

BELSIZE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

August 2015

Notes from your Chair

Welcome to the August Belsize Residents Association Newsletter. It was great to see so many of you at this year's (sunny) Garden Party. Strawberries and cakes mingled with a lot of catching up. We are really thankful to Deborah Buzan for her hospitality.

You'll see that this issue reports on the work we have been focused on, especially the 100 Avenue Road planning appeal.

Thanks again to the numerous people who have supported the BRA. We raised a lot of funds very quickly and many people wrote letters, attended meetings and generally made the case we put as convincing as possible. I write this as the closing submissions are being put to the Inspector, which is a significant milestone but not quite the end. In the coming months, the Inspector will report to Ministers who will then decide whether Camden's original rejection of the plans stands.

The newsletter also covers another local planning matter, with the BRA convincing Camden that the Steeles Pub is an asset of community value. This decision went to a review, where the BRA successfully fought for its status.

We report also on a Belsize, energy-efficient SuperHome. John Duggan has kindly offered to show members around his home in October.

Contents

Sir Richard Steele Pub -	2
BRA Summer Garden Party -	2
100 Avenue Road -	3 & 4
Belsize's Superhome -	5
Fleet Singers Community Choir -	6
Marylebone Birdwatching Society -	6
Belsize Park Library Updates -	7
Royal Free Music Society -	7
Burgh House -	7
Need to know -	8

Visit a 'Superhome' of Belsize Park

BRA members are invited to visit Belsize Park's very own 'Superhome' at 7pm on 20 October.

If you would like to attend or find out more about this house then please let us know at info@belsize.org.uk as places are limited.

For more information about Superhomes visit <http://www.superhomes.org.uk>

See page 5 for more details.



Sir Richard Steele Pub

In the year in which the Washington pub celebrates its 150th anniversary, the BRA applied to Camden for the Sir Richard Steele pub to be listed as an asset of community value. Our written application succeeded and we then attended an oral review hearing at Camden which went our way too. This means that the pub and its garden are now an ACV. The pub is well known for having hosted the Monkey Business Comedy Club for ten years and its loss was keenly felt when the club moved elsewhere. The Steele's has

also provided a great meeting venue for community groups. Transition Belsize, for example, has used its large function room for community meetings on sustainability topics. The pub garden provides outdoor space in an area where many people do not have gardens and where open space is in short supply.



Our application for ACV status was supported by comments from BRA members who described the value of the pub to local life. We are very grateful to everyone who wrote to us and who contributed to our application. You may also have read that a Planning Inspector has upheld Camden's decision to refuse planning permission to build four flats above the pub, which would have seen the loss of the garden for pub users.

BRA Summer Garden Party

The BRA held its annual summer party at Deborah Buzan's in June. The event was well attended with a beautiful summer's day allowing us to enjoy the marvellous Buzan garden. As always, there were excellent cakes made by members, with strawberries and tea easing the calories down.

We are grateful to the volunteers that helped and to the Buzans for kindly providing the venue.



100 Avenue Road Planning Inquiry

The BRA has played a major role in the Planning Inquiry about Essential Living's proposed development of 100 Avenue Road:

- The BRA funded two expert witnesses and a barrister.
- We combined with three housing associations (Cresta, Eton Avenue and Winchester Road) to give the detailed perspective of residents.

Camden defended their refusal to grant planning permission for the 24-storey block. Final submissions to the Inquiry will be made on 10 August at Camden Town Hall. We will then have a wait: Communities Ministers will take about six months to make a decision on the appeal.

The Inquiry covered Camden's own evidence, then heard evidence from resident bodies and concluded with the developer in the second week. Highlights from the fortnight were:

- Inspector Graham Dudley visited the popular Swiss Cottage open space and then walked around a BRA-designed route of the area. It was a sunny Wednesday, with the farmer's market in full force and...
- We were able to see the effect of the proposal as a blimp rose the 80m of the tower (thanks to Janine Sachs and Camden for organising this).
- Camden's conservation officer, Catherine Bond, was cross-examined for a day defending Camden's decision robustly.

Residents' views heard at Inquiry

During the eight days of the Inquiry, a number of BRA members and other local residents were heard.

For Save Swiss Cottage Action Group, Peter Smith provided visualisations of what the tower would look like from key viewpoints, many from Belsize. His description of the history and architecture of the area provided powerful and important background. Save Swiss Cottage also presented evidence on the proposal's impacts on trees and provided analysis of the pollution problems.

