



Est. 1897

The Heath & Hampstead Society

President Lord Mance **Chair** Marc Hutchinson
Patrons Lord Bragg CH Lord Hoffmann Lady Hopkins Sir Simon Jenkins
Bill Oddie OBE Tom Oliver Sir John Tusa

To: London Borough of Camden
Planning Committee

Attn: Jonathan McClue

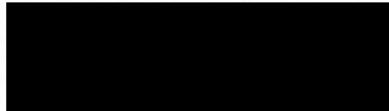
20 February 2022

Murphy's Yard – App. Ref 2021/3225/P

Dear Planning Committee

I attach the objections of the Society to this planning application.

Yours sincerely



Marc Hutchinson
Chair

MURPHY'S YARD NWS

APPLICATION NUMBER: 2021/3225/P

Introduction

1. These are the representations of The Heath & Hampstead Society ("HHS") in relation to the above application for planning permission.
2. Although we do not object to the development of the site in principle, the proposed development is too large for the site and will have a material, permanent and irreversible adverse impact on Hampstead Heath and its southern environs.
3. These representations will:
 - (i) Explain who we are.
 - (ii) Consider briefly the relevant planning policies.
 - (iii) Set out our objections to the proposed development.
 - (iv) End with our conclusion.

Who we are

4. HHS was established in 1897. It is a registered charity, whose objects are to preserve the parts of Hampstead Heath governed by section 16 of the Hampstead Heath Act 1871 in their wild and natural state; to preserve the natural and characteristic features of the other parts of the Heath; to *promote and maintain the amenities and characteristics of the environs of the Heath*, and of the buildings and streets of Hampstead (emphasis added); and to promote public interest in the study of, inter alia, natural history. It has a membership of over 2,000. The emphasised words were adopted as an additional charitable object of the Society in 1933 specifically to address the threat of harmful building construction on the fringes of the Heath, as described in the attached extracts from the Society's Annual Reports of the time: Appendix 1 to these representations.

Policies

5. We draw the attention of Camden Council as the local planning authority (“Camden”) to the following provisions and policies.

Openness of the Heath:

- (a) Hampstead Heath Act 1871: see in particular sections 12 and 16, which require the Heath to be kept open, its natural aspect to be preserved and any attempted encroachment to be prevented.
- (b) NPPF: paragraphs 130 and 148 (equally applicable to MOL).
- (c) London Plan (2021): Policies G3, HC3 and HC4.
- (d) Camden Local Plan: Policies A2 and D1.
- (e) Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2018: Policy NE1¹; and paragraphs 4.2 and 4.8.

Biodiversity

- (a) NPPF: paragraph 174.
- (b) The London Plan (2021): Policy G6 (D).
- (c) Camden Local Plan: Policy A3; and paragraphs 6.59 – 6.64.
- (d) Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2018: Policy NE4.

The Site

6. It is, or ought to be, common ground that the site is highly sensitive, given its proximity to Hampstead Heath.

7. It lies on the immediate southern fringe of Hampstead Heath. The Heath’s metropolitan significance led to its designation as MOL, described in The London Plan (2021) in the following terms:

“Metropolitan Open Land is strategic open land within the urban area. It plays an important role in London’s green infrastructure – the network of green spaces,

¹ Note: Hampstead Heath is regarded as an “open space”: see App 4 to the Plan.

*features and places around and within urban areas. MOL protects and enhances the open environment and improves Londoners' quality of life by providing localities which offer sporting and leisure use, heritage value, biodiversity, food growing, and health benefits through encouraging walking, running and other physical activity."*²

8. Hampstead Heath is described in the Camden Local Plan as *"the largest open space in the Borough providing nearly half of our total area of open space and many of our outdoor sporting facilities."* Camden undertakes to *"work with partners, including the City of London (who own and manage the Heath), to ensure it is properly safeguarded"* and to *"continue using guidance in conservation area appraisals and management strategies to preserve and enhance the built environment around the Heath and preserve outlooks and views from it."*³

Objections

9. We object to the proposed development on the following principal grounds:

Openness and views

10. We submit that the proposed development would inevitably have an adverse impact on the Parliament Hill area of the Heath. It would harm the southern Heath's open character and its setting. Many of the proposed new buildings, especially the proposed tower blocks, would be highly visible from the Parliament Hill area. Views from the Heath are part of its openness.
11. The view from "Parliament Hill to Central London" is a Designated Strategic View under Policy HC3 of the London Plan, and Policy HC4 requires that "development proposals should not harm, and should seek to make a positive contribution to, the characteristics and composition of Strategic Views". The supplementary London View Management Framework requires that a development "not detract from the panorama [of the view] as a whole".

