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NEWS AND VIEWS OF WOODSIDE PARK

VOL. XIII No. 2 NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1967

Woodside Park
Ratepayers' and Residents' Association

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News and Views

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE
WOODSIDE PARK RATEPAYERS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Volume XIII No. 2 November-December 1967

EDITORIAL

WE are having a Christmas Tree again at Sussex Ring which will be lighted with colour lamps as last year and our thanks are again due to Mr. Bathe for so kindly providing the electricity from his shop premises.

Mr. Mellors will provide a bin to receive gifts which you may think it appropriate to place there not necessarily for the needy, as we said before, but as a gesture to those who are probably lonely at Christmas and who in the opinion of your committee members, would greatly appreciate your thought and kindness. Mr. D. D. Cohn, who lives nearby, has undertaken to take into his house every evening, the articles you place there and then on Christmas morning, Committee members will distribute them.

We are very grateful to Mrs. D. Fletcher of 83 Walmington Road for undertaking to collect subscriptions. As you know, she is a new member of our Committee.

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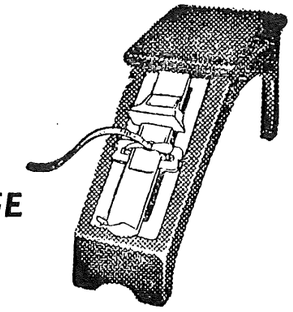

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Local Notes

Riverside Walk

The grass has picked up well and the area looks in much better shape after the removal of the air raid shelters. Some members of your Committee regretted the passing of the shelters because their shaggy grass slopes hid the line of fences at the rear of the houses in Chanctonbury Way. The son of one member, was, we understand quite broken-hearted at their disappearance, but, as we have said elsewhere in this magazine, there is unfortunately no Right of View, but we send him our sympathy.

We are grateful to the Borough Engineer, Mr. Pentecost, for having repaired the seats again.

Map of Woodside Park

It was suggested at our last meeting that a map of Woodside Park should be on permanent view in a glass case on the green in Sussex Ring by the shops and ways and means are being considered.

Postal Deliveries

We have heard a whisper that a mail delivery box may have to be provided in 18 months' time at your garden gate to save the time and labour of postmen walking up to your front door. We cannot vouch for the truth of this. Presumably a bread-bin type on a post, reminiscent of American films.

Parking

At the Annual General Meeting of the Golders Green Estate Ratepayers Association (a member of F.O.R.A.B.), questions were asked about the habit of lorry drivers or van drivers leaving their lorries in the Vale overnight, perhaps outside their houses, but in such a position as to block the entrance to drives of other houses. When complaints were made to the firm owning the lorries or vans and the drivers were called in to explain, a shop steward arrived and told the management: "Look, mate, what we do inside the firm's premises is your business, what we do outside is not your business."

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The Chief Engineer of the Highways and Transportation Department of the Greater London Council, who was present at the A.G.M., delivering his lecture on motorways said that off-street parking was a problem and it was being considered in his motorways schemes.

Barnet Borough Council Education Committee had previously not allowed car parking on the playground of Hillside Secondary School to accommodate persons using the Evening Institute but a proposal to provide additional spaces within the site at a cost not exceeding £1,650 was approved in principle early in October.

Tally-Ho Corner: Christmas Tree

The Rotary Club of Finchley has been given permission by the Barnet Council to place an illuminated Christmas Tree on the grass in front of the Tally-Ho public house for charitable purposes. The Council will erect the tree and the Rotary Club will pay for it.

Northern Line Delays

The Underground Northern line service to and from Barnet has deteriorated in recent weeks. Every day trains are cancelled and are late and we understand that at the Morden end of the line similar conditions prevail.

F.O.R.A.B. Honorary Auditor

Mr. Norman Bradstreet, your Honorary Treasurer, has accepted an invitation from the Federation of the Ratepayers and Residents Associations of Barnet to act as their Honorary Auditor. He has attended at their meetings for some time now as a representative from Woodside Park.

Rating of Empty Properties

The total irrecoverable Rates for the London Borough of Barnet (£418,852) is the highest figure for the outer London Boroughs of Greater London and includes £320,601 "loss" of rates on empty properties. F.O.R.A.B. has written to the Town Clerk asking that the amount of rates so lost should be kept as small as possible.

School Children—Lifts by Strangers—Security

There have been many complaints about children being offered lifts in cars by strangers and being molested or assaulted, or frightened by indecent exposure. Don't let your children go to the cinema by themselves, or if you do, tell them to shout if interfered with. The lights will be lit in a second and steps will be taken to deal with the offender.

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There are various plans afoot to tidy-up this country by re-organisation of industry and redirection of the industrial or commercial population but surely one of the first things necessary when tidying up a country is to tidy-up the people. Everyone will agree that there is far too much untidiness. We have had a lot of new brooms over the last twenty years but these brooms do not seem able or designed to get into the dusty corners and dust, of course, spreads disease.

