

BELSIZE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

November 2016

Notes from your Chair

Welcome to the November newsletter.

We have held a number of events since the last newsletter and it was good to see members at these. We are grateful to the organisers of the BRA visit to the Wallace Collection and the excellent tree walk in Belsize.

This Newsletter has an article by BRA's planning expert Barrie Tankel giving plenty of practical help about how residents may object to planning applications. The issue also covers latest developments in the area, such as the proposals for the Hall School and the BRA's appearance at the House of Lords HS2 Committee. We also have a piece about the Belsize Baroque Choir.

We look forward to seeing many of you at the BRA carol singing on Saturday 17 December. Many thanks go to Anne and Handley Stevens for organising this popular event once again.

Hope you enjoy the Newsletter.

www.belsize.org.uk

Contents

Our constitution - 2
Belsize Safer Neighbourhood Police - 2
BRA carol singing - 3
BRA membership - 3
Belsize tree walk - 3
Wallace Collection: BRA private tour - 3
Planning matters - 4, 5 & 6
Belsize Baroque Orchestra - 7
Letters to the committee - 7
Dates for your diary - 8



BRA Carol Singing

*Belsize Terrace, Saturday 17
December from 4:30pm*

*Mince pies, singing and great
company!*

Volunteer for BRA!

We are always looking for people to become involved with BRA activities. We are particularly looking for people to serve tea at our events and to act as stewards at our outdoor events. You might also help by delivering newsletters, a nice way to see Belsize! Contact info@belsize.org.uk.

Our Constitution

The last newsletter in August discussed changes to the organisational form of the BRA, exploring options that would make the Association a distinguishable separate legal entity, including becoming a charity. The committee is reviewing the Association's written constitution which looks dated. We will provide detail about these options in the next newsletter and the Committee will bring forward proposals for discussion at the next AGM in March 2017.

Reviewing our structure is a large and complex task. We would be grateful for any help that members can provide, especially from those with experience of setting up, running or changing the constitution of voluntary bodies.

Belsize Safer Neighbourhood Police

Our local Belsize Safer Neighbourhood Team police officers are PC Mike Lohan and PCSO Gurmaan Taak. There is to be another Neighbourhood Watch Seminar at 2.30pm (doors open 2pm) on Saturday 26th November. This is a free one-hour interactive talk, packed with fantastic tips. It will be held at The Hilda Clark Room, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ. Police officers will be available both before and after the talk for advice on an individual basis. Please Email CamdenNHW@gmail.com if you would like to attend.

Future drop-in surgeries are on the Belsize SNT website www.police.uk/metropolitan/E05000128, where you can also register to receive their monthly emails containing updates on local crime trends and hints for crime prevention and safety.

Bicycle crime has increased again recently. Recent events highlight that it is vital to make sure you have good quality locks for bicycles which incorporate quick release wheels.

There have also been some robberies/snatches by moped riders who approach residents walking along pavements, either demanding or snatching property from them. So do be aware of what's going on around you. (This is a London-wide problem.) A number of "distraction" burglaries have occurred: the latest method is by burglars claiming that they are working in a neighbouring property where water is coming through the wall or some particular need has arisen to warrant you giving access or even money.

BRA Carol Singing -
Belsize Terrace, Saturday
17 December from 4:30pm

Come and join us at the annual BRA Carol Singing. We can't promise a dry time, but we certainly can promise plenty of singing and mince pies! We will provide the song sheets, so just wrap up well and bring a brolly in case. Proceeds go to the Marie Curie Hospice.



BRA Membership

We are always looking for new members. Why not encourage your neighbour to join? And we welcome the payment of subscriptions by standing order, which saves us time and money.

