



THE
BEDFORD
PARK
SOCIETY



Annual Review 2019



1 Chair's report

Developing our heritage programme, dealing with applications for more radical changes to buildings, and the Heathrow expansion proposals were a particular focus of our work on behalf of Bedford Park and our members in 2019.



Helen Jameson, Chair,
The Bedford Park
Society

The wide range of our work and details of our key initiatives are described more fully in each section of this review of the year.

Over the past several years the active participation of Bedford Park residents in the work of the Society has increased considerably. We now benefit enormously from the time and energy of over 70 volunteers involved in various ways, and our membership reached a record 622 this year — a high proportion of the community for a local amenity group. The large numbers participating in all our events, and the positive feedback we receive are welcome confirmation of the support for our work.

This increased participation has enabled the Society to embark on a number of ambitious projects. These have already included the launch of our annual Journal, which has been greatly appreciated by members, the continuing programme of photography of the Bedford Park architectural details, and our Oral History project. New projects now under consideration include the relaunch of our logbooks. None of this would be possible without the Society maintaining a strong financial basis.

The cohesiveness of Bedford Park stems in large part from the beauty of the area and its architecture. The balance between change, improvement and conservation is a key focus of our Planning and Infrastructure teams; both teams are fully engaged with the often complex detail of these aspects. Major issues this year have been the increase in applications for more radical changes to listed houses, and the extremely convoluted proposals and consultations associated with the plans to expand Heathrow.

We continue to attach great importance to providing relevant and useful communication with members through our E-news emails, our Annual Review and information on our website. Green Days and our expanded programme of events also offer further opportunities for members to meet with our committees and volunteers to discuss issues that concern them.

The Society looks forward to continuing to contribute to the Bedford Park community. We welcome the burgeoning of new local organisations and initiatives in Bedford Park during recent years. Community life is likely to be tested in the coming months and years by the coronavirus pandemic. We will play our part in helping ensure that our local community maintains its strength and cohesion.

Membership and volunteers

We are extremely grateful to all our volunteers for their dedication. Building on the success of last year's event, we once again brought together our flourishing group of volunteers including our Road Representatives for a get-together to update everyone on the work of the Society and offer a valued opportunity for the sharing of ideas in an informal setting.

This year we have said farewell to one of our key volunteers, Wendy Williams, who has stood down from her various roles having moved away from Bedford Park. We are incredibly grateful to Wendy for her tremendous contribution to the Executive Committee where she was an invaluable member, and for her unstinting efforts as Membership Secretary. We are delighted to welcome John Bailey as our new Membership Secretary.

Volunteer your time

If you have some spare time and would like to get involved, we are always looking for new volunteers to help us do our work more effectively and bring fresh ideas. We would particularly welcome support with administration, representing views to local councils, helping with our archive material or organising social or educational events. We would be delighted to hear from you if you would like to help either on a regular or occasional basis.



The Society's Planning Committee dealt with a steady flow of planning applications, though fewer than in previous years.

The great majority were approved by the local authorities and many applications demonstrate owners' respect for the architectural integrity of Bedford Park's architecture. However, there is a disturbing – if minority – trend in applications for radical changes to buildings.

Planning applications – a continuing decrease in numbers

The decision to grant planning permission or listed building consent rests exclusively with Ealing and Hounslow councils. The very experienced Bedford Park Society Planning Committee makes a comment on all applications – though sometimes this may be a 'no comment'. The councils are under no obligation to take account of the Society's comments.

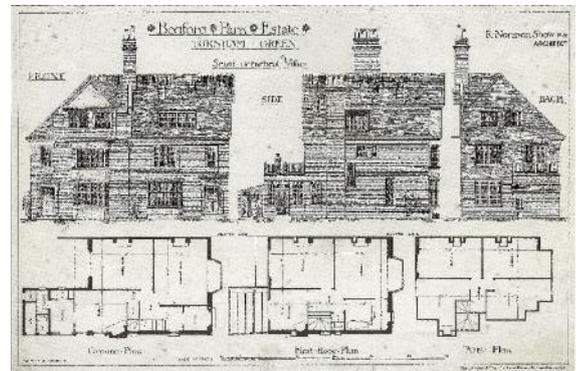
A total of 56 applications were made during the year – 38 in Ealing, 18 in Hounslow. This was down from 64 in 2018 and 84 in 2017. Only two were refused, both by Hounslow. Many applicants sought advice from the Society before submitting applications and a further 25-30% of council approvals followed modifications to the applications based on the Society's comments.