² Paragraph 8.3.1.

³ Camden Local Plan, paragraph 6.43.

12. Policy D1 of the Camden Local Plan requires the preservation of strategic and local views by any new development, and Policy A2 specifically, and in terms, protects Hampstead Heath's views in this regard: see in particular paras 7.26-7.28.
13. The impact of the proposed high tower blocks will block the views of Central London and the City from various viewpoints on the Parliament Hill area. These are the best views to be had of the whole of London (and beyond) and are world-famous. They feature in countless films and TV programmes and attract tourists accordingly. We support the objections in this regard of Historic England expressed in their letter of 31 January 2022 (ref P01451244).
14. The fact that the development will not obstruct the view to St Paul's Cathedral is irrelevant. It will, by our calculation, block the view to approximately half the landmark buildings depicted on the viewing information plaque erected by the Society at the very top of Parliament Hill and be utterly destructive of the current and very broad and presently complete panorama: see Appendix 2 to these representations.
15. The block on the views is purportedly shown in the applicant's documents, including in particular LVMF2B.1 and LVMF2A.1. However we assert that the mock-up views, contained in the Design and Access Statement, looking southwards from the Heath have been taken from selected viewpoints so as to understate the true impact in terms of loss of, or damage to, views. For example, looking west from below Parliament Hill, one can see the looming bulk of the Royal Free Hospital. We assert that that highly visible and intrusive building, which has fewer storeys than some of the proposed tower blocks, is approximately the same distance from the lower parts of Parliament Hill as will be the new high tower blocks – the Royal Free eyesore gives a much more real demonstration of the likely immediate visual impact of the tower blocks than the mock-up views.
16. The applicant has not demonstrated how its proposals comply with the policies referred to above in terms of the protection of strategic views, and we ask the Council to insist on (i) such compliance and (ii) the preparation, by an independent qualified expert, of an assessment of the true impact of the development on the views from a proper and truly representative selection of Parliament Hill viewpoints.

17. There is a further point here. If these high-rise tower blocks are built, they will inevitably set a precedent for further high-rise across the southern Heath boundary, eventually destroying the famous panoramic view altogether.
18. In summary: legislation and policy support the preservation of the openness and character of MOL; although the development site itself is not MOL, it is clear that the proposal would adversely affect the openness of the Heath as MOL, not directly through any encroachment, but indirectly as a result of its adverse impact upon the Heath's setting, views and approaches.

Impact upon the Heath itself

19. The proposal is to construct on the site up to 825 residential homes (for 2,500+ new residents, with no agreed percentage for affordable housing), 48,000 sq metres of industrial floor space, and 70,000 sq metres of office and r&d space. It must be understood that nowhere on the site itself are there to be gardens or significant green public spaces to where residents and workers can resort. The certain consequence of this grossly excessive density is that the new thousands of residents and workers will come onto the Parliament Hill area of the Heath in their reasonable search for the nearest (and only nearby) green open space.
20. Of course there can be no in-principle objection to the public coming onto the Heath, which is required by the 1871 Act to remain unfenced as an open public space. But our objection is that the new residents and workers will enter and congregate on this particular area of the Heath in such numbers that the area will be seriously and permanently degraded. Every Heath visitor witnessed the temporary degradation, right across the Heath, from covid-lockdown crowds.
21. This certain damage will be the direct result of the developer's proposal (i) to build too many new homes on the site and (ii) to provide no significant *green* recreational space within the development itself, but rather to exploit commercially the proximity of the development site to the Heath.

