

AMENITY – DIVERSITY – CHARACTER

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NOTTING HILL GATE IMPROVEMENTS GROUP

**MINUTES OF 59th MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 11 SEP 07 AT
233-235 WESTBOURNE GROVE LONDON W11 2SE (JOHN SCOTT'S HOME)**

1. Apologies for Absence were received from Robin Price, Petra Brown & Iain Wilcock.
2. Present All those ticked on the list below.
3. Minutes of the last meeting (58th) held on 10 Apr 07 were tabled & copies made available with the accounts at the meeting.
4. Date of next meeting Thursday 10 Jan 08 at 7.30 – same venue 233-235 Westbourne Grove (J.Scott's home)

ITEMS FOR REPORT & DISCUSSION

J.S. stressed that the current task in securing a top quality development for N.H.G. by Metro Shopping Fund (M.S.F.) is the most important in our 14 year history.

He read out a report including the previously declared N.H.I.G.'s aims for the project. These are:-

(A) 1. Loss of Newcombe Piazza. This small area of public open space in front of Waterstones is of incalculable value. To build over this area is surely inconceivable and an outrageous loss of amenity in the central heart of N.H.G.

As agreed at the previous meeting a donation of £250 has been made to "Open Spaces Society". The society's expert Mr Bernard Selwyn had surveyed the site and reported on 30 May 07 "In view of the fact the area is a highway, no part of it can be built on without being stopped up. This would require a separate application". No response from R.B.K.&C. or M.S.F. has been received to this notice.

J.S. reported on the Belgian Pavillion at the Venice Biennale ("Architecture Society") ending on 19 Nov 06. This entire display extolled the merit of OPEN SPACE. And it has all been recently exhibited at the Tate Modern sponsored by...Land Securities!

The Committee were unanimously opposed to this proposal.

2. Loss of Farmers Market. The meeting felt that the market should be in a central location and that it was the task of M.S.F.'s architects to design this vital amenity with appropriate parking at the rear of Newcombe House & Ken Church St. The excellent example of the new Farmers Market at St Pancras Station was to be applauded.

3. Change of use (Offices to Residential). Newcombe House. The meeting was against this as a loss of a vibrant use, enhancing a youth & enterprise culture of variety on this major communications node. Offices would maintain balance & diversity and encourage employment.

J.S. explained that Bob De Barre (Land Securities Director of Development Partnerships) to whom this report had been sent via Francis Salway (M.D. of Land Secs) (on the advice of our good friend Alf Strange) had produced a drawing of Newcombe House re-clad by Thomas Heatherwick in a most striking way in Portland Stone.

Much discussion took place on the merits of complete re-development of this area with

- a) re-alignment of the taller & more eye-catching Newcombe 'Tower'.
- b) Incorporation of the Farmers Market.
- c) Increased public open space.
- d) Small independent characterful shops.
- e) possibly Waitrose.

4. Restoration of Coronet Cinema. J.S. reported on many meetings, myriad phone calls with Colin Dye (Chief Pastor) & Ron Salamat concerning the restoration of the architectural & decorative details on this Grade II building.

The Elim Church proposals of 19 May 04 were that the cinema would be “fully restored to its former glory”. A timetable has been received “Dec 07 begin full restoration of exterior – to Dec 08.

It was felt that some positive action should be made by the Planning Dept (especially as responsibility for listed buildings was specifically delegated to Local Authorities some 20 years ago). Land Secs owns the freehold and the Elim Church hold a full repairing & insuring lease on the entire building. It was universally agreed restoration should be linked to the M.S.F. development.

5. Small Independent Shops. The dangers of “cloned” shopping centres & loss of small restaurants & shops in Hillgate and Farmer St were bemoaned. “A Balance of Trade – The report of the Commission on Retail Conservation” Publication was circulated to the meeting. This contains 7 pages of recommendations and was delivered to the Council on 23 May 07. The meeting greatly hoped that action would be taken soon to alleviate this distressing decline in our shopping environment.

6. Large E.D.F. site North side of N.H.G. behind Tesco. Members were anxious that N.H.G. should be designed with a “master plan” and not developed ‘piecemeal’. There should be a ‘Planning Brief’ for this area particularly.

The essence of the challenge is to determine what is wanted in N.H.G.; then design and build it. It was agreed it should be a Cultural Centre with open space and good shopping overlaid with the qualities of Amenity, Variety & Character.

7. Public Exhibition of M.S.F. Proposals. Following the Architects Journal article of 26 Dec 1957 which criticised the display of Land Secs original designs, the meeting agreed that early & clear display of current proposals was vital. D.C. was thanked for putting the 1957 article on our website. Initial displays by the M.S.F. team are clearly ‘mere informed soundings’. A full page Times advert by Land Secs “...appoints full time dedicated community liason stall for all its major property development projects”. Clearly our full consultation is yet to come.

8. There should be a Major Planning comprehensive proposal for N.H.G.

(B) 18 Feb 07 Critique of M.S.F. proposals.

It was reported that Cllr Daniel Moylan had met with M.S.F. representatives and has promised to consult N.H.I.G. upon receipt of M.S.F amended plans for the area. The complete rebuilding of Newcombe House was favoured which would facilitate the creation of a high quality project worthy of N.H.G. and ease the inclusion of the various requirements.

(C) Restoration of c1930s Dundee Marmalade Advertisement sign on East side of 56 Notting Hill Gate.

A resident of N.H.G. made this proposal to C.B. and it was agreed this idea be pursued by the building owner & Premier Foods who still manufacture marmalade.

(D) Wall behind Nadim Karam’s Elephant.

This has been cheerfully repainted by Nadim & D.M. was thanked for ensuring it was kept clean together with various repairs to the Carnival Elephant.

(E) Financial Position as at 11 Sep 07.

These were distributed to the meeting indicating cash at H.S.B.C. of £11,247 (estimated surplus £8,497)

Donations had been received from :-

- a. Poisson Rouge Ltd – for a promotional use of 2 Formosa St
(for which David Marshall was thanked). 1,000
- b. Georgeous for “Orange” promotion. 500
1,500

(F) Ancilliary Matters.

- a) Reply was awaited from Mr Iain Henderson re Eco Halo which has been presented to Westminster Council without response. This followed a proposal for an “Eco Halo” by Westminster C.C. at Cambridge Circus.
- b) John Ritblat has joined the board of Delancey.
- c) An encouraging meeting with Ms Sam Wilkinson (Public Art advisor to Land Secs) has been held and details of our various schemes submitted.
- d) R.R. reported that “Green Works” (living plants) were a most attractive feature of modern buildings.
- e) C.B. felt the David Game educational college should be retained for its rich variety and youth culture. The question of “affordable housing”, as to quality & location, was much discussed.

(G) Project Leader, Minutes Secretary, Hon. Treasurer.

J.S. expressed much anxiety on these unfilled vacancies and all members were exhorted to find enthusiasts with interest in shaping our urban domain.

(H) The meeting concluded at 9.45pm.

Distribution:-

Petra Brown	Steve Burgin	Christopher Buckmaster%	David Champion%	Fiona Fleming-Brown
Frank Lieberman	David Marshall%	David McHugh%	Robert Meadows%	Peter Mishcon%
Toni Newman%	Dez O’Neil%	Andrew Pilkington%	Geoffrey Roome%	Robina Rose%
John Scott%	Amin Taha	Maria Vlotides%	Iain Wilcock	Willoughby Wynne%
Robin Price - Chairman of Kensington Society				