Applications for radical changes to buildings

The Society's comments on planning applications are in large measure framed by the councils' published planning policies for the Bedford Park area. These documents lay out detailed guidelines for planning decisions. Respect for these guidelines has been instrumental in preserving the unique architectural heritage of Bedford Park, while still allowing residents to adapt their houses to a modern style of living. However, an increase in applications for highly transformative projects threatens this balance.

Applications for partitions and areas of external walls to be demolished have increased – these would significantly alter the floor plans of listed houses. The guideline from Historic England suggests the need for great caution when this kind of proposal is being considered: "The plan form of a building is frequently one of its most important characteristics and internal partitions, staircases ... and other features are likely to form part of its significance. Indeed they may be its most significant feature. Proposals to remove or modify internal arrangements, including the insertion of new openings ... will be subject to the same consideration of impact on significance (particularly

architectural interest) as for external visible alterations." (*Making changes to Heritage Assets, Advice Note 2, 2016*). A recent (2020) application in Bedford Park for a new door through an original external wall was refused. The reason given by the Local Authority was a quotation from Historic England guidelines – "Loss of original fabric ... results in unacceptable harm to this Grade II Listed Building that would fail to preserve the heritage asset."



There are also applications, mainly for unlisted houses, for substantial rear extensions, often with large areas of glass. While careful design of these extensions sometimes gives highly acceptable solutions, many proposals are of poor design, accompanied by unacceptable proposals for roofing, especially the use of large roof-lights. These designs inevitably result in degradation of the thermal insulation of the building and increased light pollution for the neighbourhood at night time.

Of course Bedford Park houses are not museums. Ground floor reception rooms in Bedford Park were originally provided with communicating doors, and the opening of ground floors in this way has always been acceptable, as has the merging of the old service areas to provide large family kitchen/living/dining space with views onto the garden.

Another area of difficulty is applications to build excessively large outbuildings in the gardens of houses in the Conservation Area. The Bedford Park Management Plan states that "Due to the small size of most gardens, no more than one shed or other garden building will normally be allowed, usually no larger than 10 cubic metres ..." Recent applications for larger outbuildings than this have an adverse effect on the balance of buildings and gardens in Bedford Park and often elicit strong objections from neighbours.

3 Tackling issues...

Whilst we continue to work hard tackling issues, it is becoming increasingly clear that to make an impact on local council or government policies, a large volume of formal complaints or survey responses from residents is always more effective than a single response from the Society. We encourage everyone to become involved.



Image: Mark Thomas

Heathrow Third Runway

The High Court judgement in February 2020 ruling the Government's plans for Heathrow expansion as unlawful has resulted in delays to the planned next stage of consultation and to the submission by Heathrow of their application for planning permission due this autumn.

The main focus of our work in 2019 was the continuing legal challenge to the building of the Third Runway and Heathrow's application for planning permission (the Development Consent Order, or DCO). Heathrow conducted two consultations in relation essentially to the physical construction of the runway, layout, operational and infrastructure issues. We continued to work closely with CHATR, who co-ordinate the objections to the Third Runway throughout Chiswick, and the No Third Runway Coalition — a consortium of councils and civic associations opposed to Heathrow expansion. Our work was again much appreciated by members and local residents.

It involved providing regular updates on progress, and developing suggested responses for submissions to both of the extremely complex Heathrow public consultations during the year. These were designed to make the process much quicker and easier for members and any other residents.

We also helped publicise the consultations locally. We encouraged residents to attend the public meetings and join the rallies outside the Royal Courts of Justice when the initial challenge against the Government's decision to proceed with the Third Runway was considered and subsequently dismissed in April.

Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging Points

In Ealing we reviewed any problems with parking in the roads with shared bays, and supported residents in a road where they experienced problems, lobbying the Council for changes. We provided guidance on Ealing Council's new phone parking system and the steps needed to use the new system for cashless and visitor parking when PayByPhone replaced RingGo as the provider. We pressed Ealing Council hard for installation of the new Electric Vehicle Charging Points in existing lamp columns, resulting in a further 10 EVCPs being incorporated as we requested. However, Ealing have warned that free-standing units may be used in future, depending on cost and physical/technical constraints.

In Hounslow, the three-year EVCP trial continues.

Pavements and lighting

Both councils are slow to schedule work on uneven pavements which are affected by tree roots in particular. It is important that residents report any problems directly to the relevant council. Heritage lamps are an important part of our street architecture and when lampposts or lanterns are damaged we ask the councils to ensure suitable replacements are fitted.

Dockless bikes

Having received a number of comments from members about problems with abandoned Mobikes, we encouraged anyone with views on the scheme to respond to a Hounslow Council Survey when the 12-month trial period ended. We also advised members how to report any issues with abandoned Mobikes or electric Lime Bikes causing an obstruction or hazard. Hounslow subsequently acknowledged problems with the running of the schemes.

Later in the year, London Councils' Transport and Environment Committee (TEC) proposed a pan-London parking byelaw to be agreed, regulating dockless bikes and e-bikes in response to the increasing number of operators and problems