Overshadowing

22. The applicant's documents disclose that in winter part of the southern part of the Heath itself, including the outdoor Lido, will be overshadowed in the morning by the high rise towers: see page 17 of the Appendix: Daylight, Sunlight, Overshadowing and Solar Glare Annex 3-6 in the Environmental Statement Vol 3 Technical Appendices. This is a completely unacceptable consequence of the high-rise towers and their positioning. The Lido is open on winter mornings for thousands of swimmers, and it would be unfair that they should be deprived of winter sunlight while swimming. Moreover, it is wrong in principle that a green public open space should be permanently deprived of seasonal sunlight by a private commercial development. Camden should insist there is no such overshadowing and require the applicant to demonstrate, affirmatively, its absence in the final proposal.

Cycling

23. The developer seems to be unaware that the Heath Line corridor will bring cyclists north towards the entrance of the Heath next to Gospel Oak Overground station at a place where cyclists have no right of access to the Heath. Cyclists will find that they are unable to cycle from there directly on to the Heath, since the path from the Gospel Oak entrance up to the Broadwalk is designated as pedestrian only.
24. Among the walking public, there is no appetite for increasing the existing dual use (pedestrian and cycle) routes on the Heath. In June 2020 Camden ran an online survey to better understand the views of the public on cycling in Camden. There was an overwhelming response saying that there should be no increase in cycle paths on the Heath. Taking comments on the Lime Avenue footpath, 18 respondents wanted to make this a cycle route; 133 wanted it to remain pedestrian only. For the Gospel Oak to the Broadwalk, 35 wanted a cycle route, while 51 wanted it to remain pedestrian only.
25. The increasing number of walkers and cyclists on the Heath means that the pressure in dual use areas has increased dramatically: in 2010 there were an estimated 6 million people visiting the Heath, it is now over 15 million annually. Given the increase in use even before the Murphy's Yard area is developed, it is no surprise that the Society regularly receives complaints from walkers feeling intimidated by cyclists on existing

routes. An increase in cycling is not sustainable. The Heath, as a protected open space, should not be part of any commuter cycling network. Camden needs to address the need for safe cycling routes around the Heath.

26. This links to the need for the applicant, in consultation with Camden, to address the issue of cycle traffic turning west or east along Gordon House Road in what is already a highly constricted road space, not least where the narrow railway bridges restrict both road width and the pavement.

Ecology and biodiversity

27. The potential ecological and biodiversity impacts of the proposal are significant. The development will increase pressure on the ecology of the Heath and connecting green spaces in Gospel Oak and Kentish Town.
28. The Parliament Hill area of the Heath supports biodiversity which is sensitive to pressure from human activity. Surveys by the Society, City of London and the London Natural History Society show that its meadows and hedgerows, already degraded by rapidly growing numbers of Heath users, support over ten bird species on the red and amber list of UK birds under threat. Residents of the Murphy's Yard development, forced to use this part of the Heath as their de facto green space, will increase stress on this fragile habitat. No consideration has been given by the applicant towards estimating or mitigating this impact.
29. The Heath also functions as a major hub of biodiversity in Camden, with wildlife moving through - and adding value to - adjacent residential areas. The Murphy's Yard development abuts four Camden Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation ("SINCs"): including Hampstead Heath, Mortimer Terrace Nature Reserve, Kentish Town City Farm and Gospel Oak Sidings. These share important threatened species for Camden, including hedgehogs and frogs. While early versions of the Murphy's Yard development, proposed green spaces and "corridors" linking these important SINCs, the current proposal has replaced all of these with buildings, thereby destroying the potential for making this network of SINCs better buffered and connected (Camden Biodiversity Action Plan 2022), which is a particular responsibility of new developments (Camden Local Plan, Policy A3). The proposed "Heath-like" vegetation along the Heath Line is now nothing more than token bedding and trees in a paved

walkway. Adding a few plants to a former works yard has been used to claim a high “biodiversity net gain” when in fact little of biodiversity value has been added.