Income from Land bought by the Borough

We believe that there may be some delay in the Council drawing up leases for land which they are letting. Surely this must show a loss of revenue? We have in mind the Darlands Estate at Totteridge, bought by the Council for £50,000, but the legal documents for a lease of 2½ acres still are not in a state for final completion.

Subscriptions

Your Committee, at its meeting on 5th December, 1967, agreed to raise the subscription from 1/- to 1/6d. per person for members of the Woodside Park Ratepayers and Residents Association.

Roundabouts

Last year we asked if children could be prevented from throwing sticks to rain down conkers from the trees on the Walmington Fold-Fursby Avenue Roundabout. The idea was to prevent motorists running over the children. Now we have some direction indicators on the roundabout, but what a size! Out of all proportion to the pleasant appearance of this clump of trees which we want to preserve. We had, however, asked if direction indicators could be placed on the South-over "Roundabout" to prevent strangers having accidents when the white lines recently painted on the tarmac are covered by snow.

Perhaps the Council has got its priority swings and roundabouts mixed.

Theft and Robbery

Two thieves who broke open the telephone coin boxes in Sussex Ring are now in jail.

Unfortunately, as far as we know, the robbers who recently entered Mr. and Mrs. Darcy's house in Cissbury Ring are not. Again a Saturday night. We are all very sorry this has happened yet again.

Finchley Memorial Hospital: Casualty Hours

We would remind everyone that shortage of staff prevents the Casualty Department being open after 7 p.m. It is necessary to go to Barnet General Hospital or the Whittington Hospital, Highgate.

New Motorway Plans for Greater London

Your Chairman as Chairman also of the Federation of the Ratepayers' Associations of the London Borough of Barnet (F.O.R.A.B.), attended a meeting of the London Ratepayers' Alliance on 9th November at County Hall, S.E.1, at which a lecture was given by Mr. J. S. Moulder, Divisional Engineer in the Department of Highways and Transportation of the Greater London Council, on the New Motorway Plans.

Your chairman was also invited to the Annual General Meeting of the Golders Green Estate Ratepayers' Association where a similar lecture was given by Mr. Gordon Ridley, M.A., M.I.C.E., M.I.Mun.E., Chief Engineer of the Department.

The following is a summary of both lectures which were extremely interesting not only for the fact that by 1983, £800,000,000 will have been spent on new motorways but also for the detailed consideration being given by the Council's Engineers to the plans as a result of the survey they conducted in 1961-1962.

At that time they interviewed in their homes, 50,000 people and also 100,000 drivers and 2,000 miles of roads. From this they were able to establish some curious facts. If you look at a map of Greater London, you will see that all the main thoroughfares radiate roughly from Marble Arch, one of the very first being Edgware Road, which because it was built by the Romans as Watling Street, runs as straight as a ruler to Elstree. You would be forgiven for supposing that most of the traffic is therefore using these radiating roads.

The survey, however, establishes that only 0.1% of the total traffic passes through London on these roads, that only 8.9% travels over the border of Greater London but that 90% of the total traffic moves within the area of Greater London on " orbital " journeys of about five miles.

In 1961 this 90% represented 1,750,000 journeys, from one non-centre area to another, 10% of which were "work" journeys taken by car. By 1981, 4,250,000 journeys will be made. It is recognised that the transport facilities from one non-central area to another are bad.

Many people complain of the amount of dock traffic but only 2.9% represents traffic going to and from the docks (and one would imagine, considerably less during the recent unpleasantness), which makes balderdash of hearsay information giving rise to slapdash figures. Light dock traffic is represented by only ½%.

Considerations of income and of future car ownership have been taken into account and it is estimated that whereas a man might earn £1,160 in 1961, his equivalent salary in 1981 would be £3,000. Car

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ownership would have increased from 1.1 million to 2.1 million (0.1 to 0.27 cars per person).

A road network of a different type is considered necessary to meet the demand and this will be met by ring or orbital roads, similar to the North Circular, which comes under fire because of hold-ups and traffic jams even now, while the South Circular Road is hardly more than picking routes through existing thoroughfares with all the attendant bends, doubling back and general leaning over backwards to avoid right hand turns.

Two types of road are envisaged, primary roads (orbital) for "long distance" travel of 4-5 miles (e.g. Cricklewood to Highbury) which should not be taken through residential roads or town centres and a secondary system of distributor roads for which money available is small.

You would be surprised to learn that the recently widened Euston Road, with its underpass under Tottenham Court Road at Warren Street Station, is considered as a distributor Road.

Traffic management will take into account a new attitude to parking and control of use of the roads and will probably be similar to the present Urban Clearway technique. We are all familiar with the daily sight of large numbers of cars with only one person in them.

Construction of the the primary system will take into account (1) available resources (2) preservation of the character of the neighbourhood (3) encouragement of present activities.

The basic idea is to prevent a neighbourhood from being split into two by an uncrossable road division (we have something of this problem in Watford Way, near Mill Hill where people live on one side and the shops are on the other and where the Simmonds Mead "amenity" open space cannot be used to serve one end of a footway bridge, difficult to prams and old people, and where the cost of providing a pedestrian ramped underpass is prohibitive, even if there sufficient room).

