



HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

FROM THE HIGHBURY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Brighter or bleaker? the future of our high streets



Since May 2013, when the Government allowed many conversions not to need planning permission - initially for a temporary period to May 2016, many areas in London have seen conversions from offices to housing. Because planning permission was not needed, these housing developments did not have to offer any affordable housing, s106 or minimum standards, such as the amount of light required and the size of rooms.

In September, public consultation was carried out in relation (Technical Consultation on Planning) to new proposals to extend such permitted development to allow even more conversions without planning permission from May 2016, and to extend the 'temporary period' to 2019.

Local councils were allowed to issue Article 4 Directives to reject such conversions, but the Government cancelled this right in Islington and Richmond. Islington Council threatened a judicial review, and the Secretary of State recently

compromised allowing Islington to retain 50% of office space in the main town centres (outside the central activities zone), notably the Angel and Nags Head. If the new proposals are agreed, such exemptions will no longer be allowed. But what happens to popular and well-patronised shopping parades outside these town centres? With housing becoming much more profitable than renting to offices and businesses, what will happen to areas such as Blackstock Road and Highbury Vale?

Commenting on the Technical Consultation Peter Eversden, Chair of the London Forum, has noted that:

'Not only has the capital lost a lot of its essential offices, the 'dwellings' that have been delivered in their conversion are rarely the type that are needed locally. If the permitted development of offices to flats is allowed to continue, with exemptions withdrawn (the use of Article 4 Directive), as proposed from May 2016, and other town centre properties are also allowed to convert, it could be one of the biggest blows to the town centres and the economy of London.'

In Islington, 71 office buildings

have obtained 'prior approval' for conversion to residential since the law changed in May 2013, with 11 further applications submitted. The total loss of office space is around 45,000 square meters - which is capable of accommodating between 3,000-3,500 jobs. In some cases, small businesses and charities have been evicted. (Islington Council; London Forum's Newsforum, Winter 2014)

Although the Council is unable to gauge the impact this will have on high streets in the borough, just when there has been a marked trend towards shopping locally, viable businesses could now be forced to close. Increasingly local independent shops are recognized as being more personal and contributing to people's sense of being part of a vibrant community, with the additional benefits including cutting fuel and food waste.

We are highlighting this information as most of these proposals will be included in Bills that are being legislated now, so if you are concerned, please write to your MP as soon as possible.
DIANE BURRIDGE, Committee member of HCA and the London Forum.

London Forum

The London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies has nearly 100 member societies in membership, and is a good source of information on issues that are important for the living and working environment of Londoners.

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The HCA represents over 900 residents and businesses on all aspects of living and working in Highbury, Lower Holloway and Finsbury Park.

Membership is free. Members receive bi-monthly newsletters like this one. New members will receive the newsletter by email (unless you don't have email).

To join or talk to us about anything Highbury-related, please email hcanews@hotmail.com

The opinions expressed in HCN are not necessarily those of the Highbury Community Association and its committee members.



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Planning and development bulletin

Finsbury Park Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Consultation period on the draft is open for comments until 15 December. The draft provides a further layer of detail to the broad development objectives that are outlined within the adopted Finsbury Park Town Centre SPD, and is available online at islington.gov.uk/finsburypark; hard copies at 222 Upper Street, and for reference in all Islington libraries. Queries regarding the consultation can be emailed to deanna.walker@islington.gov.uk, also reachable on 020 7527 1825.



11 Ronalds Road and 25-27 Horsell Road. We objected to the application to convert workshops at these premises into 18 residential units. Our grounds were loss of employment space, disruption of existing small businesses and absence of any affordable housing. We also said that the lack of amenity space rendered the proposed units unsuitable for families with children. The application was refused, partly due to evidence provided by Robin Hull that the building was not used solely as offices, as claimed by the applicants, but as workshops. We anticipate the applicants will go to appeal.

Ladbroke House. We commented on the plans exhibited by Pegasus Life, potential developers of Ladbroke House for its conversion to flats for older people. We are glad to see that something is happening to the building, although we are not totally satisfied with what is proposed. We await the planning application which we will look at in more detail.

In the meantime, HCA has been invited to take part in a further consultation which anticipate will take place in December. If residents have any comments, email hcanews@hotmail.com.

Highbury Pool and Gym. Greenwich Leisure, which runs the amenity, are planning to invest £2.5 million to make major alterations. These involve doubling the height of the site along Highbury Place and building more studios, fitness rooms and a new health suite, as well as refurbishing the reception foyer. The extensions will mainly be built over the current reception area and staff car park.