BRA's evidence to the Inquiry

We funded two expert witnesses and both did a great job presenting their reports and answering questions from Essential Living's QC. James Weeks (Built Heritage) presented his heritage report, written with land use expert Liz Loughlan (Line Planning). He answered questions adeptly, bringing out the unsuitability of the tower in a Victorian area and critiquing the developer's plans in the context of policies on heritage impacts. He faced tough questioning well.



Planning inspector Mr Dudley visits Swiss Cottage and Belsize.

100 Avenue Road Continued...

Martin Tabor from consultancy firm LUC covered the harm to Swiss Cottage open space, highlighting the importance of the area's tranquillity and its popularity amongst users.

We are also extremely grateful to our counsel, Katherine Olley, who is a planning barrister at Landmark Chambers. She introduced the BRA's expert and lay witnesses and questioned Essential Living witnesses. She will be making closing submissions on our behalf.

We also joined up with other resident bodies and very powerful evidence was provided by Edie Raff (Cresta House) on the level of public objection to the proposal. Elaine Chambers (from Winchester Road Residents Association) explained the impacts on those living next to Swiss Cottage, such as the residents of Mora Burnet sheltered accommodation. Eton Avenue resident Julia Court – like many other residents – expressed the effects of a tall tower on neighbouring buildings in terms of visual impacts.

Peter Rich, one of the architects of the current 100 Avenue Road building, spoke eloquently on the BRA's behalf about the architectural principles that underpinned their work 30 years ago. While not averse to redevelopment, he did highlight how they felt any building needed a human scale in that location.



BRA Counsel Kate Olley cross-examined EL's heritage expert about the proposal's impact on important Belsize views such as this.

Thanks for your support

The BRA Committee would like to express its heartfelt thanks to all those who have helped us in the Avenue Road Inquiry. Members have supported the BRA financially and by generously giving their time. We also have now raised almost £15k.

We welcome any further support and also continue to look for people who can spare time to help on planning matters. If you can help, then please contact info@belsize.org.uk.

Belsize's energy efficient Superhome

Belsize includes one of a network of houses across the UK that has reduced its carbon footprint by at least 60%. The Coach House is one of the 7 "Superhomes" in Camden and 37 in Greater London and is owned by BRA member, John Duggan.

For the Coach House, a Victorian dwelling, the challenge has been to transform fuel use, whilst preserving and enhancing our heritage. The inside of the street-facing elevation has been internally insulated to preserve the external appearance using plasterboard over 100mm Rockwool and Knauf insulated battens to avoid cold bridges. The rendered side and back external walls were externally insulated with the Weber, again preserving the external appearance.

Front windows were draught stripped, whilst high performance windows with low emissivity glass coating replaced windows at the back of the house and argon filled cavities to approximately double the insulation value compared with normal double-glazing.

The home includes a condensing boiler which is "A" rated, fitted together with a well-insulated hot water cylinder. Most pipework is insulated. The roof insulation uses upside-down Dow Styrofoam boards laid directly over the flat asphalt roof and covered with timber decking panels. Good insulation means that a third of the radiators were no longer needed and were removed, with the added benefit of reclaiming the walls. Comfort has been improved, with radiators now remaining mostly tepid or cool. The thermostat temperature has been set at least 1 Deg C lower because the walls are now warmer.

John has kindly offered BRA members a chance to visit his home and hear more about the improvements made, 7pm 20 October. If you would like to attend or find out more about this house then please let us know at info@belsize.org.uk, as there will be limited places. He is also participating in this year's London Open House. You can find out more about Superhomes at <http://www.superhomes.org.uk>.



BRA member John Duggan's Superhome: Members are invited to visit in October

Get involved in your neighbourhood!

The Fleet Singers Community Choir

The Fleet Singers Community Choir autumn term starts Monday 7th September. Weekly rehearsals will take place 7.30 - 9.30pm at Gospel Oak Methodist Church, Agincourt Road NW3 2NT.

Following an exciting end of term workshop with composer Alexander L'Estrange, the choir will continue to prepare "Ahoy! Sing for the Mary Rose" for a performance on Saturday 10th October at Gospel Oak Methodist Church. Contact Pam Gilby on 020 7485 6990 for more information.

Full details can be found at www.fleetsingers.org.uk.