30. Furthermore, we note that the proposed tower blocks will shade adjacent SINC, in particular Kentish Town City Farm and Mortimer Terrace Nature Reserve, at critical times of the day, thus degrading these important conservation areas.
31. Overall, the development, as proposed, will have a negative impact on Camden biodiversity, damaging several SINC. It misses a once-in-a-generation opportunity to link important Camden conservation areas, supporting Camden’s Nature Recovery Network (Camden Biodiversity Action Plan 2022) by creating an actual green corridor linked to the Heath.

Design

32. The overall bulk, massing and height design of the present proposal render it inappropriate for this sensitive site and are the cause of the harms referred to above.

Deficiencies of the proposed housing - height and density

33. The number of dwellings is stated as between 750 (1,983 habitable rooms) to 825 (2,182 habitable rooms). The average dwelling size is therefore 2.65 habitable rooms. The population, if all dwellings are fully occupied, could be 2,500+ people (though many such high-density housing developments have been shown to be bought as investments by foreign buyers and left empty).
34. The site area allocated to housing is 2.96 hectares; thus the housing density is 285 dwellings per hectare (if 750 dwellings) to 314 dwellings per hectare (if 825 dwellings). This density is considerably higher than the adjacent housing and therefore dwarfs and overshadows all around, and also forms narrow “canyon”-like public spaces and routes of a city-centre character - very different from the surrounding areas. For instance, the “street” or “lane” between blocks L and K is 17.5 metres wide with buildings either side of 11 storeys (33 metres) high!
35. This Outline Planning Application specifies precisely the height, massing, enclosure outline, shape, and the gap of 17.5 metres between each housing ‘block’. The maximum shape and height of the housing ‘blocks’ are therefore fixed, and the majority of dwellings, instead of being distributed at a lower level throughout the

site, are concentrated in a “wall” of nine high housing `blocks`, increasing in height from five to 19 storeys. All are closely packed together – the three tallest are `point` blocks (almost circular on plan), namely: J (19 and 17 storeys) and S (17 storeys). The other six are all `slab` blocks (a long rectangle on plan) aligned on a south-west to north-east axis at right angles to the views from the Heath, and thus forming a continual line of high buildings which block the views from the Heath, and which loom over and seriously affect its character and openness (see above).

Further problems caused by the excessive height, close proximity and alignment of housing blocks O, M, L, K, J, and S

36. Air movement at ground level is shown by the applicant`s submission to be higher than required for comfortable conditions in the public spaces and streets, and that mitigating measures at ground level will be required to reduce air movement. It has long been recognised that high buildings with narrow spaces between them will cause high, even dangerous, wind movement at ground level – with people blown off their feet and even heavy lorries overturned. The proposed housing lay-out with narrow “chasm”-like streets and gaps is aligned to funnel the prevailing south-west winds into the site.
37. The Sunlight Analysis shows that, because of the high housing to the south-west of the site, only two hours of sun per day will reach parts of the proposed streets and public spaces.
38. Good urban design, particularly in Northern Europe, has always aimed at creating sunny, comfortable, well-used public space through the careful organisation of buildings. The proposed lay-out, because of its excessive height and density, is seriously deficient. It is not sufficient to lower the higher blocks by two or three storeys as suggested by the Design Review Panel – a complete re-design is required.

Traffic

39. The proposed access to the site from Gordon House Road, and from Sanderson Close off Gordon House Road, is problematical. The entrance to the Heath at Gospel Oak is the Heath's main south-east entrance, used not just for access to the Heath but also to the Lido, the Parliament Hill Cafe and the numerous sports facilities and

pitches in the area, and also by large numbers of schoolchildren walking on the Heath to get to and from school.

40. Gordon House Road is heavily used in both directions by traffic at most times of the day. The road and pavements become narrower in the area of the two railway bridges at the proposed entrances to the site causing at present regular traffic bottlenecks and even gridlock when e.g. buses and lorries are unable to pass each other.
41. Although the residences proposed on the site are to be "car-free", the sheer number of residents and businesses on the site will result in a large increase in vehicular traffic (taxis, delivery vehicles, tradespeople etc) using Gordon House Road to access the site. The large increase will of itself worsen noise, pollution and traffic jams at the entrances to the site, and in turn jeopardise the safety and convenience of pedestrians crossing Gordon House Road to access the Heath. Again, this important consequence is the direct result of the overdevelopment of the site.