The Council's consultation period and at the Pool closed in November. We are aware that there are concerns about the over-development of land adjoining the Fields. Islington is the most densely-populated borough in the country with the least amount of open space and large buildings adjacent to this space should not be encouraged.

Student towers. Rejected earlier this year, LBI has informed us that the re-hearing is to be held from 17/3/15. Roger Wright has said he will attend for HCA and welcomes anyone else who'd like to be involved. HCA will keep members informed.

DIANE BURRIDGE & JOHN EGAN

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Public meetings are held every two months and focus on a particular topic, with expert speakers, and are free to attend. The next one is about '2050 Infrastructure and Transport Developments', 29 January 2015, 6:30-8:45pm. Meetings are held at 70 Cowcross Street, near Farringdon Station.
www.londonforum.org.uk;
http://twitter.com/London_Forum

The Department for Communities and Local Government is publishing summaries of responses from Councils, and a wide variety of interest groups, under Planning and Building Consultations on their website.

A fond farewell and special thank you to Roger Wright

In September, after many years in Highbury, Roger moved to Cornwall with his partner Sally. We would very much like to thank him for all the work he has done on behalf of the community and wish them both all the best for the future.

Roger's status as a planning guru was first established many years ago when he became involved in helping to challenge Arsenal's original plans to expand its existing stadium (by the compulsory purchase of a long line of houses in Highbury Hill including Roger's). It was that proposal which brought HCA into existence, and Roger was part of an active campaigning team from the first. As one of his contributions, he built a beautiful scale model of the stadium, and demonstrated the ways in which he thought it could be expanded without knocking down a row of houses.

As a result in part of the inputs of that team, the original plan was eventually scrapped and plans for the new stadium were put in place. Since then Roger has, through HCA, led the fight to make sure that Arsenal is held to the S106 commitments to the community that it had to make at the time it was granted the right to build the new stadium.

These challenges seem never ending, and Roger's patience in the often wearisome process of continuing to oppose them has been one of his most enduring and endearing qualities. His many articles for the newsletter over the years, with the signature fastidious detail, kept us all informed and were greatly appreciated. We will miss him and his energetic input enormously and will have to work very hard to continue to cover the terrain.

Roger continues to visit Highbury regularly and still organises the printing of the

newsletter and will attend planning meetings on issues where he is already involved. But he will not take up any new issues, and is looking for someone to work alongside while his handover gradually takes place.

GILL SHEPHERD on behalf of the HCA

As a resident I looked forward to reading his articles in HCA news. As a councillor I was copied into his regular updates and responses to planning applications. These were always invaluable. I also came to enjoy, and slightly wonder at, the number of times he was first with the facts. 'Ping' the email from Roger would arrive and then, sometime later the Council would provide the same information.

The only thing I didn't enjoy quite so much was bumping into Roger on Highbury Hill, post Arsenal games. On far too many of those occasions in recent seasons we seemed to be talking about the 'fourth place trophy' and dropped points.

Roger was wearing an Arsenal tie when he gave evidence last December for the HCA, against the club's proposals to increase the number of concerts at the Emirates Stadium from three to six a year and to triple the number of major events held on Sundays from one to three.

His powerful contribution underlined exactly how important he has been both to HCA and our local community. Not only did he succeed in making the science of sound gripping as he challenged the club's calculation of noise levels, but he brought alive our local community when describing it to the planning inspector. It was a tour de force, combining technical expertise with human understanding, and it was a winning argument.
JULIE HORTEN

Seasons and Blossoms

We are a health food shop in Highbury selling a large range of fresh local and organic fruit and vegetables and health foods.

Seasonal produce from local farms, organic dairy & delicatessen, artisan bread, freshly prepared mediterranean salads, herbs, freshly made coffee & tea.

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Timebank Café In Gillespie Park

Sunday café in Gillespie Park
Open Sunday 11am to 3.30pm up to Christmas
Closed January to March. Reopens first Sunday in April

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Islington Ecology Centre, 191 Drayton Park, Highbury N5

Lots of choice in Highbury shops for this Christmas



Continuing the tradition, our local shops this year are offering fresh, healthy, specialist and convenient seasonal food, and high quality, unusual presents for everyone. Here's our customary roundup for 2014!