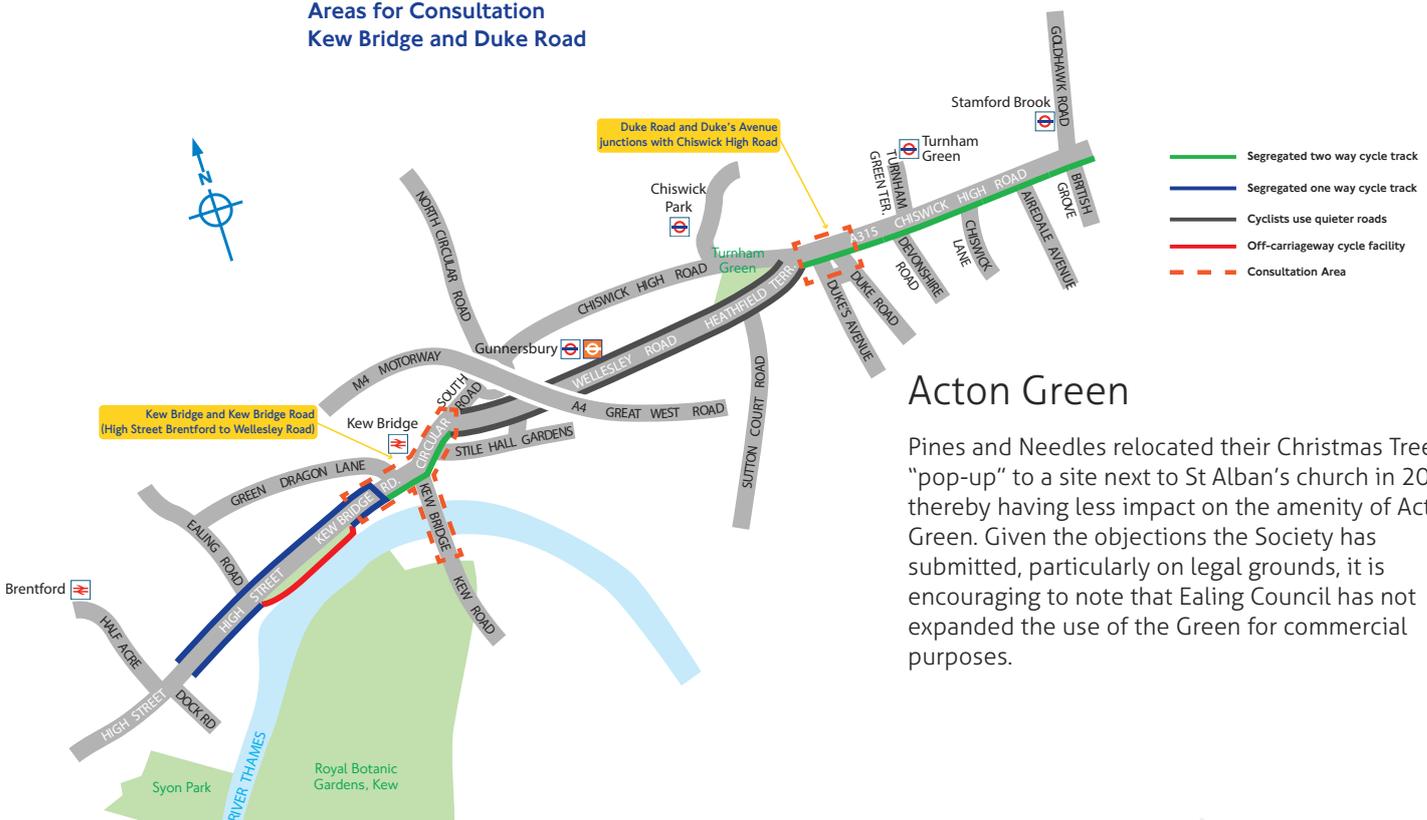


caused. The byelaw would apply across all 33 boroughs and would make it an offence for a dockless bike operator to cause or permit their dockless bike to be left on the highway or public place other than in a location agreed by the local authority. All London boroughs were consulted and have agreed that they will delegate the drafting of the regulation to the TEC. Once TEC has agreed their draft, it will pass it on to the Secretary of State for approval. In the meantime, members should continue to report any issues to the relevant council.

Cycle Superhighway

We continued to monitor developments on the proposed Cycle Superhighway on behalf of members following Transport for London's announcement that they would essentially be implementing CS9 as originally proposed, subject to certain relatively minor changes. We supported efforts aimed at trying to ensure adjustments were made, particularly in relation to the safety of both cyclists and pedestrians, but following Hounslow Council's decision to proceed with the proposals, construction at Kew Bridge junction started in December and the full scheme is due to be completed by summer 2022.

Areas for Consultation Kew Bridge and Duke Road



Trees

The two councils responsible for Bedford Park adopt a different approach although there are signs of more activity now trees are being given a higher political profile. We have maintained our contact with the team at Ealing and a list of proposed plantings in Southfields/Bedford Park has been provided. There may be additional Ward funds to plant trees on Acton Green, which we are monitoring. Hounslow Highways are responsible for all tree work in Hounslow. No list of plantings is available, although there is a contractual obligation to replace all felled trees. We are continuing our efforts to engage with them to tackle this, as well as to deal with a backlog of pruning. Homefields Ward is due to be assessed for tree work in 2020.

Both boroughs have difficulty siting trees because of services under the pavements. The preferred location is on the house boundary, but if that is not possible, a more central position may be chosen. Neither council has the resources to water new trees and residents are encouraged to consider watering a new tree outside their house in dry weather.

Phone box on the Triangle

For many years the dilapidated state of the BT phone box on The Avenue, next to the Triangle, has been a cause of complaints. Despite it being a listed structure, our efforts over the years to persuade BT of their responsibility to renovate the box or to consider allowing residents to "adopt" it for alternative community use have been resisted. However, in response to our latest reminder, BT have confirmed they will be carrying out the necessary maintenance during the course of 2020.

Acton Green

Pines and Needles relocated their Christmas Tree "pop-up" to a site next to St Alban's church in 2019, thereby having less impact on the amenity of Acton Green. Given the objections the Society has submitted, particularly on legal grounds, it is encouraging to note that Ealing Council has not expanded the use of the Green for commercial purposes.

5 A busy year of events

In 2019 our dedicated Events team — with help from a number of other Society volunteers — organised two lectures, our AGM, a Guided Walk, the Winter Party and the Society's presence at the Bedford Park Festival Green Days.



Image © The Royal Parks

Putting civility into cities

Well-known TV writer and presenter Loyd Grossman delivered our 2019 Spring Lecture to a large audience gathered in St Alban's Church on 12 March. Since 2017 he has been Chairman of the newly created charity The Royal Parks and his talk outlined the importance of the parks to London's citizens, and also the scale of the task facing the new organisation. He emphasised that the Royal Parks remain a crucial element of the civility that is an essential ingredient of London life. They provide a fundamental element of the well-being of Londoners and visitors, as a space for relaxation, exercise, entertainment and education and all of this provided entirely free of charge.