About Fleet Singers Community Choir

The aim of the choir is to provide singing for both recreational and learning purposes as well as to provide entertainment. The group aims to make classical music available and accessible to all, and to liaise with orchestras to bring entertainment but also to support music provision in local schools.

Marylebone Birdwatching Society

The new Marylebone Birdwatching Society season opens with a talk on House Sparrows Friday 18th September and a Local Outing to Rainham Marsh RSPB Reserve the next day. The first Coach Outing, now setting off from near Euston Station, is to Pagham Harbour on Saturday 31st October. Weekly walks on Hampstead Heath continue every Tuesday throughout the year.

Contact Marion Hill 020 7722 2965.

Email: birdsmbs@yahoo.com.

Details: www.birdsmbs.org.uk.

About the Marylebone Birdwatching Society

Marylebone Birdwatching Society is based in Hampstead, North London, but attracts members and visitors from all parts of London and beyond.

As a friendly and inviting club, they are serious about watching birds but also enjoying other wildlife, scenery and one another's company. New members are welcome to join at any time, whether you are an experienced ornithologist or just wanting to learn a little more about the birds around you.

Belsize Park Library Updates

Parenthood: A piece of cake?!

Throughout the summer the library will be hosting a series of four meetings entitled "Parenthood: A Piece of Cake?!" which have been organised by Wrap a Hug. The meetings are aimed at pregnant women and parents of all ages. Topics covered include baby wearing, aromatherapy, traveling with children, and doulas. Entry is free for all sessions. Read about the meetings offered below and for more information contact wrapahug@gmail.com or call Azzurra at 07928513877.

Walking Mums

Wednesday 19th August at 1pm

Jay Keshani, founder of Walking Mums, will talk about travelling near and far away with small babies. She will explain how to make your journey as short and enjoyable as possible. This talk will be full of tips based on real life experiences.

Meet a Doula

Sunday 6th August at 10.30am

How can having a Doula help you? The work of birth and postnatal doulas explained by Doula UK recognised practitioners Alison Grunwald and Nina Forman.



Royal Free Music Society

Saturday, 14th November

Royal Free Music Society presents
Rossini's Petite Messe Solonnelle
Conductor Benjamin Wolf

St John's Wood Church
Lord's Roundabout
NW8 7NE

7.30 pm

£12 (adult) £6 (child) on door or
£10/£5 in advance

www.royalfreemusicsociety.org.uk

Burgh House

Set in the heart of Hampstead Village, Burgh House is a Queen Anne, Grade I listed, building with a terraced garden and licensed basement buttery serving Sunday roasts and cream teas - they'll even pack you a picnic to have on the nearby Hampstead Heath. Upstairs, on the first floor of the house, you'll find the Hampstead Museum while many organisations have shared the facilities here including the Hampstead Music Club and Hampstead Buddhists. In past incarnations, the house has been home to a physician, an upholsterer and a vicar, as well as to Rudyard Kipling's daughter. Former resident Thomas Grylls, a distinguished stained glass designer, created the rose window above Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey. Regular concerts, recitals and talks are held, as are ever-changing art exhibitions and weekly bridge and scrabble sessions. For upcoming events see page 8.

Need to know

Dates for your diary

Imaginary Friends - Festival Of The Unconscience Screenprinting Workshop + Saturday 29 August

Freud Museum, 20 Maresfield Gardens, NW3 5SX
12pm, 1pm, 2.45pm, 3.30pm and 4.30pm
£6 (Adults) £3 (Concs) free (Under 12s)
Details: www.freud.org.uk/

Crafternoon: Mad Hatter's Tea Party + Sunday 11 October

JW3, Finchley Road, NW3 6ET
2pm - 5pm
Free entry
Details: www.jw3.org.uk/

The Hungry Eye: Hampstead Photographic Society Summer Exhibition 2015

+ Until Sunday 23 August
Burgh House, New End Square, NW3 1LT
Wednesday - Sunday, 12-5pm
Details: www.burghhouse.org.uk

Ben Uri Centenary Exhibition: Uncovering A Century Of Art, Identity And Migration

+ Until Thursday 1 October
Ben Uri Gallery, 108a Boundary Road, NW8 0RH
10am - 5:30pm
Free entry
Details: www.benuri.org.uk/

Fleet Singers

+ Rehearsals every Monday
+ Performance on 10 October
Gospel Oak Methodist Church, Agincourt Road
NW3
7:30 - 9:30pm

How to contact the editor

Comments, contributions and events welcome!

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