

THE BRIXTON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Spring issue, April 2018

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Walk this way...

Most members should already have received a copy of what we still refer to as the Summer Walks leaflet, though dates have now spread through the year. If you get your newsletter by post, the leaflet should be enclosed with this issue. We still have spares if somehow you missed out. Local highlights include:

Sunday 10 June – Windrush Square to Somerleyton Road

Meet at 2-30 pm outside the Brixton Tate Library for a walk led by Alan Piper, taking in the south-eastern fringe of the Town Centre and the old “Front Line”.

Sunday 15 July – Brixton Hill to Clapham Park

Meet at 2-30 pm at the corner of Brixton Hill and Morrish Road, site of Brixton's Stone (?) to explore an overlooked corner where Brixton, Clapham and Streatham merge together.

Brixton Market Walks are continuing to attract bookings – more details on page 2 overleaf.

Brixton Windmill Heritage Walks are put on by the Friends of Windmill Gardens and tie in with Sunday openings of the Windmill, the start and end point for the walks through the surrounding neighbourhood. Charge £5 (£3 concessions); gather at 12-50 pm, next dates 15 April, 13 May, 10 June, 15 July.



Loughborough Road shops, retained to serve Angell Town and Myatt's Fields South estates – residents are just starting to research the history of their local shops, see page 5. (February 2008 photo/APC)

Our next open meeting

Thursday 14 June:

Annual General Meeting

7 pm at the Vida Walsh Centre,
2b Saltoun Road, SW2

Not just the usual business of reporting what we have done over the past year, where the money went, gathering ideas for the year ahead and electing committee members to carry them out. This year the formalities will be followed by a social get-together, so you can all relax with a drink and tell us what you **really** think. Naturally we hope this will tempt more members to appear in person!

The Society on show...

Weekend 21 & 22 July

Lambeth Country Show

12 noon to 7 pm, Brockwell Park, SE24

It may seem a way off yet, but save the date to visit our stand – or even lend a hand. And tell us **now** if you want us to join in any other summer events – info@brixtonsociety.org.uk

Diary of Events, Spring 2018

Market Walks

Our guided walks around Brixton's markets continue on the second **Saturday** of every month, at £3 including the illustrated booklet of the route. Tickets are best booked in advance via marketwalks@brixtonsociety.org.uk

Walks start from Brixton Station Road, corner of Beehive Place, at **2-30 pm** and take about 80 minutes.

Committee Dates

Our Executive Committee meets monthly, on the second Thursday, to plan activities and agree our response to current issues. Meetings are at the Vida Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Road SW2 (facing Windrush Square) at 7 pm. These meetings are open to all our members, but if you want to raise a specific issue, it helps if you can tell the Secretary beforehand.

- 10 May
- 14 June (AGM)
- 12 July.

Editorial Notice

Space permitting, we try to feature local events, issues and reminiscences in our newsletter. We welcome news and comments from all who are interested in the Brixton area, so opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily those of the Brixton Society. All material should be sent to the Secretary, Alan Piper, 82 Mayall Road, SE24 0PJ, or by e-mail to apiperbrix@aol.com

Events arranged by other groups

Please check directly with organisers if any queries over times or charges.

Sunday 15 April – Dawn Chorus Bird Walk

Meet at 6 am (!) by the clock tower in Brockwell Park for a special walk led by RSPB members.

Friends of Brockwell Park

Monday 16 April – Brixton Windmill

Jean Kerrigan describes its history and restoration, at 8 pm at Woodlawns, 16 Leigham Court Rd, SW16.

Streatham Society

Thursday 26 April on – Longfield Voices

This new community singing group will run weekly from 10 am to 11-30 am on Thursdays at Longfield Hall, 50 Knatchbull Road SE5 (opposite Minet Library).

Enquiries to Catherine on (020) 7978 9153 or just turn up for the first session.

Longfield Hall

Saturday 28 April – Vintage Voices

Come on a journey through the decades with Brixton residents, part of a creative writing project sponsored by the Brixton Pound.

7 pm – 9 pm at Brixton Community Base, Talma Road, SW2, free.

Sixteenfeet Productions

Wednesday 9 May – the story of a Lambeth Midwife

Robert Holden recalls his grandmother, who worked

as a domiciliary midwife with the LCC in the 1930s and into the Second World War.

