

No. 139 March 2009

Council probes safer crossing for junction

Richmond Council is planning to put a zebra crossing at the junction of Waldegrave Road, Tower Road, Strawberry Vale and Cross Deep. As a direct result of representations by SHRA and residents, the Council's Highways and Transport department will forward its recommendations to Cllr David Trigg, Cabinet Member for Transport, by mid-March.

Parents living nearby say they have witnessed many near accidents while taking children to school and fear that soon a child could be seriously hurt (see SHRA Bulletin 138).

Richmond Council's Highways and Transport department says its officers will undertake an analysis and feasibility report.



Emily Cotton, Ellen Purton and children

The department says that CCTV captured images of traffic and pedestrian movements at the junction before Christmas. The data are under review and will form the basis of its recommendations to Cllr Trigg.

Plans to tidy up Gifford House site

Richmond Council has promised to move swiftly to tidy up the Gifford House site which is attracting graffiti, rubbish dumping and parking on the pavement. There have also been burglaries at neighbouring houses.

Uncertainty remains over the fate of the Council-owned Gifford House site. Residents had hoped that the former care home for the elderly would be sold by now, but it seems that the sales process, which started last year, is ongoing. Possible buyers have a variety of plans for the site.

The former Twickenham Day Nursery, at the back of the Gifford House site, has planning permission for development as a Council-run

Contact Centre for assessing children for the courts.

The Council has promised to replace the wooden hoarding with strong wire mesh so as not to provide a blank canvass for graffiti. The Council is also consulting with Care UK, which has a lease of around seventeen years for Gifford House, with a view to installing metal mesh along the Popes Avenue side. It is also hoped to bring the gates of the Centre development closer to the road to prevent entrance to the Gifford House garden. Wire had already been erected behind the Gifford House boundary wall which had to be removed for safety reasons.

The Council is in the process of choosing a contractor to build the Contact Centre and it seems that this will be announced at the Council meeting on 23 March. Building is unlikely to start for a few months as various plans still need to be prepared and presented to the planning department. The earliest that the Centre will be completed is February 2010.

A resident whose home overlooks the site says: "It is very stressful. We are living with a building site in the middle of our houses and an empty building to the side.

The Council officers have been very helpful, but such problems seem to be inherent in the situation – i.e. a building left empty for over four years and building developments which start and stop."

(see history of Gifford House on page 2)

SHRA AGM 20th April



The Annual General Meeting of the Strawberry Hill Residents' Association will be held at 7:00 for 7:30 pm on Monday April 20th at Strawberry Hill Golf Club, Wellesley Road.

Free coffee and tea will be available, as well as a cash bar. All residents are invited to attend.

Post office now does bulk posting

Strawberry Hill post office continues to add new services so as to ensure its survival. In addition to recently added Oyster cards the post office will now accept and stamp bulk packages for local people.

"These are local businesses doing mail order for such things as CDs and books," says Jay Patel. "We do their stamping when they're short of manpower and it keeps the business in the local post office".

The post office's dry cleaning service is also proving very popular.

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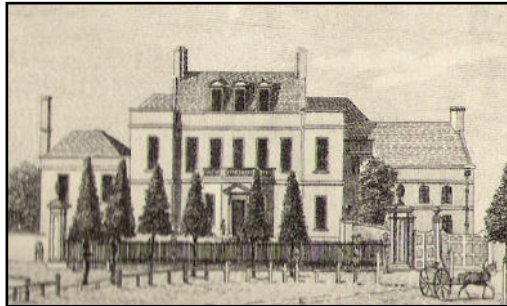
Gifford House - the western wall

Gifford House, a former care home, is known to people in the area for the controversy surrounding its future. Closed down in 2004, the fate of the site is still unknown. However, its past is a different matter.

Dating back to the seventeenth century, the history of the Gifford Lodge Estate is well documented by Anthony Beckles Willson on the Twickenham Museum website (search for Gifford):

<http://www.twickenham-museum.org.uk/>

The land occupied by the Gifford House care home was previously the garden of a handsome mansion, Gifford Lodge. Its illustrious former owners over the centuries include the first Earl of Strafford who negotiated the Treaty of Utrecht, Lady Eleanor Holles who founded the famous school for girls, Sir Chaloner Ogle, Admiral of the Fleet and Ruler of the King's Navy and Dorothea Jordan, the famous actress and mistress of the Duke of Clarence, later William IV. The house was acquired by the Council under wartime powers



Gifford Lodge in 1753

as a day nursery. By 1963 it was occupied by squatters, caught fire and was demolished.

