

update

The free newsletter of the St John's Society

What's happening at Seager ?

The residents of St John's have joined forces with the Brookmill Action Group and other local organisations to oppose planning permission for a **26 STOREY TOWER BLOCK**, which developers MacDonald Egan are planning to build at Deptford Broadway on the site of the old Seager Distillery.

Local people are not opposed to regeneration in Deptford, and welcome inward investment, which will create housing and jobs. However, they are worried about the current proposals for the Seager site.

The height of the building will dwarf historic Deptford and Greenwich. English Heritage having seen the plans say:

“English Heritage is absolutely clear that this scheme should be refused.”

There are a number of old buildings on the site including a Victorian Mill. These buildings are part of Deptford's heritage and should not be sacrificed for the sake of profit.

The number of affordable housing units being provided on the site is only increasing by 14 properties – surely a missed opportunity. Lewisham Council is also refusing to conduct

an environmental impact assessment for the development. There are going to be a number of regeneration projects in the local area and given the fact that Deptford is already a densely populated area of London, concerns have been raised that the Planning Committee appears to be considering each planning application in isolation.

By not looking at the bigger picture, residents are worried that local traffic, school places, hospital places will be adversely affected and the Council does not seem willing to address this. The Council has also not determined from the developers what planning gains there will be for the local community.

So what has happened so far? Many local residents found out about the plans by accident. Lewisham Planning Services have only actively consulted residents living close to the site, so many people who will be affected by the development (including those literally living in its shadow) do not know about it. Because Lewisham Council only consulted on such a small scale, local people worked hard, spreading the word about the planning application. Those residents who knew about the plans submitted objections to

Continued overleaf

Next Meeting: 8pm on Monday 2nd July 2001 at St John's Church

the Council. There have also been many objections sent via petition to the Council. In March there was a large public meeting at St John's Church during which residents expressed their reservations about the site.

Meetings have been held with MP Joan Ruddock, the developers and local residents. At these meetings the developers were asked to re-think their plans for the tall building, which they refused to do. Joan Ruddock MP, speaking about the proposals said;

“When I attended the public meeting at St John's Church I agreed with many of the residents about the Seager site proposals. Traffic parking and pedestrian safety were obvious concerns and I was extremely disappointed in the design and height of the tower. I subsequently met with the Brookmill Action Group to hear their detailed case and offered to convene a meeting with McDonald Egan to see what scope there was for compromise. We began a useful dialogue but there's a long way to go and vital discussions still to be had with the council.”

If you want to let the Council know your views you can write to Mark Gibney, Lewisham Planning Services, Laurence House, 1 Catford Rd, Catford, London SE6 4SW.

St Johns needs traffic management to stop the rat-runs.

This May we saw a visit of our local MP Joan Ruddock and road safety officials to St Johns to look at the problem of rat-running and poor road surfaces. Basically we really want to see improvements before we see a fatality. Furthermore for our roads, which in places are dire, to be re-surfaced.

There is case for doing this all at the same time especially when one considers that St Johns is part of the Sustrans cycle route, which would benefit from cycle lane provision. During the visit residents of St Johns pointed

out how the previous minimal traffic management has resulted in St Johns being made into more of a 'funnel' for traffic between two busy A-roads. St Johns is currently the only local route linking the two A-roads without traffic calming measures. We also had the benefit of witnessing speeding traffic on Brookmill Road during the visit.

We are asking for traffic calming and other measures in St Johns and wish to be involved in considering any scheme that might address the above mentioned issues. Lewisham Council have agreed to at least consider St Johns as a priority and an assessment of the area is still being carried out. They will let us know how the St John's area fits in with the borough's priorities. Already the officials are measuring speeds on Brookmill Rd, which we pointed out needed a number of measures to make it safe including pedestrian crossings.

Residents can help with this campaign by lobbying Mr Tom Henry of Lewisham Council, or Joan Ruddock MP. E-mail addresses are as follows:

Tom.Henry@lewisham.gov.uk
AlexanderH@parliament.uk

Alternatively contact the St Johns Society if you wish to be more involved.

Public Meeting
at
St John's Church
to discuss
The Seager Development
on
Tuesday, 12th June 2001
at
7:30 pm
Chaired by Joan Ruddock

Did you know?

The World's First Power Station

Since the sixteenth century, Deptford had provisioned all vessels associated with pioneering voyages. Sir Francis Drake departed from its banks in the Pelican, and James Cook set sail with the Endeavour in 1768 to chart the coasts of New Zealand and Australia. In 1889, however, it was Sebastian de Ferranti who became Deptford's latest pioneer, with the first ever large scale power station in the world. Ferranti's Power Station on the west side of Deptford Creek was the original building from which the modern power station of Deptford East grew. The Ferranti building was eventually decommissioned in 1957, the remaining buildings closed in 1983, and finally demolished in 1992. For the first time in several centuries there was little left to symbolise the greatness of Deptford's success.

Do you know any interesting facts about St Johns and Deptford that you would like to share with us? If so please drop them off at Cranbrook Road Post office, e-mail to us at st_johns_soc@hotmail.com or come along to one of our meetings.

Dates for your diary:

- Tuesday **12th June, 7:30 pm** Seager Building Public Meeting at St Johns Church
- Saturday **23rd June, pm** Brockley Society Fair at Hilly Fields, Lewisham
- Tuesday **26th June, 6:00pm** Park Users Group at Rangers Hut, Brookmill Park
- Monday **2nd July, 8:00pm** St Johns Society at St Johns Church
- Sunday **2nd September**, Brookmill Park party for all – look out for posters nearer the time

The Glendale Lewisham Events Guide:

Look out for this useful guide to events and leisure activities in Lewisham's parks. If you have any problem getting hold of one of these guides ring Lewisham's Parks Events on 020 8318 3986

Thank You

We would like to thank John at Cranbrook Road Post Office for allowing us to use the shop again as a collection point for all your tear-off slips.

PARK NEWS

Users of the park will have noticed a real improvement in Brookmill Park - it's starting to look cared for! The fountain works, the grass has been cut, the shrubs have been pruned. And there have been several river clean-ups since the last Update. Some idiots still use sunny weather as an opportunity to tag everything in sight but perhaps they'll grow up one day ...

The kids playground is to be moved from the far end of the park to a more central position. Work is due to start at the end of June and it is scheduled to be completed by 20 July (this year!) in time for the school holidays.

Anyone interested in joining the Brookmill Park User Group please ring Sarah (8691 3197) or turn up at the next meeting on Tuesday 26 JUNE at 6.00 pm at the park rangers' hut.

sebastian▶roche

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020 8291 9441



I cannot make the next St John's
Society meeting but I want to be kept
informed of future meetings

Name _____

Address _____

The issues I would like to raise are:

Please cut off this slip and send or leave at Cranbrook Road Post Office

If you wish to advertise your business in future issues of this newsletter then please
telephone 07010 700610 or e-mail us at: st_johns_soc@hotmail.com