The parks face many threats — from developers, pressure for more memorials, conservation issues and the decline in public funding, reducing the amenity provided to the general public. A lively question session followed Loyd's talk, covering issues, such as the pressure of development and the problems of the withdrawal of public funding from conservation, which have parallels with Bedford Park.

Guided walk

In April, local architect John Scott — much in demand for his engaging and insightful walks around Bedford Park — very kindly offered to conduct a guided walk, exclusively for the Society's members. The tickets sold very quickly and we plan to repeat this opportunity again.

2019 Betjeman lecture

For the Society's 2019 Betjeman lecture John Betjeman himself featured as the subject — probably for the first time. On 18 September in the Andrew Lloyd Webber Theatre at the ArtsEd Schools, distinguished architectural commentator Alan Powers talked on the subject of *John Betjeman and the Garden Suburb Movement*.

Alan proposed that Betjeman's poem *Narcissus* suggests that he may have imagined Bedford Park almost as an alternative place of his childhood — he was in fact raised in the more conventional Hampstead. This may have provoked his deep interest in the work of architects such as Voysey, Baillie Scott and Norman Shaw who had broken with the tradition of the small Victorian house, with its ornament, stucco and symmetry, in favour of a new vernacular; Betjeman found a particular appeal in the deployment of red brick. By the 1930s, spreading suburbs — cruelly parodied by Betjeman himself — could be seen as embarrassing "grandchildren" of Bedford Park, but Betjeman retained his clear affection for the original, which led to his passionate engagement with its defence in the 1960s. A more detailed version of the lecture together with an account of John Betjeman's role in saving Bedford Park is available on our website.



Festival Green Days

Our annual stall at the Bedford Park Festival Green Days on Acton Green in June once again provided the perfect spot for residents and members to catch up with the Society's volunteers manning the stall. Despite gusty winds on the Saturday, our presence at Green Days was, as ever, an important opportunity to talk to people about our work, as well as to sell a variety of Bedford Park memorabilia. This included cards, books, bags, tea towels, aprons, and two new Bedford Park Society mugs for 2019, which proved so popular that a second batch was produced to satisfy orders.

Winter party

The main social event of the year is the Society's Winter Party held in the Michael Room of St Michael and all Angels. This time it was another sell-out with over 100 guests appreciating the excellent food, wine and entertainment. For the third consecutive year — back by popular demand — students from the Arts Educational Schools provided live music.



Rather than a troupe treating the audience to a preview of their next performance as in the last two years, five talented singers performed solos accompanied by their Head of Music, Huw Griffith, on keyboard. Thanks go to the hard-working members of the Events Committee for organising the party and the refreshments, also to the Road Representatives and other volunteers who helped prepare the food and who worked tirelessly throughout the evening.

Heritage update

We are continuing to progress the Society's mission of broadening knowledge about Bedford Park's rich and engaging past — its architecture, history and early residents — which complements our conservation work on the heritage of the area. In addition to some notable projects reported below,

we are also making progress on the Oral History of Bedford Park and the biographies within the *Mainly About Bedford Park People* project.

Bedford Park logbooks

During 2019 we completed an extensive investigation into a possible re-launch of the logbooks. This project, highly innovative when first launched in 2000, was originally designed to encourage, inform and support owners of listed buildings in the Bedford Park area in the conservation of their properties. Clearly much has changed over the last 20 years in Bedford Park itself, in the range of information available and in the possibilities offered by technology for providing access to information. The Society is following up the options emerging from the study with an exploration of the IT aspects and the possible expansion of the project to build on the original and include a wider range of houses.

Tabard pub sign

The original pub sign of the Tabard public house, painted by the celebrated artist and local resident T M Rooke in around 1880, was gifted to the Society by Greene King. We have commissioned a preliminary study from a specialist firm of conservators who will carry out a detailed investigation of the sign, which is in poor condition, in order to make proposals and provide costings for its conservation.