7-30 pm for 7-45 start, Herne Hill United Church Hall, c/o Herne Hill and Redpost Hill, SE24.

Herne Hill Society.

Saturday 12 May – Thames Shipbuilding

The 7th symposium on Thames-built ships and ship-building, to be held in the Weston Theatre at the Museum of London. More details and bookings via:

www.docklandshistorygroup.org.uk/page33.html

Docklands History Group

Thursday 17 May – the John Gent postcard collection

A talk by John Hickman and Carol Roberts, 8 pm at the Phoenix Centre, Westow Street, SE19.

South London Local History Group.

Monday 21 May – the South London Botanical Institute

Roy Vickery describes the work of the SLBI which was established in Norwood Road in 1910. Open 7 pm for 8 pm start, at the old Clapham Library, now Omnibus, North Side SW4.

Clapham Society

Monday 21 May – Mrs Beeton

The life and times of a Victorian celebrity, a talk by Tina Baxter, at 8 pm at Woodlawns, 16 Leigham Court Rd, SW16.

Streatham Society

Brixton Design Trail 2018

BDT18 was launched last month with a callout for local creatives and businesses to join in. It aims to showcase the best creative work south of the river, as part of the London Design Festival, running from 15 to 23 September. Once again, it aims to show the unique culture of Brixton to a wide audience, bringing creativity to the streets for everyone in the community. This year's theme is **We Belong**. To find out more or get involved, see website <http://brixtondesigntrail.com>

Council elections and parks

Parks for London champions parks and greenspaces throughout the capital, and has called on candidates in next month's elections to pledge to:

- Protect greenspaces from loss or unwanted development.
- Manage and maintain greenspaces to best practice standards.
- Commit adequate long-term resources for care and improvements.
- Encourage community and volunteer engagement, including for the health and well-being agenda.
- Collaborate and co-operate across all London boroughs to promote and protect our parks and greenspaces.

See more at www.parksforlondon.org.uk

Bringing back the Grove Adventure Playground

Volunteers are seeking more help to get the playground re-opened this spring, starting with a DIY day on Saturday 14 April, from 10 am to 4 pm – lunch and refreshments provided. The playground is in Gordon Grove, behind the Marcus Lipton Youth Club. Offers/enquiries to grovevolunteers@gmail.com

Temporary Art Gallery

A pop-up gallery has opened in part of the old Diamond Builders Merchant premises in Acre Lane. The first show curated by Von Goetz Art features 5 artists under the theme of Slippage: performative utterances in painting. See: <https://www.vongoetzart.com>

The incredible shrinking Brockwell Park

There's no doubt that a big issue is Lambeth's policy of hosting big commercial events on its larger open spaces, closing off large areas to public access, not just during the events but also for setting up and dismantling stages and marquees. Although the scale of objections persuaded the proposed Love Box Festival to withdraw northwards to Gunnersbury Park, we still face extended operations in Brockwell Park between 19 May and 10 June, taking in the Whitsun half-term holiday for local schools. This is for the Field Day and Mighty Hoopla events which are expected to take place through Friday 1st June to Sunday 3rd June.

Although considerable challenges remain, the organisers have modified their initial plans and provided a useful briefing for Brockwell Park Community Partners (the management advisory committee comprising all stakeholder groups) on 25 March.

An important concern for Brixton residents is that most of the paying customers will be channelled between Brixton Tube Station and the Brixton Water Lane gate. As the event closes, the peak crowds will be flowing northwards along the east side of Effra Road. To increase the pavement width, southbound traffic may be diverted – this was still under discussion as we went to press. There will be temporary road closures and parking restrictions in the side roads on the event dates. There will also be temporary toilets and extra bins placed in Windrush Square, maybe a useful precedent.

Closure of the 6 music stages will be staggered between 8 pm and 10-30 pm, with a target of all audience members being out of the park by 11-30 pm. At least the initial idea of closing Herne Hill Station has been abandoned, so there will be some arrivals and departures from this direction – and residents will be able to use the station themselves to flee the area during the actual events!