Healthy eating starts at our Highbury Barn fishmonger **Meek and Wild** who offer fresh, line caught fish, smoked salmon and homemade salmon pate (13 Highbury Park, 020 7226 1347). **Highbury Butchers**, our

traditional family butchers at 183 Blackstock Road, can take your orders for their quality turkeys (order by mid-December, forms in store) and homemade sausages,

opening hours 7am-5pm Tue, Thur, and Fri, and 7am-5.30pm on Saturdays. **Godfrey's**, are offering an easy Christmas service this year for their game, and free range meat and poultry, with click and collect at their shop and Finsbury Park unit, and orders taken in store as well

(www.godfreys.co). Stilton and truffle brie are in stock at **La Fromagerie**. **Five Boys Health Food Store** stocks gift packs of organic chocolates, biscuits, cakes, gluten-free Christmas puddings and mince pies, and fruit punch, as well as natural toiletries. **Seasons & Blossoms** has local,

organic fruit and vegetables, festive stuffings, nougat, panettone stolen, handmade chocolate coated marzipan figs, and hot mulled apple juice made in store from Kentish apples (92 Highbury Park). **Highbury Vintners** offer a Christmas gift service anywhere in the UK, as well as cases of mixed selected wines from £100 (71 Highbury Park). For Christmas lights, illuminated Christmas trees, Price's candles and coal and logs go to **Woodland Hardware** at the Barn. Bargain cards, wrapping paper, tags, Sellotape and brown paper are stocked by **Raymond's**, who also have a range of essential branded household goods.

The selection of presents at **To Be Established** includes beautiful LSA glassware, scarves, jewellery, and gifts for all ages. Charity cards, diaries and calendars are also in stock. At **Louis Farouk** you can find original gifts, lovely handblown Christmas glass ornaments of birds and beasts, and distinctive jewellery and scarves (113 Highbury Park). **Gathering Moss** will be open in the week before Christmas as well as at weekends, and you can find Nkuku Fairtrade gifts in stock, as well as local artists' handthrown bowls and vases in lovely colours, glass candleholders and reclaimed furniture (193 Blackstock Road).



Because it's that time of the year

With Christmas just around the corner...

Before giving up your broken laptop, why not try out Bright Sparks, Islington's Repair and re-use shop that can bring your small electrical items back to life, from toasters to mobile phones and musical instruments. Not just a repair shop, you can also buy small electrical items at Bright Sparks and donate items you have finished with. It offers an easy way to reuse, repair or recycle your pre-loved electrical items, as opposed to chucking them away. If you want to make a donation there are various sites around Islington where you can drop off your unwanted gadgets and appliances, and at the same time help people to gain skills and be good to the environment too. Repairs are done at a new workshop that offers training and volunteering opportunities for local people. To find your nearest donation point you can either call the shop 020 7272 9156 or email: shop@brightsparksonline.com. The shop is open Mon-Sat 11:00- 17:30, 176 Seven Sisters Road, N7 7PX.

It's Brrrr outside: keeping warmer inside without costing the Earth.

As autumn draws to a close with temperatures outside dropping and the leaves (mostly) fallen from the trees, our thoughts turn to winter and we switch the heating on again. As we head into December, Islington's Energy Advice team has useful advice for practical ways to burn less energy and money over the chilly season. Their long list includes: insulation and draught proofing; fuel switching and bills; efficient heating systems, low energy lighting and



renewable energy technologies; local and national grants and discount schemes;

understanding bills; and other low or no cost ways to save energy. A winter warmth check is also available for residents over 60 or with

a heart or respiratory condition or on a low income with a child under the age of 5.

The team can provide advice over the phone, by e-mail and in person and via hands on workshops like adding thermal lining to your curtains without a sewing machine. For more info, email: energy.advice@islington.gov.uk, call: 0800 953 1221, or visit their website: islington.gov.uk/energy

SARAH POTTER

The streets they left behind



In the last publication of the centenary year, we'd like to draw attention to Islington Heritage Service's project 'The Streets They Left Behind' which commemorates the Islington residents who died in First World War.

One part of the project is an interactive map that marks out with a poppy every household in Islington that suffered a fatality.

Prompted by the question 'was my house affected?' brings the conflict closer to home, or even actually into it. Mapping the casualties illustrates the scale of the war and gives an idea of the impact this must have had on communities. Details of the victim's age, regiment, site of death, and place of burial make examining the map a moving experience. With neighbours scattered from France to Palestine, we also see the extent of the territories involved. To view the map, follow the link <http://bit.ly/1oGBHXf>.

Another part of the project sees plaques installed across Islington commemorating residents who died from each street. From a plaque on Highbury Park, near St Joan of Arc church, we learn of a family which lost two sons, and the history witnessed by the streets we are so used to walking down.