Conclusion

42. The trustees of HHS are legally obliged to pursue its charitable objects, in particular the protection of the Heath and its environs. To the extent we have commented on the design and location of the buildings on the site, this is only to demonstrate the source and cause of the harms to the Heath and its environs that the development will entail.
43. The Society has had sight of the objections made by the City of London Corporation, the owner and manager of Hampstead Heath, through Metropolis pdg ltd in the letter dated 2 February 2022, and supports those objections.
44. The Society reserves the right to comment further on this application in its current or amended form.
45. The Society opposes the application in its current form for the reasons given, and urges Camden to insist upon a wholesale re-think by the developer of the excessive scale of the project.

Signed on behalf of HHS.....*M.S Hutchinson*.....

Marc Hutchinson, Chair

Date: 20 February 2022

Address: The Heath & Hampstead Society, PO Box 38214, London NW3 1XD

Email: marchutch54@gmail.com

APPENDIX 1 - EXTRACTS FROM HHS ANNUAL REPORTS

from the Annual Report of the
Hampstead Heath Protection Society 1932

1932/1933

The military try to flout Town Planning regulations

During the year it became known that the Air Ministry had acquired "Heath Brow" for the purpose of adapting it for use as a headquarters for the officers of a Territorial Air Force squadron. "Heath Brow" is included in the Town Planning Scheme of the L.C.C., under which all the neighbouring property is scheduled for private residential purposes at a density of two houses to the acre. Although [this] was apparently not known to the Air Ministry when the house was purchased, the Ministry has persisted in carrying out the scheme, and is claiming exemption from town planning restrictions.

A canvas silhouette was erected in the garden at "Heath Brow" for inspection... In the unanimous opinion of the representatives of the L.C.C. and the Hampstead Borough Council and of this Society, the proposed new building would interfere with the amenities of the Heath. The Committee is at present awaiting the result of their protest.

In the meantime the Committee desire to record their emphatic disapproval of any departure from the town planning restrictions which have been imposed by the L.C.C., such as would be constituted by this proposed new building. In the view of the Committee once any relaxation of the present town planning restrictions is permitted, it will be increasingly difficult to enforce the scheme in its entirety. *How present they were!*

Adumbration of the 'Old Hampstead' part of the title

The Committee have been impressed during the year with the necessity for preserving the verges and approaches to the Heath from unsuitable and unsightly building developments. Such development constitutes the principal menace to the rural character which the Heath still retains. The Committee are accordingly of opinion and recommend that it is desirable that the objects of the Society should be extended so that the Society can exercise its influence to safeguard the old and historic buildings and to preserve the natural characteristics of the district.

It became known in October that a proposal for developing a site in the High Street, one of the principal approaches to the Heath, as a garage or terminal station for motor coaches from the North and Midlands was under consideration. As urgent action seemed to be called for, the Secretary addressed a letter of protest to the "Times" which was duly published on 19th October. The proposal was subsequently abandoned.

The Society now became affiliated with the Council for the Protection of Rural England.



Photograph of the proposed 'inconspicuous' building, which was later bombed by the Luftwaffe and the site was later turned into a much-needed area near the brow of the Heath, with the s...

*from the Annual Report of the Hampstead Heath
and Old Hampstead Protection Society 1933*

Hampstead Heath and Old Hampstead Protection Society

The Society has, under the extended objects adopted at the Annual General Meeting in 1933 (*and with a consequent change of name*) done its best to protect from unsuitable development the old streets and buildings adjacent to the Heath. The events of the year have clearly shown the need for this extension of the Society's activities.

Already plunged into controversy over road widening

We regret to report that during the year proposals for widening the roads approaching and crossing the Heath have been revived...the Hampstead Borough Council resolved to inform the County Council that they might take into consideration as and when the opportunity occurred the widening of Heath Street from Holly Hill to the Heath, North End Way between Pitt House and The Hill, and Haverstock Hill throughout its length. An amendment to omit these streets was defeated in the Council by five votes.