One of the concerns of nearby residents is that the Council is allowing higher sound levels (75 dbA and 90 db peak) than in previous years,

Amenities & Arts News

so noise will reach further afield – and it's fair to call it noise when music from three or more sound stages mixes together. Friends of Brockwell Park also expressed concern at a potential surge in crime, particularly drugs offences, based on experience of the same events at their previous venue in Victoria Park. The organisers expect daily attendance to peak at 30,000 for the Saturday event.

Within the park, about a third of the whole will be cordoned off during the events, an area bounded by the lido, the BMX track, the tennis courts, the community greenhouses, thence across to Brockwell Hall and down towards the Rosendale Road gate, then following the path parallel to Norwood Road and via the Herne Hill gate and model railway back to the lido. Paths will remain open adjacent to all these amenities. However, the field between the lido and the former St.Judes vicarage may also be used as a holding area if crowds build up early before the gates open (11-30 am Saturday, 12 noon on Sunday, 1 pm on Friday).



Drpbx 2005-07-01.jpg

Outside the actual event dates, the organisers will fence off sections of the park in stages for setting up, a process which will be run in reverse afterwards. Initially there will be 2 large compounds, one based on the music stage for the Country Show and extending towards the Herne Hill gate, the other between the community greenhouses and Brockwell Hall. Over the bank holiday weekend, a third compound will appear further east, left of the path from the Herne Hill gate up to Brockwell Hall.

Field Day's operations manager is James Dutton, james.dutton@broadwicklive.com

During the events, Field day's community liaison manager, Kelly Stewart, will be based at 198 Gallery close to the park – contact 07 540 724 698, kelly@fielddayfestivals.com

Remember also to feed back any practical problems to us or other local groups, to guide us in assessing future event proposals.

There remains the concern that this scale of operation two or three times a year is not sustainable without lasting damage to the fabric of the park. Future events need to be smaller so that different areas can be rested and the public are not deprived of so much of their precious greenspace each time.

Alan Piper.

Carnegie ghost library opens

After 22 months of closure, Carnegie Library re-opened on a limited basis on 15 February. At present it's all in the central library space but the aim is to move it later into one of the smaller spaces at the front. There is no disabled access yet and librarians only attend for 2 hours a day.

Local Gardens open for charity

The Dulwich Society's garden group casts its net wide in persuading enthusiasts to open their gardens to the paying public, and once again there are some local examples:

60 & 62 Brixton Water Lane will open on Sunday 10 June, 2 to 5-30, combined entry £5.
31 Trelawn Road nearby opens on the same day and times, entry fee £3.

Cultural Impact Award

As a runner-up prize in the recent contest for London Borough of Culture, Lambeth was awarded £200,000 by the Mayor for its **Next Generation Project**, which will work with key cultural institutions in the borough to provide skills and job opportunities for young people in the arts and creative fields.

Key contacts at Lambeth Council are Dawn Bunce (arts officer) dbunce@lambeth.gov.uk and Matthew Blades (regeneration/ business & investment) mblades@lambeth.gov.uk

A South London street – Loughborough Road, its residents, shops and taverns

LEAF TRA, the tenants and residents association covering Loughborough Road (Brixton Road to Fiveways junction), Evandale Road and Akerman Road (Mostyn Road to Fiveways junction) is launching a South London Street heritage project. With the support of a small grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the project aims to uncover the hidden stories of the people who have lived and worked on Loughborough Road, in its shops and pubs, over the past 200 years.

We really want to hear from anyone who has any stories or memories of the small row of shops, on Loughborough Road by the Fiveways junction with Lilford and Akerman Roads, and the two pubs/venues: the Jamm, formerly the White Horse, at the junction of Loughborough Road and Brixton Road, and the Loughborough Hotel on the corner of Evandale Road and Loughborough road.

We'll be running some oral history interview training for up to 10 local residents who will lead on interviewing and digitally recording their neighbours' stories.

If you would like to join us to help with doing the interviews or you have memories of the area and would be willing to be interviewed, we'd love to hear from you.

Of course, we'll be using Lambeth Archives for some of the research, as well as visiting other archives including London Metropolitan Archives, Black Cultural Archives and the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Archives. (See Brixton Society newsletter October 2017 for the story of Nellie Roberts, a former resident at one of the Loughborough Road shops who was RHS orchid artist for over 50 years.)



