

## September newsletter from StQW Forum and St Helens RA

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# St Helens Residents Association St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum

## A fun evening at the Bowling Club

The *Greening your Home* event on September 14th at West London Bowling Club was very well attended. Seventy local residents came along on a beautiful sunny evening to hear short talks from The Lady Lenzie on growing heritage vegetables, and Aimee Spanswick on sustainable gardening and permaculture.

Robert Pereno from *LancWest Grows Best* started the evening with his presentation, a performance to remember and including a recitation of Seamus Heaney's poem *Digging*, on the Club's terrace (see below).

Preeti Gulati Tyagi from RBKC's Planning Department explained the Council's new policies to support sustainable retrofitting of homes. Her slides and those from Aimee are now available to see on the the StQW website in a [new post at this link](#).. These include much useful information for those wanting to do some ecological gardening or needing information on what aspects of retrofitting a home require planning permission. Local architect and StQW committee member Jenny Harborne gave more specific advice for those who had booked a slot with her.

Photos below from Fiona Cambell and Tania Martin







The event has prompted thoughts amongst the StQW committee about holding further StQW/SHRA events at the Bowling Club. For 50 or so people it is a great venue (more people than expected came to the Greening event so seats were in short supply). The pay bar is now open regularly on Thursday evenings (for Club members and guests). This venue is the nearest thing we have to a social centre in the neighbourhood.

Recent evening talks at the Club on subjects as varied as the history of racing pigeons and the life of a film director (Mark Ezra) have drawn a good audience. The popular film nights at the Club, run by Claudia Dalton, will start again in

November. This neighbourhood has many residents with interesting expertise and insights to share and we are thinking of a further event in the New Year..

So we would welcome ideas and suggestions for future similar occasions. One might be on 'Water in our area' (history of the Grand Union Canal and Counters Creek, and speakers from Thames Water Authority and RBKC with latest advice on local flood risk), Or local authors and writers, or musicians, talking about their work.

If anyone who came to last week's session (or other members) would like to spend a couple of minutes giving some practical support to the StQW Forum, the RBKC consultation on our 'redesignation' for a further five years [remains open on the RBKC website until October 6<sup>th</sup>](#).

The neighbourhood forum reached its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this summer. We want its work to continue. Were the Forum not to be redesignated by the Council (a legal requirement every five years) the 2018 StQW Neighbourhood Plan would remain in force, with all its neighbourhood-level planning policies intact. But there would no longer be a body in place with the legal powers to update or revise the Plan.

An email to [planningpolicy@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@rbkc.gov.uk) expressing support to the work of the Forum and its redesignation would therefore be appreciated. Please put **SQWNF Re-designation** in the subject line and give your postcode.

Meanwhile many thanks to Tania Martin, Maggie Tyler, Kim Evans and Jenny Harborne for organising the Greening your Home event, and to our speakers The Lady Lenzie, Aimee Spanswick, Robert Pereno and Preeti Gulati Tyagi for giving up their time to contribute to an entertaining evening.

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## **Kensal Canalside - the planning application will be submitted shortly**

Developers Ballymore/Sainsburys are now close to submitting a planning application for their major development at the Kensal Canalside Opportunity area. Consultation sessions have been in progress since April 2021. StQW had a final update from Ballymore this week, along with Kensington Society planning committee members.

The proposals have changed little since the Development Forum held at Barlby Primary School in July 2023. The [Project Flourish website](#) gives details.

There are some new CGIs available showing the proposed road layout and 'public park' on Ladbroke Grove, at the entry to the development. The image below has yet to be updated to show the traffic lights and pelican crossings which TfL will require, to replace the present mini-roundabouts. The impact of these changes on traffic congestion remains one of the big questions about a development of 2,519 new homes at this location, with its single vehicle access and exit point.

These CGI images below are drafts at this stage. Rendering showing brick facades has yet to be added to the buildings shown as white. The first image is a view looking north along Ladbroke Grove, the second the view looking south.





The Threshold:  
*After*



When the planning application is submitted there will be a series of long distance 'views' available, taken from

points in Barlby Road and St Marks Road as well as from the north of the site and from Kensal Cemetery. The public will also have access to the financial viability assessment for the overall development.