Artifacts

Towards the end of 2008, the Contact Centre, at the back of the former care home, was taken down and an archaeological evaluation undertaken. The western wall of Gifford Lodge was uncovered in the former Centre's garden. It appears that a brick-built well, a path and two drainage structures were also discovered.

Various artifacts found on the former

Centre site included ceramic building material, a white earthenware doorknob and hand-made bricks.

A desk study has also been undertaken by the Museum of London Archaeology Service which also lists artifacts found

in the surrounding area. These include:

- Animal bones possibly dating from the Palaeolithic period near Pope's Grotto.
- A Mesolithic axe in Walpole Road.
- Evidence of Bronze Age field systems at Pope's Grotto public house.

- Bronze Age sword and other artifacts: River Thames opposite Pope's Villa.
- A 2nd-century Roman coin in Hampton Road.

Acknowledgements: Geoffrey Morgan and Anthony Beckles Willson (Gifford Lodge history), David Maples and Tom McKeivitt (Archaeological Evaluation of the Contact Centre site, December 2008)

Did you know...

... that Tower Road is named after a water tower, which stood there until it was demolished in 1950?

It supplied water to Strawberry Hill House and stood in the grounds of Harpree House in Waldegrave Road. It was probably built in 1857 by Lady Waldegrave. Harpree House itself was Walpole's "Cottage in the Woods", to which he would retreat to escape from visitors.

This, and many other fascinating facts about the area, can be found in "Strawberry Hill; A History of the Neighbourhood" by Tony Beckles Willson, available from Langton's Bookshop, the Twickenham Museum and the Secretary.

Planning Decisions

48 Waldegrave Park

A resident had applied to demolish a very undistinguished 1960s house and replace it with a new, Victorian-style, larger one. The council planning officer recommended refusal because of a policy item in the Borough Unitary Development Plan which states that a redevelopment must provide "a substantial housing gain", interpreted in this case as an additional dwelling. The SHRA Committee had written a letter of support for the application.

The Planning Committee overturned the officer's recommendation and approved the application on the basis that the replacement would be considerably more in keeping with the Victorian houses in the adjacent conservation area, that it would provide much more living space and that it would be carbon-neutral. Although this should not be taken as a precedent for future decisions, the SHRA is pleased that the Council is prepared to make exceptions in exceptional circumstances.

St Mary's College Sports Hall

St Mary's University College was granted permission to build a new sports hall and to refurbish and remodel the existing sports hall, together with landscaping within Metropolitan Open Land. The application was opposed by residents immediately affected by the development, by Cllr Clare Head and by the SHRA.

A number of non-standard conditions were imposed including a Scheme for the protection of trees. Full details of the plan and conditions can be found on the Richmond Council website among the Calendar of meetings for January 22.

Several of the councillors on the Planning Committee criticised the College for an inadequate dialogue with the local residents. Following on from this, SHRA has written to the Principal of the College proposing that a sub-committee of SHRA should liaise with the College on a regular basis on matters of mutual interest. We will report on developments on this subject in the next Bulletin.

Planning merry-go-round

A planning application was submitted in 2007 for the change of use of the vacant room on Platform 2 at the station to a taxi hire office. This is still undecided.

More recently, an application was submitted for another change of use of the old Peaches and Clean dry cleaning shop in Rochester House in Tower Road to a minicab and chauffeur office.

Another application is expected soon for a change of use of the Lovett International office also in Rochester House to: a dry cleaning business!



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Bowls Club plans open day

Strawberry Hill Bowls Club, founded in 1920, is to hold an open day on Sunday, May 30, from 11 am to 5 pm, inviting the public to try their hand at this ancient game.

Free equipment will be provided and bowls coaches will be on hand to give guidance. All you need is flat-soled shoes to avoid damaging the green. Free refreshments will also be provided.



A Ladies versus Gentlemen match in April 2008

For those who cannot attend the open day, the Club is running a Saturday Beginner's Course running on May 10, 17, 24 and 31 from 10.20 am to 12 noon. The cost is £5 and includes all equipment and coaching. Should you become a member, the £5 is refunded from the annual subscription.

The Club has 68 members ranging in age from 17 to more than 80 with asocial evening every Thursday, internal competitions, friendly matches against local clubs, and social events such as quiz nights and an annual dinner.

For further information contact: Alan Hewitt on 020 8898 6803.

Police Liaison Group

Committee member Clare Phelps attends the borough-wide Community and Police Partnership meetings on behalf of SHRA. She also attends the local South Twickenham ward Police Liaison Group meetings, which are run by Sgt Denzil Darby and his team, our local Safer Neighbourhood police team.