Belsize Tree Walk

On Sunday 18 September, a group of BRA members were treated to a fascinating guided tour of trees in Belsize. Walking from Belsize Village to the Swiss Cottage Open Space, we had our eyes opened to the variety and character of the trees in our neighbourhood which we usually take for granted. Our guide Bettina (who is a BRA member) was superb at getting us all to think about how to look at trees and how to recognise them. Very special thanks go to Bettina for such an interesting and informative walk. Thanks also to those who baked quiches and cakes for the refreshments which took place at Swiss Cottage Community Centre afterwards.



Wallace Collection: BRA Private Tour

On Sunday 9 October, Danuta Lasik gave twenty-five BRA members a guided tour of the Wallace Collection in central London. Many of us had been before to this outstanding collection but Danuta helped us to understand and see the wonderful displays in a new light. Danuta is a BRA member and a Wallace Collection guide. We owe her many thanks for a memorable afternoon.

Proposals to Re-Develop Hall School

As you may have seen from the Ham and High, a number of local residents including several Belsize Residents' Association members have formed a group to contest proposals to redevelop the Hall School in Crossfield Road. Although a formal planning application has not yet been made, Camden Council has held a development management forum about the proposals and the school has held an exhibition. The proposals involve the demolition and rebuilding of the existing building at 23 Crossfield Road, the excavation of a second 4 metre basement under the large sports hall at the back of that building, and the construction of a new 4.5 metre structure on top. Members of the BRA committee attended both events.

If an application is submitted along the lines currently proposed the BRA will be objecting to it on two grounds: that the proposals involve over-development on the site proposed, with consequent effects on the visual and other amenities of the conservation area and that the architectural design quality is very poor and not adequate for the conservation area.

The Hall School opposition group points out that those living on the east side of Crossfield Road, the west side of Strathray Gardens and the north side of Eton Court are going to be especially affected by the basement excavation under the sports hall and the new structure on top of it. Both could in their opinion have long term permanent implications with the first increasing the risk of subsidence and damage to trees, and the second being visually intrusive with loss of light and increase in noise from the new classrooms.

Local residents are also concerned about the impact of the construction process, through noise and heavy lorry traffic. It is intended that the fleet of lorries needed for the building work should approach the site through Buckland Crescent and then from the top of Lancaster Grove, travel down Crossfield Road, and leave going eastwards along most of the length of Eton Avenue. This will mean that for most of the day during Monday to Saturday, Crossfield Road could be difficult to access, and it could be difficult to get in or out of the whole area through Lancaster Grove or Eton Avenue. Access to Winchester Road may be severely restricted by the 100 Avenue Road development and Adelaide Road by HS2 works, so a wider area of Belsize Park is likely to be gridlocked. The BRA shares these concerns, although they are not legally valid grounds for objections to planning proposals.

Anyone who wishes to support the Opposition Group can do so by registering their support by email with their name and address to anthonykmbbox-19a@yahoo.co.uk, or by contacting Prof. Gabriel Balint-Kurti, 40 Eton Court 020 7722 4403 or Anthony Kay LL.B at 26 Crossfield Road on 020 7586 2068.

How do I make a planning objection? BRA committee member and planning expert Barrie Tankel (FRICS) offers advice.

Most of us live in an area we love to protect. Why should someone destroy the way of life we have enjoyed for years? How do we stop them? I reckon in Belsize Park we see the Belsize Residents' Association as our defender. BRA is frequently asked to fight a planning application considered by local residents to be "horrendous", because BRA is very concerned about developments or changes to property that really impact on our lives.

My suggestion is to do your homework to establish if a proposal is really a concern. Then prepare information to help BRA support your objection.

So how do we start...

1. Camden has a good website that is easy to follow. If you go to the *Planning section* you can register to automatically receive email alerts about planning applications in your area. You can choose the area to be covered, from a range of 100m of your postcode up to 2,000m, or you can select your Ward or the whole of Camden.
2. These email alerts provide the address and reference number of each application. You then access the application on Camden's web site using the link to *Searching for Planning Applications*.
 - A click on *View Related Documents*, will find the application together with the drawings and "Design and Access" statement. It's always worth reading this statement as it provides an insight into the thinking behind the application.
 - By looking at the drawings you can compare the proposed elevations against existing. Try to evaluate...
 - o Is there is a detail that offends?
 - o Is the change likely to cause overlooking or invasion of privacy?
 - o Is there something that will be offensive to the street landscape?
 - o Is the roofline too high?

