

Walworth Society General Meeting – Minutes

7pm November 17th 2021 (Online and at the Energy Hub)

Welcome, apologies and introductions

Jeremy welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was agreed that Anna, a journalism student, could observe the meeting and carry out interviews after.

Attendance: Jerry Flynn, Vincent Brown, Jeremy Leach (Chair), Norma Lawrence, Aaron Burton Crisostomo, Kevin Williamson, Jim Beedell, Christine Tan, Diana Cochrane, Liba Hoskin, Elizabeth Sinclair, Darret Tomlin, Geoff Anandappa, Lizzie, Neil Crossfield, Robyn Wilford, Tracy Crossfield, Sarah Coombes, Anna Sin, Ruait McErleon, Olnic Tweedie, Caitlin Colquhoun, Jane Hadfield, Robert Hadfield, Lise Magnollay.

Apologies: Tyron Landau, Peta Steel, John Whelan, Roger Batchelor, Lindon Rankin

1) Planning Matters

- a) Jerry Flynn spoke about the **Elephant Park H1 planning application**. JF explained that the original plan for the site was for mixed use: mostly homes, over 13 separate plots each with its own planning permissions. The current application, for the last of these plots, includes no housing at all, but is for a large office block: 18 storeys of 50,000 square meters.
- b) Since 2007, the public have been told that this last plot would include housing of up to 340 units of which 35% would be affordable – though as former public land it should be 50% affordable.
- c) Lendlease now claim that as they have already met their housing target, they need build no more housing. They also argue that the office block will help with Southwark's employment targets. Lendlease, however, has squeezed the homes built so far on to 12 plots so as to leave space for an office block on this last plot.
- d) Moreover, Lendlease has only delivered 25% affordable housing with the homes built so far.
- e) JF also noted that, regarding the claim to create employment, offices don't create new jobs, they tend to relocate existing ones. And that while Lendlease may be promising an NHS facility on the ground floor of the office block, this is in fact just a commercial let and could anyway form part of a housing block.
- f) JF noted there has been much opposition locally to the office block plan and already there have been over 450 objections lodged.
- g) Following a general discussion in which all participants opposed the Lendlease plan, it was agreed that WS would continue to object to the planning application and seek to coordinate with others opposed to the scheme.
- h) The WS has made the following objection to the reconsultation:

The Walworth Society notes the revisions to this application and continues to object to it. These revisions in no way address the fundamental concerns that the development runs contrary to Southwark Council planning policy that we set out in our original objection and we trust that the objections that we and many parties submitted are in no way negated by what are in fact very minor adjustments to this application.

2) East Street Baptist Church

- a) JL reported that the East Street Baptist Church, a historically important local church, is under threat of demolition. WS is working with Historic England to get the church listed as well as

looking at other ways to protect the building. Jan 2022 update – Historic England has not approved the church for listing.

- b) NC gave a brief history of the church noting its local and national significance for non-conformism, as well as education and welfare initiatives for the poor.
- c) It was agreed that the WS would make opposing the demolition a priority. JL noted that over twenty objections have gone in and urged anyone who hasn't yet objected to submit an objection.

3) Old Kent Road Regeneration

- a) DC reported on the five new conservation areas recently agreed across the Old Kent Road area.

4) Walworth Stories

- a) NC gave a short talk on **Harriet Taylor Mill - Re-claiming Walworth's Early Feminist Icon**. This research is part of the Walworth History Project, which is investigating some of the major figures connected to Walworth. One such, Harriet Taylor Mill, was born in Walworth in 1807. She married John Stuart Mill, and though his intellectual equal and of great significance for early feminism, is not as well known.
- b) NC has been in touch with Jo Ellen Jacobs, Professor of Philosophy at Millikin University, Decatur, Illinois, USA, editor of the complete works of HTM, and she is very supportive of the project. It was agreed that we investigate the possibility of Prof JEJ giving a talk over Zoom for the WS as part of Walworth Stories.

5) Other Planning Matters

- a) JL reported that Manor Place Terrace is now being demolished rather than renovated. It is regrettable that after all this time the façade is to be lost, but it is good that at last there will be progress on the new building, which will feature a new surgery and a café on the ground floor.
- b) Pedestrianisation of Liverpool Grove, the consultation has just finished and we can expect a decision in January.
- c) Walworth Town Hall, JB is pursuing further clarification around what uses the Section 106 money will be put to. JB and JL to follow up and report back when details are made available.

6) Any Other Business

- a) NL reported that **Southwark Pensioners** will be supporting a lobby of Downing St regarding heating security for the elderly.
- b) There was a request for more information on the **Walworth Community Pub** initiative, and JL agreed to put anyone interested in touch with Matt, who spoke at the last WS meeting. And provide further updates in future WS mailings.
- c) It was agreed that because of Covid there would be no WS festive event in 2021.

Next meeting 19th January 2022