There used to be more shops at the Brixton Road end of Loughborough Road (seen above), until the Angell Town estate was built in the early 1970s – but what was the name of the pub on the corner of Angell Road? (Bx-LR1.jpg)

In 2019, following the research phase there will be:

- An exhibition in the windows of the shops and pubs with posters displaying short histories of each place.
- An associated exhibition will be held at Lambeth Archives presenting additional materials and documents relating to the people and businesses.
- An accompanying book will be published by The Brixton Society, telling the stories of the people and places.
- All written histories and digital oral histories will be deposited at Lambeth Archives and any past photographs of the area emerging from the project will be added to the Archive's Landmark image website.

If you'd like to know more, share your stories or get involved, contact Tracey Gregory at leaftra@gmail.com. We'll be publishing updates in future Brixton Society newsletters.

The Struggle for the Vote

While this year marks the centenary of the right to vote being extended to women – or at least those over 30 – it has only been part of a long struggle to widen the franchise among the adult population. Since medieval times, members of parliament had been elected by owners of land or premises of a certain value. In 1832 the threshold was lowered to allow more middle class men to qualify, but working class people were still excluded. At the same time, Lambeth (from Brixton northwards) became a parliamentary borough, electing 2 members, instead of being part of the Surrey constituency.

Local History Focus

The Chartist movement was a popular campaign that saw working people come together behind the Charter's six demands for democratic reform. Their fight for justice included dedicated women's groups, and inspirational figures such as Anne Knight, who produced what is thought to be the earliest leaflet on women's suffrage. Another leading figure was William Cuffay, son of an emancipated slave.

In the spring of 1848, as revolution and unrest raged across Europe, Kennington Common was at the centre of the fight for social justice in Britain. Tens of thousands of people gathered on the Common (since replaced by Kennington Park) on 10th April, demanding the right to vote. The **Kennington Chartist Project** celebrates our local park's dramatic place in the history of protest and democracy. It is supported by the Friends of Kennington Park and the National Lottery, through the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Between April and October there will be a number of talks, guided walks, workshops in 2 local primary schools, and a park event in July. Young people will explore writing a new Charter and the traditions of oratory, protest songs and banners. We will be building an online archive and asking people for ideas for a permanent memorial or commemoration for the 175th anniversary in 2023.

Upcoming talks at St. Mark's Church include:
Saturday 28 April, 7-30 pm, Kennington and 1848, year of revolution, by Malcolm Chase (historian of popular politics).

Saturday 5 May, 7-30 pm, Who was William Cuffay? S.I. Martin (writer on Black history) and Katrina Navickas (historian of popular protest).

Saturday 19 May, 7-30 pm, Salt Pork and Daguerrotypes – unpacking evidence from 1848, by David Steele (researcher of crowds in Britain).

For more events, do visit the website,
www.kenningtonchartistproject.org

Poets' corner

One marker of the ongoing voting restrictions in the mid-19th century is the group of streets south-east of Brixton, laid out in 1855 by the Westminster Freehold Land Society. The worthy intention was to provide self-build house plots of sufficient size for the new residents to qualify as voters, but take-up was slow until the opening of the nearby railway line to Victoria in August 1862.

After Disraeli widened the franchise in 1867, the remaining plots were gradually taken up by speculative builders, resulting in a great variety of Victorian house types.

ADP.

More Brixton memories

"Lovely to see the refurbished 45 Electric Avenue on the front of the October newsletter. This was the site of my first job in 1948, at John Maxwell's menswear shop. It was owned by M. & N. Horne, of the Angel, Islington. I lived 2 streets away in Rushcroft Road, where my father had a shoe repair shop.

I had a look at the site last year, when the owners let me go down to the cellar where they store their greengrocery. In my day we served customers there. Perhaps next time I will be able to see the two upper floors, and even that dome on top."

Ivan Mattin, Hoddesdon.

Voices from the Front Line

Just one more grassroots history project, then we really must move on...

Voices from the Front Line was a multi-media arts and heritage project hosted by **198 Gallery** for Lambeth young people aged 13-25 from diverse backgrounds. It provided opportunities to learn new skills, be creative, and investigate the heritage of the local area through archive visits, workshops and creative activities. It culminated in an exhibition at the gallery in Railton Road, between 9 February and 23 March, with additional talks and workshops.