Typically, drawings can be misleading, so look closely at the floor plans...

- Has the plan been drawn to the correct scale? *Recent drawings for an extension were scaled at 1:50 but drawn at 1:100. No-one, including Camden, noticed and an extension drawn at 20m² received consent for 80m²! Fortunately, due to a series of errors, they lost the permission - but that's another story.*
 - Does an extension or new building project out too far, impacting on neighbours by reducing daylight or sunlight? Or changing the street landscape?
 - Does it create a sense of enclosure?
 - Is it just too large? Compare the size of the building with others and check the % against site area. A recent application showed a building projecting 2 metres in front of its neighbour. Camden recommended approval but the Development Committee listened to our representation refused permission. It was also refused at appeal.
3. Read the *Camden Conservation Area Reports*.
 4. Camden will ignore objections that just relate to noisy work, because that's just part of the system. in cases where they agreed with my concerns.
 5. If something appears scary then engage with neighbours who are also affected.
 - o I usually prepare a Petition on a single A4 page, incorporating a photograph of the proposed building, together with bullet points that focus on potential damage to the area. Hand deliver the petition to neighbours.

6. Contact a local councillor to see if they will support your objection. I have found councillors very supportive
7. For Camden to seriously consider your objections you must get a large number of concerned residents to object.
 - o If the planning officer recommends an approval, then you must attempt to get it discussed at the Development Committee. This needs several objections.
 - o Camden permits objectors to speak to the Development Committee at the meeting for a maximum of 5 minutes. So it's best if just one person makes the oral representation. If more people speak they are still limited to 5 minutes...if 2 people speak that's 2½ minutes each...etc.! This will make the objection less effective.
8. To be most effective, leave the emotion at home. Just deal in facts like finding holes in daylight/sunlight reports. The Committee are very concerned when residents are badly affected.

I came across one application in which the Consultant stated that the adjoining owner would not be affected by loss of sunlight. Despite this fact, his report contained data that said sunlight would drop from 100% Sunlight to Zero!

9. Sometimes permissions are granted but the owner/developer builds something that doesn't reflect the planning permission. If you have any concerns about this then simply contact the Enforcement Officer to come around and take a look...they are very responsive!

10. Keep your eyes open because once planning has been granted it's just too late.

Of course there's lots more to consider but this brief outline will help you on the way. Good luck.

Cycle Superhighway 11, HS2 and Boundary Changes

Earlier this year, Transport for London consulted on proposals for Cycle Superhighway Route 11 between Swiss Cottage and the West End. TfL received 6,270 responses. (60% supportive or partially supportive of the TfL proposals). We objected to the proposals, primarily because the disruption to Swiss Cottage was disproportionate to the needs of providing a safe cycle way. We do support cycle routes but felt the removal of the whole gyratory for CS11 was not necessary, taking away far more road space from other users than the single lane needed to give cyclists a safe route. We understand that the CS11 plans around Swiss Cottage remain a concern and we continue to look to TfL for a better solution. Meanwhile, TfL's consultation about a number of nearby local bus routes – routes 13, 82, 113, 139 and 189 – has closed and we await the outcome.

BRA appeared in front of the House of Lords HS2 Select Committee in October. Many of the concerns raised by us at the House of Commons stage had been satisfactorily resolved. For example, the plan to use Haverstock Hill as a route for lorries removing spoils and the suspension of parking in England's Lane have been reconsidered. Our focus was therefore on the routing of lorries along Finchley Road. Some use of the A41 for HS2 lorries is inevitable but HS2 are being asked to minimise this by having ambitious plans to use rail to remove spoils. Many experts and community groups spoke to this issue and we will see how influential the petitions have been in the new year.