These meetings give residents an opportunity to meet the team, and voice any concerns or problems they may have. The next PLG meeting will be on Wednesday 17th June in St. James Hall, in Radnor Road. The SNT also hold monthly surgeries at St. Marys College on Tuesday evenings, (dates on the station notice board) where residents can discuss any problems.

Residents can contact the SNT team for non-urgent problems on 020 8721 2910 (answering machine operates) or email:

southtwickenham.snt@met.police.net

Café poised for Spring opening

By Cllr Clare Head, Chairman, Friends of Radnor Gardens

In the last year, the main gates of Radnor Gardens have been replaced and look very smart. The entrance has been widened so that large vehicles can enter, but the paths now have bollards so that vehicles can't drive on the grass.

The collapsed paving near the central steps that lead to the War Memorial is nearly finished. Many thanks to John Armstrong (our deputy chairman) for organising a flag pole near to the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday. It looked very fine and I have never seen so many people attend the service which was, as always, a moving and poignant occasion.

The disused café is now fully restored inside (not for £53,000 as was originally costed by the Council's consultants, but for £3,000! See how we look after your money!). We are impatiently waiting for the council to get all the legal papers signed so the café can open in the Spring. We have

chairs (but no tables).

We look forward to seeing families enjoying a cup of tea and refreshments in the newly refurbished space next to the playground. We are still working on the problem that we have no public toilet facilities to offer families.



Councillor Head prepares to wash up in new kitchen in the café

We are delighted that the world famous tree expert from Kew Gardens, Tony Kirkham, has kindly agreed to give a talk at our AGM to be held at the Popes Grotto at 7.30 pm on Monday March 23rd. He will also answer questions, so do come along. Don't worry if you are not yet a member. We can always take your £3 (single) or £5 (families) membership on the door!

Finally we are very happy that we have forged links with the two

schools in Cross Deep (St. Catherine's and St James) who have offered help and provide facilities to us for our Family Fun Day, hopefully on the last Sunday of the Summer Holidays, September 6th. It is a lot of work and very weather dependant so fingers crossed.

I do hope you enjoy the Gardens and if you could make any offers of help do please get in touch with me on 020 8977 7789.

April Area Consultation Meeting

The next Area Consultation Meeting will be held on Wednesday 1st April at 7:30 pm in St James' Hall, Radnor Road. This is the first time the meeting has been held in the centre of our area and also the first time a meeting has been solely for residents of South Twickenham. If you want to raise a topic for the meeting, you should contact the Council up to 10 days ahead.

Area Consultation Meetings are an opportunity for you to come and meet your local Councillors and Police Representatives and discuss issues of local interest.

Station Booking Office

The Department for Transport has approved the revised opening hours for the station booking office. They are:

Monday to Friday: 06:15 to 19:00
 Saturday: 08:00 to 17:00
 Sunday: 09:00 to 13:00

It is expected that these times will be implemented from 1st May, although this is not yet certain.

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Under the spreading railway arch

(with apologies to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

Steve Clarke, Strawberry Hill blacksmith, does not have a spreading chestnut tree under which to hammer on his anvil. But he does have a railway arch by the side of the bridge in Pope's Grove.

There are many who are not aware that Strawberry Hill has a blacksmith. Steve, helped by his assistant Dave Viggers, has been hammering, bending, twisting and cajoling hot steel and iron at his forge for the last 15 years.

His gates and balconies can be seen in front of homes all over Strawberry Hill, as well as schools and parks in surrounding boroughs.

Walking into arch 34 is to step back into the 19th century. Heavy metal pincers, pliers and hammers hang from the walls. A massive iron press, like a medieval instrument of torture, stands menacingly at the end of the room beside racks of steel. The only modern touch is the small, gas-fired farriers' forge for heating the metal. Health and




Steve Clarke welding in his workshop

Safety (oh yes!) will not permit a full-sized fiery forge.

Steve has been a blacksmith for 30 years. He lives in Whitton, but set up shop in Strawberry Hill when his children attended St James's School. Railing and decorative metal work are his mainstay. Steve says: "You can see my work all over the village. There's some nice stuff in Bonser Road and Orford Gardens."

STEVE CLARK - BLACKSMITH



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Please send any comments, praise or criticism you may have to: Bulletin@shra.org.uk

RENEWAL OF SUBSCRIPTION of £3.00 (minimum) PER HOME FOR YEAR 2009

This subscription renewal may be made by cash or cheque made payable to Strawberry Hill Residents' Association.

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- A** John Naish, 12 Waldegrave Gardens, TW1 4PG
- B** Costcutter by Strawberry Hill Station
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Payment may also be made by Standing Order. Forms are available from John or from the SHRA website (www.shra.org.uk)

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