The project explored an important aspect of Brixton's heritage, the political and social history of Railton Road, known for being home to many of the Caribbean community in the post-Windrush period, and flash-point of the Brixton riots in April 1981. Against a backdrop of increasing gentrification and social change, the project has sought to document the sites, personalities and events which have shaped the area. As part of the investigation into this once contested space, the project asked "What characterises the spirit of Railton Road? What does the space now mean for people who visited and lived on the street?"

For highlights of the programme, interviews and to see the resulting printed material, visit the website <https://frontline198.com>

For more information on current activities at 198 Gallery, see <http://198.org.uk>

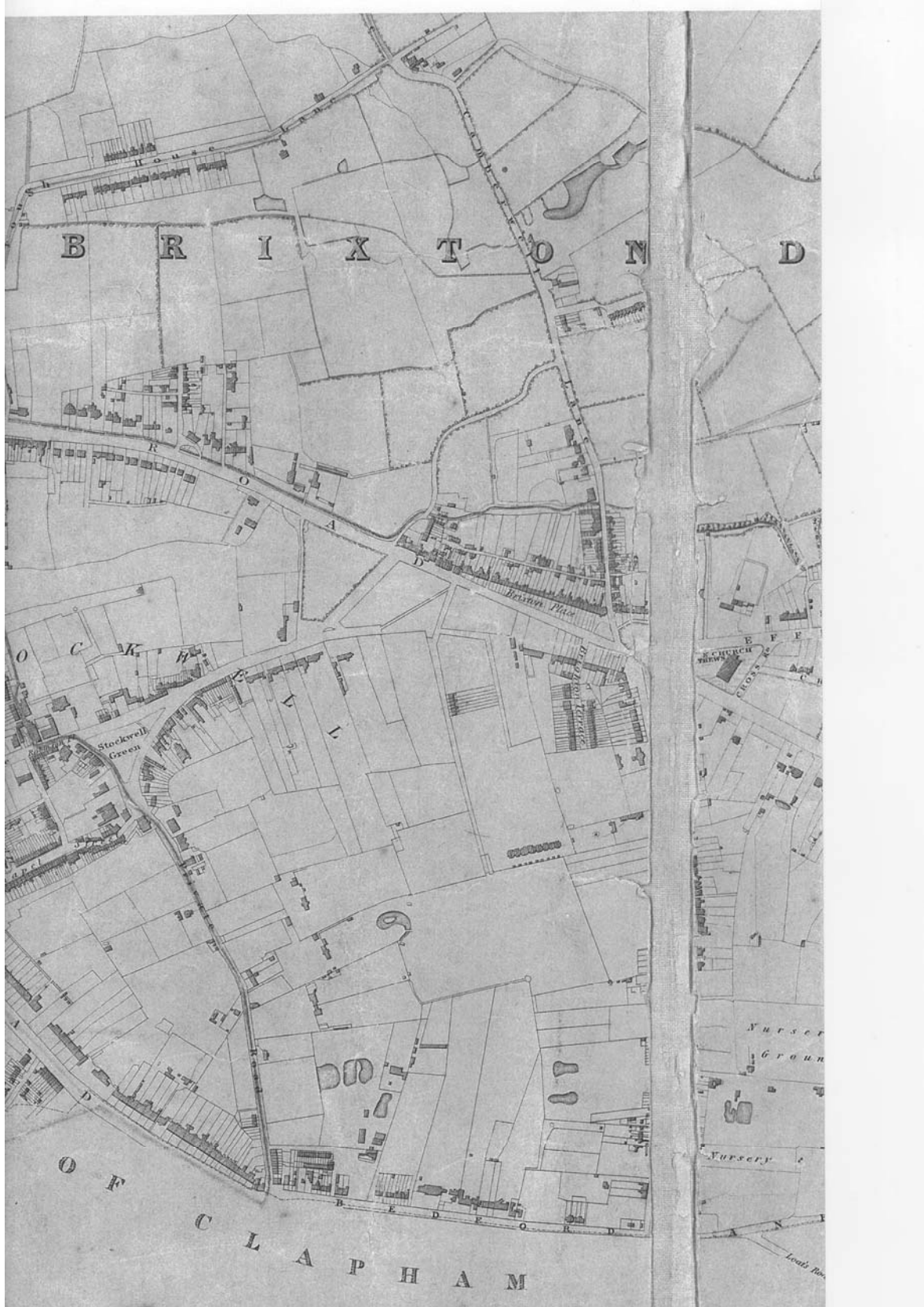
198 are currently pursuing plans to add 2 more floors above the gallery, to provide studio space and additional offices at a time when space for creative enterprises is becoming harder to find.