It is a matter of profound regret to all lovers of Hampstead and the Heath that such proposals should ever have been entertained by the Borough Council. The destruction of the remaining length of old Heath Street and the Mount would deprive Hampstead of one of its most celebrated features, visited every year by hundreds of people, to many of whom it is familiar as the scene of Madox Brown's best-known picture.

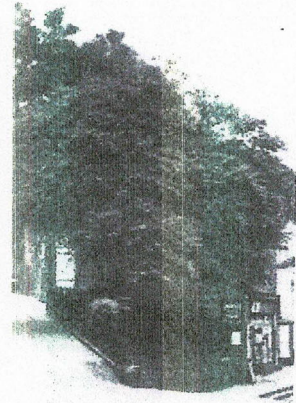
This Society will certainly lose no opportunity of expressing its determined opposition to these proposals, which it believes to be most detrimental to the Heath, as a unique public open space, if at any time they should be revived.

Air Ministry only partially shot down

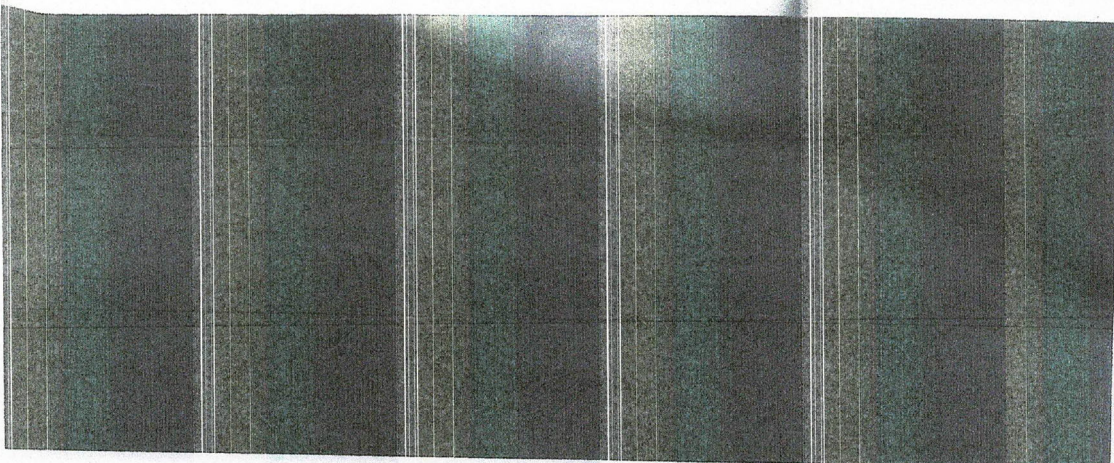
The new building which the Air Ministry is erecting at "Heathbrow" is now in course of construction. It is hoped that when completed it will not materially affect the views on the West Heath. If the present building is compared with the photograph showing what was at first proposed, which appeared in our Annual Report last year, the extent of the concessions which were obtained from the Air Ministry in respect of the height and elevation of the new building will be appreciated.