The Boundary Commission is currently consulting on changes to the Parliamentary constituency boundaries. The number of constituencies in London must reduce from 73 to 68 and, by law, every constituency must contain between 71,031 and 78,507 electors. If you would like to look at the initial proposals and comment, then look at <https://www.bce2018.org.uk/>



Get involved in your neighbourhood!

Belsize Baroque Orchestra

Belsize Baroque focuses on eighteenth century music, primarily baroque with an occasional foray into early classical. The orchestra play in an historically informed manner, that is to say with tone and style that musicians would have used in performance at the time the music was written. The instruments themselves are either eighteenth century originals or modern copies, and are played at a lower pitch than is customary today. This creates a sound world quite different from that of most modern performances.

The orchestra has evolved over time: whilst the orchestra has long included students as players from all the London conservatoires, this is the first year that a formal scholarship and bursary has been established. The Belsize Baroque Leadership Scholar, Kate Agostino, who performed a Bach concerto at a most recent concert, will lead the orchestra for the next year. The bursary award winner, Ada Witczyk will lead the second violins. The hope is that the experience and assistance will prove valuable to these young musicians.

This orchestra has its roots firmly in Belsize Park; the idea of a period orchestra was conceived amongst a group of friends playing chamber music together, one evening in Belsize Park in 2002. Since, there has been a number of directors of international standing who have performed with the orchestra and directed it; they include Laurence Cummings, Adrian Butterfield, Mathew Truscott, Pavlo Beznosuk, and most recently Catherine Martin. These individuals have lead some of the most prestigious baroque ensembles in Europe and have contributed an enormous amount to the musical development of our orchestra.

From Belsize origins, the orchestra has played in a number of major venues in London and have found it rewarding to give charity performances, for example for Cancer Research and the Coram Trust. But in the past few years it has been a particular pleasure to come home to Belsize Park, where there has been huge support from residents, local businesses, and everyone at St Peter's. The next concert is on the 27th November at 6.30pm at St Peter's (details in the what's on section) and one is being organised for 31 January in the new year. www.belsizebaroque.org.uk

Letters to the Association

Dear BRA,

Huge thank you for the generous donation from BRA towards our Village lights. They go up and on November 23rd, all being well.

See you soon
All the best
Angela from Heywoods

Hello BRA,

What an utter delight the tour of the Wallace collection was. I have been before several times but Danuta's putting stuff in context was wonderful.

Thanks so much to you and Danuta for organising this.

Jane Boardman

Need to know

Dates for your diary

The Belsize Baroque Orchestra: Sunday,
27th November

Join for a 6.30pm start at St Peter's Church, Belsize Square. Tickets are £12. Directed by Persephone Gibbs, with Nia Coleman, soprano. Music by Handel, Purcell, Corelli and Muffat.

Daunt Books Author Event with Philippe
Sands: Wednesday 7th December

Attendees welcome from 6.30pm - tickets can be bought for £5 in advance here:
www.dauntbooks.co.uk/events/

St Peters Church - The Boyle Klöfver Duo:
Friday 9 December, 7.30pm

Including works by Argentine tango composer Astor Piazzolla, Passing Season by Eddie McGuire, and the duo's own arrangements of Scottish folk tunes. Free admission - retiring collection.

BRA Carol Singing: Saturday, 17 December,
4:30PM

Join the BRA for carols, mince pies and great company at Belsize Terrace/Belsize Village. There will be a collection for the Marie Curie Hospice. Free and all welcome.

Interested in keeping up with Belsize news and events? Do we have your email address? If we have your email address, we will send you occasional emails with news about Belsize and BRA. If you wish to receive emails and are not already on our list, please send your email address to info@belsize.org.uk.

To find out the latest about Camden Planning: <https://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/planning-and-built-environment/>

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