Local History Focus



Brixton Markets 50 years ago: The top picture is Electric Avenue with a surviving section of the glazed canopy just on this side of the road. The busy lower view is part of Brixton Village, then still Granville Arcade, looking towards First Avenue. Both photos were included in Lambeth Council's 1969 Brixton Town Centre Plan, presumably to show the untidy but vibrant shopping scene they were so keen to sweep away.

Local History Focus



Part of the Lambeth Parish map of 1841, centred on Brixton with North to the left. Acre Lane is masked by a fold in the map, with Bedford Road at the bottom. Coldharbour Lane is shown as Camberwell Lane, while Stockwell Green and Stockwell Common are not yet built on.

Back to Basics:

Objecting to a Planning application or appeal

Local residents or organisations often seek our advice when they find out about a planning application which may impact on them, so here are some basic points to follow.

Time is critical

When the council notifies neighbours by post, it normally allows them 3 weeks to respond with comments or objections, but you may have less if post is delayed, or you only found out from somebody else. If you are concerned, you need to move fast if you want to mobilise opposition (or support) – don't leave it until the weekend to share your concerns!

In theory you can send in comments up until the time the case officer writes the decision letter, but your chances of influencing the result diminish rapidly after the deadline for comments has passed.

Get the full picture

Easier said than done, because plans are no longer sent to local libraries (not many left staffed anyway!) and currently the planning department has no enquiry desk and operates from an accommodation address in Winchester!

For those with Internet access, look up the application by address or reference number on the applications database within the Council's website. Check the timetable for comments and decisions. The first document to look at should be the **Design & Access statement**, which should explain the proposals, even if the plans themselves may be hard to follow.

Are proposals against policy?

Every council publishes planning policies for its area to indicate what is or is not likely to be approved. Above these sit the Mayor's London Plan (qv) and the National Planning Policy Framework, which applies where local plans are silent or vague.

The strongest arguments to block a proposal are made by showing that it defies a published policy. Unfortunately, there are many fine-sounding policies which are too fuzzy or can contradict each other.

Is permission even needed?

To reduce the number of minor applications that councils have to process, the trend over the past decade has been to extend the scope of permitted development (PD) including allowing more changes of use in business premises. As a result, the contentious part of the proposals might already be allowed, so that the developer only needs approval for something superficial like a new sign or shopfront. The scope of PD is reduced in Conservation Areas, or if the Council has made an Article 4 direction.

Getting neighbours on side

Anyone thinking about making a planning application is officially encouraged to consult neighbours beforehand, though it's not yet compulsory. For a householder that means at least speaking to the people next door before extending upwards, downwards or sideways. For a larger development, draft plans might be displayed for comment at a local community building before the final application goes in. A savvy developer can tweak his application to allay local concerns.

Similarly, if you are objecting, you should aim to mobilise local opinion – never fight alone. Social media can make this easier, and at least tell us of your concerns by e-mailing to planning@brixtonsociety.org.uk

What about Councillors?

Applications are only submitted to a committee of councillors for decision in rare cases – either because an important policy issue arises or if there are lots of objections but the planners still want it anyway. There are limited rights for objectors to address the planning committee, but this is really a last throw of the dice. However, it's still worth trying to involve your local councillor at the outset, in case they can exercise any influence.

Some bribery is allowed!

Strangely, planning is one area of public life where bribery is permissible, provided it goes to the council and not to individuals. Developers can provide new amenities or infrastructure to enable their development to take place ("Section 106") or more usually, pay

Planning News

a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) based on floor area or number of flats. Residential development is also supposed to include a proportion of “affordable” dwellings. All this means negotiations with the planners such that the council becomes an interested party in the development going ahead. Thus large developments are harder to stop than small-scale alterations where the council is more neutral.

Conditions, details and variations

The Council may impose conditions when granting planning permission, and these can be used to appease local concerns. You will need to be vigilant though that the conditions are followed by the developer. They might require him to provide further details later of how a problem will be dealt with. He might also apply later for a variation of a condition, but you need to respond promptly to these “minor” matters because the consultation periods are shorter.