To prevent this division of residential areas, use will be made of existing artificial divisions such as a railway. Here the road would run alongside it if the railway is in cutting or over it if it is at ground level.

This has several additional advantages: a road in cutting is not only much less noisy but it disrupts the landscape less than an overhead route.

Some people think that existing railways could be used for roads. The trouble here is that to be effective an eight-lane motorway requires a width of about 130 feet whereas a railroad consists of two tracks each under 5 feet wide.

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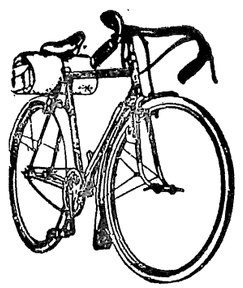

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Other considerations are:

(1) The road must serve its purpose conveniently.

(2) It must avoid disruption of the working community.

(3) It must avoid cultural and historic areas.

(4) It must demolish the minimum number of houses.

It is obvious that complete prohibition of temporary loading and unloading or parking facilities near shops would ruin them. In the United States, the authorities are far more ruthless with no-waiting restrictions.

In 1965, the Greater London Council published a series of routes as " corridors of opportunity " and it was suggested to local authorities that no development should take place along these routes after exhaustive consultation with them and the Railways.

No definite line has been fixed for the North Cross Route yet and it is appreciated that delay in publishing such a route promotes " blight ", the official name for conditions in an area under sentence, but engineers are working as fast as possible to determine the route to be taken. The South Cross Route is under inspection at the same time, while the East Cross Route survey has started and that for the West Cross Route will begin in 1971.

For the North Cross Route a study area in the North-West was investigated and the amount of negotiation necessary is of course enormous. The final routes recommended by the Traffic Engineers will be accepted or rejected by the Greater London Council.

Regarding compensation for demolition and compulsory purchase of property and land, this must be, by law in the Greater London Area, at market value assessed by the Council's Valuer directly related to the property affected.

Mr. Moulder said that, so far, compensation has been accepted as satisfactory.

Difficult problems occur where there is no artificial division existing, such as a railway. The Finchley Road, Hampstead, Belsize Park area is an example of a high amenity area without barriers but when the demand for road improvement is across such a district. In such a case there are two possibilities. One is the use of a bored circular tunnel or series of tunnels and the other is a cut and cover tunnel.

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With circular tunnels, stability of the soil dictates a distance of 50-60 feet between the centres of two tunnels. Four tunnels would be required involving a distance of 300 feet between the centres of the outermost tunnels. On emergence from the tunnels the roads must be regrouped together at minimum fixed radii and the area of land taken up would be enormous. In addition ventilation shafts would be required for every length of 700-800 feet. Existing earth cutting shields limit the tunnel diameter. About a third of the cross section of the tunnel is wasted, apart from taking services, in providing a level platform for the motor lanes. Such a complex of tunnels would cost about £40,000,000 per mile.

With cut and cover tunnels, there is no restriction on width, the earth is excavated to a comparatively shallow depth and roofed over with reinforced concrete on top of which rebuilding can be undertaken subject again to a third of any given length over 800 feet being open to provide ventilation. They cost about £250,000 less per mile than bored tunnels.

When it is realised that Birmingham, Leeds, Coventry and about four other large towns can be accommodated in the Greater London Area, with room to spare, some idea of the immensity of the task can be gained. In fact it is the biggest motorway project ever tackled anywhere.

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Naturally objections are expected and it is believed that about three years' warning will be available in any given area for objections to be heard. There is no specific distance laid down as to how near a motorway can pass a building, and the Engineers would inspect local problems very carefully and if necessary recommend purchase of the property where there is doubt as to the future stability. Overpasses are built on piles which are immovable and through which no transmission of vibration through the soil to surrounding property is possible. Vibration from traffic on a properly constructed highway is transmitted through only a few feet and property should not suffer.

There is one basic deficiency in our law at the present time. We have Rights of Way catered for. Rights of light and air are safeguarded in the London Building Acts and Constructional By-laws, Rights of Adjoining Owners are taken care of when buildings are built with a common party wall but there is no Right of VIEW and because there is no Right of View, there can, at present, be no compensation if a VIEW is obstructed or denied or altered.

We believe strongly that there should be a Right of VIEW or amenity. Often a person buys a house because it overlooks a park or open space of green fields, or alternatively because it is not overlooked and for this he pays in the purchase price. He expects to live in his house "in quiet enjoyment". He improves his property, maintains it well, keeps it painted, puts in central heating, brings his garden to a Kew standard and then suddenly hears that half of his garden is to taken from him because of a new motorway. His view is gone for ever and his quiet enjoyment becomes a parody of words, the value of his property deteriorates and with it his health. Officially no compensation can meet such a contingency. In our view it is time that somebody tried to establish a basis for some compensation because such a house-owner is at a grave disadvantage with a neighbour who would uproot himself at the drop of a hat and who has cared little for his property over the years but who, presumably, on the present basis of compensation, fares equally as well or equally as worse, as his more industrious "blighted".

F. Kerr.