The developers acknowledge that at 2023 construction costs and property values, this ambitious scheme could only be delivered at a loss. Ballymore will be taking a risk on a financial 'growth model' over the 10 year period which the development will take to build out. The level of affordable housing currently negotiated with RBKC is at 20%, as compared with the 35% which would meet the London Mayor's threshold for a 'fast-track' scheme (under which no financial viability appraisal would be required).

The proposed demolition of Canalside House and relocation of the community groups using this building has been a contentious issue in recent months. Ballymore say that they are now meeting monthly with the occupants. But it will be down to the Council to come up with alternative accommodation during the several years before replacement community buildings are provided as part of the development..

A fundamental flaw affecting the whole development is the single vehicle access and exit point to the Opportunity Area from Ladbroke Grove. The efforts by the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC) to deliver a viable road access at the western end of the site at Scrubs Lane have come up with no funded or workable solutions so far. A pedestrian/cycle bridge from the development southward across the rail tracks, to create a link with Barlby Road, is being treated by Ballymore as a separate project to be handled by RBKC. Such a bridge has been designed but will not form part of the forthcoming planning application.

## **A £1.7bn London terminus for HS2 with only one road access**

Similar obstacles to 'connectivity' arise with plans for Old Oak Common Station. HS2 have a planning application awaiting decision by OPDC for short-life buildings on the station site. These extra facilities are needed to allow the rail interchange to act as the London terminus for HS2 in the period before a viable station at Euston is built (assuming this ever happens). The interval of time is currently expected to be from 2029-32 (when Old Oak Common station is due to open) until the early 2040s for completion at Euston.

The proposed extra buildings are planned for the eastern end of the 1km long rail interchange, on the part of the station site near Scrubs Lane and north of Wormwood Scrubs. They are not proposed to be tall buildings. But this planning application has focused the minds of Hammersmith and Fulham councillors and local groups on the fact that this £1.7bn rail interchange is being built with only one road access, off Old Oak Common Lane at its western end.

There was to have been a new road bridge, across the rail tracks and canal, linking the Cargiant land and a Hythe Road Overground station with Old Oak Common station. This part of the project fell by the wayside when Cargiant pulled out of working with OPDC in 2019, on plans for 6,500 new homes at 'Old Oak Park'.

All that is now promised is an 'elevated pedestrian/cycle bridge' from the southern canalside towpath at Mitre Bridge to an upper level of the new station. Even this will be a very sub-optimal route, 900m in length, for pedestrians and cyclists. Those familiar with the stairs at Mitre Bridge and this stretch of towpath will know well that this location is hardly an impressive or convenient 'gateway' to one of the UK's most expensive new infrastructure projects..



HS2 continue to claim that *Old Oak Common station is set to be the best connected and largest new railway station ever built in the UK in a single stage becoming one of the country's most vital transport super hubs*. Yet for anyone other than those changing trains, the options for arriving or leaving this 'super hub' will not begin to compare with those

at Kings Cross, Waterloo or any major rail terminus.

The Old Oak Neighbourhood Forum and LBHF have submitted objections to these proposed temporary buildings (application [23/0160/HS2](#)). We have added an objection from StQW. These objections are on the basis that the buildings will sit on that part of the site where a road bridge was originally destined to land. A piece of essential infrastructure will be obstructed should Cargiant and OPDC come up with a viable solution for an eastern road bridge.

In the words of a LBHF councillor at their last Planning Committee, this whole scenario is 'an absurdity'. HS2 and OPDC say little on the subject. It is not clear if even Government Ministers, glancing at plans for the station, yet appreciate there will be only a road access at the western end. Old Oak Common Lane is 20 minutes further away from Central London by bus, taxi or car.

At our next open meeting we will discuss the question of *what benefit will Old Oak Common station bring for North Kensington?* Not much it seems, whereas a decade ago we were being promised an Elizabeth Line/Portobello North station and '9 minutes to Bond Street'.

We will hold our next open meeting of StQW/SHRA at St Helens Church hall in the second half of October, once we know that the planning application for Kensal Canalside has been submitted. .

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