Appeals

Sadly, only the original applicant has a right of appeal, if the application was refused **or** if he felt the conditions were too onerous. Most appeals are decided by a government Planning Inspector, based on written representations from interested parties. This is an opportunity to restate or refine your past objections. If your case was that the proposal would block your daylight or access, or expose you to noisy/smelly processes, you can ask the Inspector to visit before making his or her decision. In rare cases, there may be a public inquiry or a less formal hearing, with opportunities to bring witnesses before the inspector.

Further information

The Planning Portal website provides useful guidance on what needs planning permission and the mechanics of applications and appeals: www.planningportal.co.uk
Current planning policies, design guides and conservation area appraisals can be found on the planning pages of Lambeth Council’s website: www.lambeth.gov.uk

Alan Piper.

The Bigger Picture

The Mayor published a draft new London Plan on 1st December, to set the pattern for development across Greater London as a whole. On 1st March we submitted comments on the most relevant policies to Inner London areas like Brixton, including housing, social infrastructure, workspace, the night-time economy, green spaces, air quality and transport. No space to say more here, but if you e-mail to info@brixtonsociety.org.uk we can forward our 5-page document.

Ours is only a spare-time operation, so we are unable to take up every good cause. Thus we took no action on the recent consultation on the proposed further expansion of Heathrow Airport, in the absence of any clamour from our members.

However the next big one will be a revised draft of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which is open for comments until **10 May**. Again, the deadline means we need to hear from you NOW if you have any concerns – respond to planning@brixtonsociety.org.uk

Neighbourhood Plans update

The plan for Kennington, Oval and Vauxhall was launched for comment on 19 March, with comments needed by **9 May**. This has just a small overlap with our catchment area – west of Brixton Road and north of South Island Place – but the plan drawn up by their neighbourhood forum looks impressive. See their website <https://www.kovforum.org.uk>

A draft plan for **Tulse Hill** is currently being drawn up and is likely to emerge in June, though with Erica Tate scaling back her work with the forum, we wonder who will drive the process. An over-ambitious bid to create a Greater Herne Hill plan was knocked back, but the process highlighted a pocket of residents around Deronda and Romola Roads who wanted to be included in Herne Hill rather than the Tulse Hill Plan.

On the far side of the South Circular, work is underway on a plan for West Norwood, with an event planned for **Wednesday 25 April**, 7 pm at Portico Gallery, 23a Knights Hill SE27.

Notes & News

Members' Corner

Making an exhibition of ourselves

We run stalls at a number of events in the course of the year, to sell our publications and promote the Society. We are always in need of more volunteers to share the work, especially over the weekend of the Lambeth Country Show. We aim to pair you up with a more experienced member, and for no more than 2 hours in the day. If you can lend a hand (or with setting up/ taking down) please contact Bill or Diana Linskey on 020 7274 3835 or e-mail diana@linskey.org.uk

Newsletter distribution

Copies for most members have long been delivered by a team of volunteers, but we are stretched to cover some corners of our patch, so more help would be welcome – contact Bill or Diana as above.

Complimentary copies are supplied to local councillors and selected local organisations, but we have been reviewing the list to limit our postage costs. If you can afford to subscribe, please do so! We continue to exchange newsletters with the other amenity societies around us – reading them is one of the few perks of the Secretary's job.

Data Protection

You have probably seen reminders from other organisations about forthcoming changes to data regulations (GDPR). Our database is quite primitive by modern standards, to ensure we deliver newsletters and collect members' subscriptions. There may be some changes to the small print, but we don't record your social profile or preferences. Remember to tell us of any errors or changes in your address, and it's very helpful to have an e-mail and phone number too – notify corrections to membership@brixtonsociety.org.uk

We have been very sparing in our use of e-mails, mainly to alert members when there are last-minute changes or additions to our events. If you really want to hear from us more often, please tell us!

Alan Piper, Secretary.



A view from the top of Brixton Hill towards the City, c. 1790. (Drpbx 2007-11-20)

Changing Times Quiz

Currently the Brixton scene seems to be changing at a faster pace than we have seen for a long time, though some corners are yet untouched. What's it like down your way?