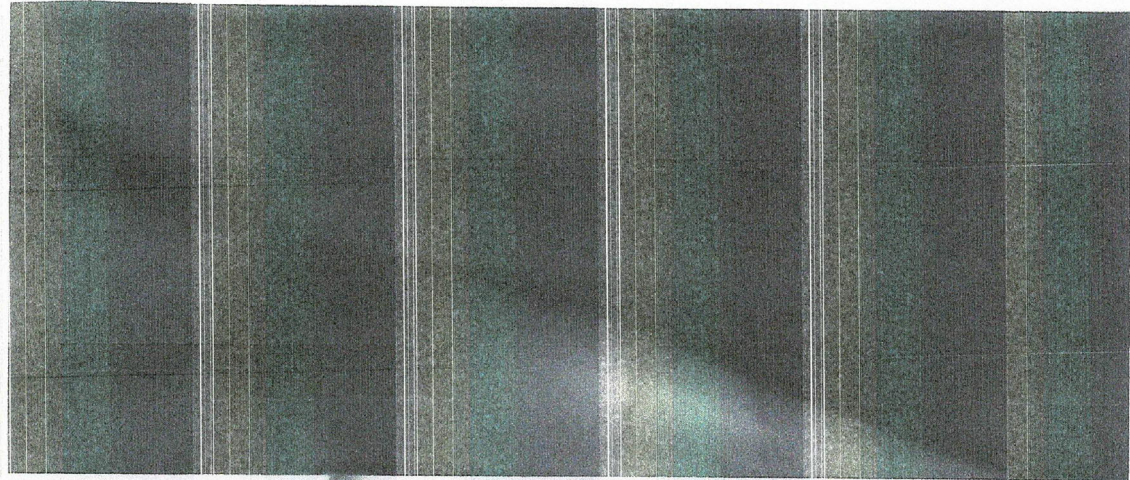
Proposed petrol station in Downshire Hill

Several members wrote protesting against the proposed erection of a petrol-filling station in Downshire Hill...The proposal was rejected by the Town Planning Committee.



*Heath Street, Hampstead, from the Mount
to the left, not visible (here, at least) in
protecting not only the fringes of the Heath
streets in the whole of what became the
zone was quite a mouthful.*





of the Hampstead Heath Protection Society 1933

Protection Society
adopted at the Annual General
(*age of name*) done its best to protect
and buildings adjacent to the Heath.
the need for this extension of the

road widening
proposals for widening the roads
been revived...the Hampstead Borough
Council that they might take into
account occurred the widening of Heath Street
between Pitt House and The Hill.
An amendment to omit these streets

ers of Hampstead and the Heath
retained by the Borough Council.
old Heath Street and the Mount
celebrated features, visited every
time it is familiar as the scene of Madox

nity of expressing its determined
views to be most detrimental to the
any time they should be revived.

recting at "Heathbrow" is now
when completed it will not materially
the present building is compared with the
old, which appeared in our Annual
Reports which were obtained from the
action of the new building will be

||
proposed erection of a petrol-filling
station rejected by the Town Planning



Heath Street, Hampstead, from the Mount. Note the clutter of road furniture on the left, not visible (here, at least) in 1996. The Society now took on the task of protecting not only the fringes of the Heath but the appearance of major and minor streets in the whole of what became the Hampstead Conservation Area. The changed name was quite a mouthful.

APPENDIX 2 - HHS NEWSLETTER 2016



The Heath & Hampstead Society
NEWSLETTER

November 2016

Vol 47 No 3



The new plaque on Parliament Hill is unveiled!

Heath Report

by John Beyer and Lynda Cook

New Parliament Hill panoramic plaque unveiled

On 12 September a new plaque was unveiled by Virginia Rounding (Chairman of the City of London Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee) and Society Chair Marc Hutchinson. The plaque was donated by the Society for the benefit of the many who visit the site each year, following extensive work with City of London staff.

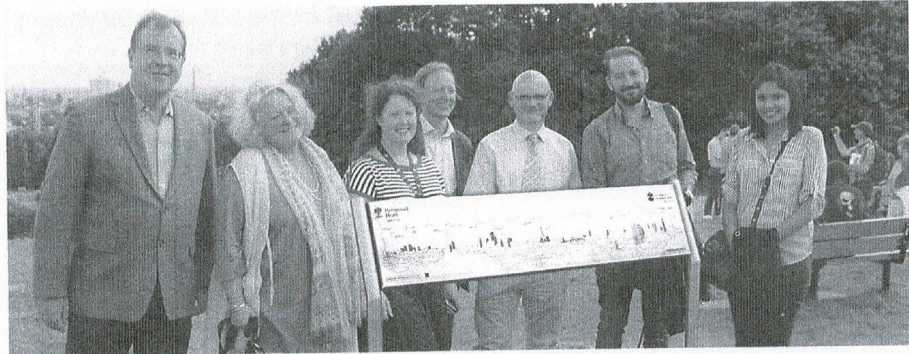
Virginia Rounding commented: "We are very grateful to the Heath & Hampstead Society for this new plaque. The pace of change in London is so fast that the depicted skyline may be out of date very soon. But like all snapshots it serves as a reminder that change is a part of our lives, while the Heath remains a beautiful tranquil place of respite away from the hustle and bustle of city life."