The project will remain online to enable local school, community group, family or individual to find out more about the men and women who sacrificed their lives.

If you would like to volunteer to help on any of Islington Council's First World War projects or have any family photos, letter or memorabilia from 1914-18 email local.history@islington.gov.uk or call 020 7527 2837. To help trace addresses and other details for people not yet on the interactive map, you can get in contact with the WW1 Project Officer, John Shepherd, at john.shepherd@islington.gov.uk or call 020 7527 2837.

More information about the commemorative projects can be found at: http://www.islington.gov.uk/islington/history-heritage/heritage_borough/Pages/world-war-one-centenary.aspx

Calendar- snippets of what's on...

14 December Carols by candlelight, 6.30pm at Christ Church Highbury

16 Dec. Islington Society AGM, 7.15pm at Islington Town Hall.

17 Dec. Organ recital with mince pies, from 11am at the Union Chapel. And at the same venue, 21 Dec carols by candlelight. 7pm but arriving early advised

Until 21 Dec. Exhibition last two weeks, *Roman Ostia: Ancient Ruins, Modern Art* at the Estorick Collection.

Until 4 January 2015, Jack and The Beanstalk, Christmas pantomime at Park Theatre.

7 Jan until end Feb. Venturing away from the 'bury, work of local topiarist who raises funds for the charity Hft, Tim Bushe, will be featured in a Selfridges window and atrium.

Until 25 Jan. New solo exhibition, *Through my Hand*, paintings by local artist John Sheeny at Outpost, the gallery space and gift and homeware shop at 546 Holloway Road (N7), run by Peter Bedford.

Until 26 February. Exhibition, *From East to West: Chinese life in London since 1900* at the Islington Museum.



The Highbury Barn would like to wish all of their customers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

An intimate restaurant and theatre kitchen, with refurbished bar area and pop up coffee shop for your morning breakfast coffees and pastries. Breakfast now served every day. Reserve tables early for our busy Sunday lunchtimes.

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HIGHBURY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

www.highburycommunity.org

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Elizabeth House: a living legacy

If you read the article about Stephen Coles in Highbury Community News a year ago you will have heard of Elizabeth House; it is a thriving community centre in the heart of Highbury, whose history goes back,



all the way back, to the 1800s. The building first

appears on maps sometime between 1805 and 1841, on what was then Myrtle Street. It is likely that this property and those surrounding it were associated with the then Highbury College - which is now buried under the main stand of Arsenal's old stadium.

Later in the nineteenth century the building came under the auspices of the Soroptimists, a women's organization which is part of an international volunteer movement that exists to this day



which aims to empower and transform the lives of women and girls. The name dates from that time after

one of its members, Elizabeth Hawes.

As you may recall, the 1980s saw the building and its work entered a period of decline, and the decision was made to close it and sell it off. Thanks to enormous support within the community and an anonymous

benefactor the building was purchased and its work was able to continue. Getting the centre active again and restoring the crumbling building was a still a daunting challenge, and the small group of trustees worked really hard to achieve their vision. We can now say with pride that they have more than managed it.

Today, Elizabeth House is flourishing and busier than ever. Its activities include an afterschool club, a summer and holiday play scheme run for children 6-12 years,



an art club, a youth club run with various activities for young adults, Taekwon-do

and Capoeira classes for adults, Saturday morning music classes for kids, and much more. The centre also offers educational support courses, in subjects such as healthy

eating, football training, and residential courses for older children. We are currently developing ideas for a new oral history project. We are well loved by all the children and adults who use our services or work with us as volunteers. We have hundreds of users each week.

In 2013 we were honoured by a visit by HRH Prince Philip, who



was impressed by the impact and change that a small organization like Elizabeth House can make. We would love you come and see us, join our activities or get involved as a volunteer, and use your skills to run classes, like IT, as play workers, or to help run the youth club, or even to assist in the office and gain administration experience.

Also, please see our advert for trustees, we look forward to hearing from you.

RONIT DASSA (Chair of Trustees)

Would you like to become a trustee of Elizabeth House?

Play and youth charity Elizabeth House offers educational and recreational opportunities to the residents of Islington, Hackney and Haringey. We are looking for volunteer trustees from a range of backgrounds, but we would particularly welcome practical experience in the following areas: law, human resources, partnership working and community development, marketing and communications and fund-raising. The Trustees meet about eight times a year, usually at Elizabeth House, at 6.30pm. If you would like more details and information on how to apply, please email our Centre Director, Megan Pakam at megan.pakham@ehlc.co.uk.