

LEE MANOR SOCIETY



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Next Regular Meeting
7.30pm on 6th December 2017
at: 12 Micheldever Road, London SE12 8LX

Open to all residents in the area. Formalities end 9.00pm - refreshments afterwards

Notes of our Meeting on 15th November 2017

Present: Ralph White (Chairman), David Plumer, Patti Byford, Frances Migniuolo, Veronica Simmonds, Charles Batchelor, Suki Goodman, Vanessa Tinker, Mary Donovan and Sheila Peck (Secretary).

Apologies: Lorraine Burton, Sue Byford, Judy Cole, Sylvia Ling, Gill Stoker, Rita Craft and Linda Wonbon.

Lee Green Consortium Volunteers Social

The event, held in Lochaber Hall on 11th November, was a great success – well attended and with lovely food and drink, music and a raffle. The purpose was to share experiences of volunteering and learn from other groups. The plan is to make it an annual event. LMS contributed £40 to the costs.

Planning Community Group Forum on Oct. 26th in Lewisham Town Hall

This was the second of a six-monthly series of meetings of Conservation and other Societies with the Planning Department following the abolition three years ago of the fortnightly "Panel" meetings where representatives considered individual planning applications in Conservation areas. Charles represented the Society.

David Syme, Strategic Planning Manager, gave a list of senior Planning Dept. staff under Emma Talbot, Head of Planning. Mr Syme ran through recent Council actions including work on a draft Housing Strategy to identify small sites though the focus for new homes remains "town centres" (such as Leegate). The plan is for "design-led density", whatever that means. Lewisham has achieved a 20% affordable housing figure in the past year though the target, subject to viability assessments, remains 50%. The Council has produced 'working drafts' for special Planning Guidance on extensions and alterations and for a new Statement of Community Involvement. The Planning Dept. now has 25 Planning Officers (up from 11 five years ago) though officers now carry out their own support functions. There are two Conservation Managers, Natasha Peach and Joanna Ecclestone, and three Enforcement Officers with a new Enforcement Head, Luke Perkins, having just joined. Richard McEllistrum, Head of Development Management, said Lewisham had dealt with 4,000 Planning Applications last year. 90% were dealt with by Officers (i.e. they did not go to a Planning Committee) against the 95% London average. Charles queried the Council's failure to maintain an adequate street tree planting programme. Lewisham plants far fewer trees than surrounding Boroughs such as Southwark and Greenwich.

Comment: Planners claim these meetings replace the "Panels", but they do not. Their value lies in them giving us an opportunity to meet the senior planning people, but they do not allow any

discussion of individual applications. Too often council representatives present an unduly glossy, top-down picture of what is happening while the experience of Societies on the ground is much less favourable. The meetings do give us a chance to inject some reality into the Council's thinking. The figure of 25 Planning Officers came as a surprise since the Council is always claiming lack of resources to deal with Planning Applications and objections. If Planning Officers are now carrying out jobs previously done by cheaper support staff this does not seem to be a sensible use of resources.

Ice House

We are preparing a rota of public openings for the coming year aligned as always with events in Manor House Gardens. The first opening of 2018 will be on Sunday 1 April from 3.00 – 5.00 pm.

Leegate meeting with St Modwen at their Leegate office on October 30th.

St. Modwen ('St M') represented by Colin Darby and Nick Smith. Sheila and Charles represented the Society. Other local societies also attended.

St M hoped to submit a revised planning application by the end of November, though this may since have been delayed. The new plan was first presented in the summer of 2017 when ASDA withdrew from the scheme and has since been slightly modified following consultation with the planners; it now involves a smaller anchor store, a larger public square and two walkways to the square from Carsten Close and the Eltham Road/Leyland Road corner. St M hope to start work on site in the summer of 2019 'at best'. Demolition and build would take 2 to 3 years depending on how fast the flats/houses are sold and progress on the build. There are slightly more homes (370-plus) of which 25% are affordable (of which 2/3rds are social rent and 1/3rd shared ownership). The anchor store will be a 'neighbourhood food store' with most customers assumed to be walking rather than driving. St M are talking to 'two or three' food groups and hope to decide by Spring 2018. New to the scheme are between 6 and 10 start-up units on easy leases for new businesses.

The public realm including the square has doubled in size from the original 'ASDA' plan to 4,000sq. metres. The height of building to the south of the square has been reduced by one storey to improve light to the square. Houses have replaced flats overlooking the walkway from Carsten Close to the square to make the route more friendly: kitchens will overlook the walkway giving more social control. More parking for the homes will be provided underground with a second entrance off Carsten Close. Parking will be provided for only 1 in 4 or 5 of the dwellings. There will be 40 parking spaces for the food store at ground level (vs more than 300 for the superstore in the 'ASDA' plan). Demolition and build will take place in three stages: firstly the north side including the public square, then the south side down to Carsten Close, finally the south-east Carsten Close/Leyland Road corner. St M says the plane trees on the present square are too big to move. The Community Centre is planned to be put on the first floor though Lee Green Lives is pushing for it to be moved to the ground floor where it would be more visible and more accessible.

Comment: The property market, in the shape of changing retail patterns, rather than Lewisham's Planners, has finally delivered the scheme the Society has been pressing for over the past 10 years. We are broadly in favour of what St M is now proposing, particularly the larger public square, but we must remain vigilant to see that what is now proposed is actually built.

AOB

St. Winifred's school: The Newstead Road expansion is almost complete, but no actual date for relocation is known to us. We have no news on the future use of the old school building in Effingham Road but we remain vigilant.

Trees: David F has asked the Assembly for funding for more trees in Manor Lane.

Manor House Library: Some book checking machines are still not working. Apparently a 'ransomware' attack has caused severe software security problems and these issues are still being resolved.

We thank Lee Green Lives Community Centre for hosting the meeting.