local List £17 members, £20 non-members.

Bradmore House illustrated booklet, £5.

Both available from Group chairman: 020 8748 7416

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

£5.00 for individuals and £15 for groups. New members always welcome. Please contact the chairman.

NEWSLETTER CREDITS

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