My neighbour's vehicle is:

- A. A white van;
- B. A SUV or 4-wheel-drive;
- C. A Robinson R22 helicopter.

In my neighbour's front garden there is

- A. An old fridge;
- B. A bike store;
- C. A tree fern or palm tree.

The old corner shop is now:

- A. A hairdresser or nail parlour;
- B. A coffee shop;
- C. A yoga studio.

The local pub is:

- A. Still going despite a change of name;
- B. Converted into flats;
- C. Replaced by a bigger block of flats.

My neighbour is extending his house with:

- A. A conservatory;
- B. A loft conversion;
- C. A new basement.

My other neighbour is using her attic for:

- A. Growing cannabis under lamps;
- B. A home office;
- C. A bedroom for the au pair.

The old bank is now:

- A. A betting shop;
- B. Another coffee shop;
- C. An estate agent.

My local supermarket is:

- A. Aldi/ Lidl/ Netto;
- B. Tesco/ Sainsbury/ Morrisons;
- C. Waitrose.

Answers: (from overleaf)

Mainly A: the 21st century has yet to reach you.

Mainly B: hanging in the balance...

Mainly C: Gentrification has truly arrived!

Housing claims disputed

Just before Easter, Lambeth Labour launched its manifesto in readiness for the Council elections on 3rd May. The more vote-winning ideas proposed by the Momentum group have largely been ignored, and the only substantial promise is to make good on the 2014 pledge to build 1000 new council houses in the borough. However, it's not clear over what period of time this will be achieved. Lambeth Housing Activists have claimed that only 17 have actually been provided so far. Neither is it clear if this is an actual increase after allowing for the hundreds being taken out of use during the rebuilding of several council estates under the current Estate Regeneration programme, including Cressingham Gardens, Central Hill and Fenwick estate.

Strangely, Lambeth has just missed the chance of an early boost to the number of social-rented homes by turning down the costed bid from **Brixton Green**, including funding from a housing association, to build the approved scheme for the vacant Somerleyton Road site. This would quickly provide 234 homes without the need to remove any others – and protected from loss under the Right to Buy. It could have been the full 304 homes originally planned, but Lambeth failed to pursue a Compulsory Purchase Order to buy back one of the factory sites it sold off 20 years earlier. Lambeth now seems determined to lead the development itself, either through its new house-building subsidiary or another obscure deal with private sector friends. Yet no dates have even been set in its business plan.

More information can be found on several websites, including:

www.brixtongreen.org

<https://www.facebook.com/savecressinghamgardens>

www.brixtonbuzz.com and

www.brixtonblog.com

Underground Utilities

As part of modernising the National Grid, a deep tunnel is to be excavated across South London between Wimbledon and New Cross, to carry high-voltage electricity cables. As with the current work on the Thames Tideway sewer tunnel, it will need shafts to be sunk at intervals along the route, to provide access and remove spoil. It is proposed to sink one shaft at the corner of **Acre Lane** and King's Avenue, where the site is still vacant after another development was refused permission. Proposals will be displayed at **Clapham Library**, 91 Clapham High Street SW4 on Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 April, between 2 pm and 8 pm each day. Enquiries to nationalgrid@londonpowertunnels.co.uk or 0800 783 2855.

Meanwhile, road works continue along Brixton Road, to renew a major **gas** main. The present focus is on the section between Normandy Road and Wynne Road. In Summer 2019 work will move onto the busy section south of Wynne Road, down to Coldharbour Lane.

Jim Nicolson of Vauxhall

Veteran members of the Brixton Society were sad to hear of the death of Jim Nicolson on 15 January, aged 88. For many years he was Secretary of the Vauxhall Society, founded in the late 1960s, and his experience and encouragement helped in establishing our own society on similar lines. In those early days he was a leading light in co-ordinating the work of the various amenity societies within the borough.

He was active in protecting Albert Square from redevelopment and neglect, and later helped to organise the Lambeth Local History Forum. Members of the forum attended his humanist funeral at west Norwood on 21st February.

Although he had studied architecture at Hammersmith, his professional career was as a TV set designer, first for Associated Rediffusion and then with Thames Television. Sadly, we had rather lost touch after he retired from the committee of the Vauxhall Society some 15 years ago.

ADP.