In reply, Marc Hutchinson said: "The Society has donated the plaque in furtherance of its

charitable object of education. The legally protected viewing point over London where the plaque stands is world famous, and we hope that the plaque will enable the public to understand the changes to the mix of ancient and modern which make up the skyline of this great city."

The panoramic plaque, on the summit of Parliament Hill, replaces the original plaque which has been on site since 1984. Given that the old plaque looked relatively unscathed from its thirty-odd years on the summit, the Society decided to present something equally robust. It was feared that other materials would soon become faded or damaged by people or weather, on a site which is famous for the winds which buffet it: it is with good reason that it is known as Kite Hill. The old plaque will be preserved and retained in a public place, probably in the Heath Visitor Centre.

The donation of the plaque enables the Society to have its name and logo prominently presented



Photograph courtesy: Ron Vester

Society and City representatives with the plaque designers: left to right are Marc Hutchinson, Society Chair; Melissa Fairbanks of the Heath Sub-Committee, Lucy Gannon of the Corporation of London, John Beyer, Heath Sub-Committee Chair, Bob Warnock of the Corporation of London and the two designers, Jonathan Hawkes and Sheetal Patel.

to a broad public at a location on the Heath which receives so many visitors and is in itself so impressive. The plaque outlines the key buildings visible in July 2016; doubtless as more new buildings appear there will be a guessing game for visitors of "spot the missing tower". The choice of what to include was at times difficult. Tempting although it was to select only those buildings deemed by the Heath Sub-Committee to have architectural merit, we chose buildings that visitors were most likely to ask about.

The panorama includes one of two viewing locations on Hampstead Heath identified in the Greater London Authority's London View Management Framework in recognition of the significant views towards St Paul's Cathedral. There is an additional statutory viewpoint near the footpath which descends to the café; it is the view towards the Victoria Tower at the Palace of Westminster. The Sub-Committee and the City agreed that, although the view was protected, it did not offer the outstanding view from the top of Parliament Hill and therefore did not merit a plaque.

In preparation for deciding what should be included in the design, the City, with the assistance and advice of the Heath Sub-Committee, held a number of site meetings to establish what management of trees was necessary to produce the most attractive view. The process resulted in broad agreement with what is reflected on the new plaque. The City believes that only occasional trimming will be required to keep the trees as they are now and as illustrated on the plaque.

A further feature of the plaque is a moulded "QR" code which enables anyone with a smartphone quickly to access a dedicated page on the City of London website about Parliament

Hill; this, in turn, leads them to a page on the Society's website where they can find more information about Parliament Hill, including photos of how the view looked in former times (for example 1889/90, 1913 and 1929), courtesy of Michael Hammerson (Highgate Society and Heath Sub-Committee member).

Heath Sub-Committee member Melissa Fairbanks, who brought the whole project to conclusion, praised the professional and cooperative approach of Lucy Gannon, who represented the City in the year-long process.

Starting to see green around the Ponds

The Heath visitor is at last beginning to experience a very different landscape from that viewed when our last Newsletter was published in May; instead of deep ravines and crevasses criss-crossed with a constant flow of tractors, excavators and cranes, in some areas there are newly-restored meadows, which have been turfed or seeded. However, although much of the noise has been stilled, the background whine of tractors and lorries as they move back and forth and the thuds of heavy duty machinery continue to be heard on many parts of the Heath, such as, for example, the pounding of drills recently used on Hampstead No. 2 Pond as part of the project to plant new reed beds.

Most of the spillways have been completed and are currently being seeded with grass and wildflowers, and seeing some Ponds freed from machinery gives hope that very soon the Heath will be free of the intrusions of the last two years.

Reseeding has started on the western meadow on the Model Boating Pond and this area is rapidly regaining its shape and offering dramatic new views. The dam on the Model Boating