Architectural details and archives

A key aspect in the preservation of Bedford Park is appreciation of the wonderful internal and external detailing of its buildings. The Society is continuing its surveys of various aspects of architectural detailing. Adding to the work on porches and stained glass, we undertook a survey of fireplaces in 2019. Examples of these projects were published in the *Journal* and on the Society's website.

Another important aspect of the Society's heritage activities is the maintenance of archives relevant to Bedford Park and the Society. The major part of this is material gathered by the Society's co-founder, Tom Greeves, and gifted by his widow, Eleanor, to the Society, enabling it to be arranged and catalogued. Further material is awaiting sorting and cataloguing.

The archive is housed at the Chiswick Local Studies Library, along with a great deal of other material on the history of the area. Members who are interested in pursuing their own research on Bedford Park can consult the material there. The catalogue of the Tom Greeves' Archive can be obtained by contacting the Society.

7 Membership and structure

Membership increases

During the last three years there has been an encouraging growth in membership, reflecting the work of our Road Representatives, our increasing involvement in important local issues, such as Heathrow expansion, together with our improved communications and external profile. In 2019 individual membership numbers increased to 622 from 604 last year and the total number of households grew to 391 from 376. Of this total, there are 559 members from 343 households living in the Bedford Park area. Our annual presence at the Bedford Park Festival Green Days again provided an opportunity to engage with existing members and recruit new ones.

There was a positive response to the invitation sent out in November asking members if they would like to pay their membership renewal by standing order, which makes administration easier for members as well as us.

Society Committees and Officers 2019

The Society is managed by an Executive Committee with specialist committees working on Planning, Infrastructure and Environment, Events and Merchandise, and Communications. We are very grateful for the vital support and assistance we received during the year from our many hard working and committed volunteers and special advisers.

Executive Committee and Trustees

Chair: Helen Jameson
Hon Treasurer: Simon Baddeley
Hon Secretary: Nick Bueno de Mesquita
Minutes Secretary: Simon Hillyard
Hilary Atherton (until April)
Kate Bowes
Ruth Clarke
Raj Parkash
Wendy Williams
Carol Woolner DipArch RIBA (retired)

Nigel Woolner MBE, President, Martin Landy, Special Adviser, and Nick Cowell, Road Representatives Coordinator, attended by invitation

Planning Committee: Chair Carol Woolner DipArch RIBA (retired), William Taylor DipArch, MA, RIBA, FRSA, Charles Wagner BSc DipTP, MA, IHBC, MRTPI, FSA, FRSA, George Butlin BA Hons, FCSD (retired) member of the Ealing Panel for Bedford Park)

Infrastructure and Environment Committee: Chair Raj Parkash, David Blackburn, Kate Bowes, Chris Carrington, Ruth Clarke, Peter Eversden, Simon Hillyard, Paul Hopper, Helen Jameson, Martin Landy, Justin Morris-Wyatt, Paul Walker

Events and Merchandise Committee: Chair Ruth Clarke (Hilary Atherton until April), Simon Baddeley, Bernadette Barber, Jackie Cowell, Nick Cowell, Hugh Johnson, Imelda Jones, Anabela Wilkinson (Tessa Hopkins and Karen Griffiths for part of 2019)

Communications Committee: Chair: Kate Bowes, Nick Bueno de Mesquita, Helen Jameson

Road Representatives Coordinator: Nick Cowell (Hilary Atherton until April)

Membership Secretary: Wendy Williams

Planning Steering Group: Chair Sir Donald Insall, Patron of the Society, Hugh Broughton, Architect, Steven Bee, Principal of Urban Counsel, Nigel Woolner, President, Bedford Park Society, Peter Murray (Convenor) Special Adviser, Bedford Park Society, David Selby, Architect

Society Patron: Sir Donald Insall, CBE

President of the Society: Nigel Woolner MBE, FRSA, FRCM, Dip Arch RIBA (retired)

Special Advisers: Peter Eversden MBE, Special Adviser, Infrastructure and Environment, Martin Landy, Special Adviser, Infrastructure and Filming, Peter Murray, Special Adviser, Architecture, Exhibitions and Publications

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