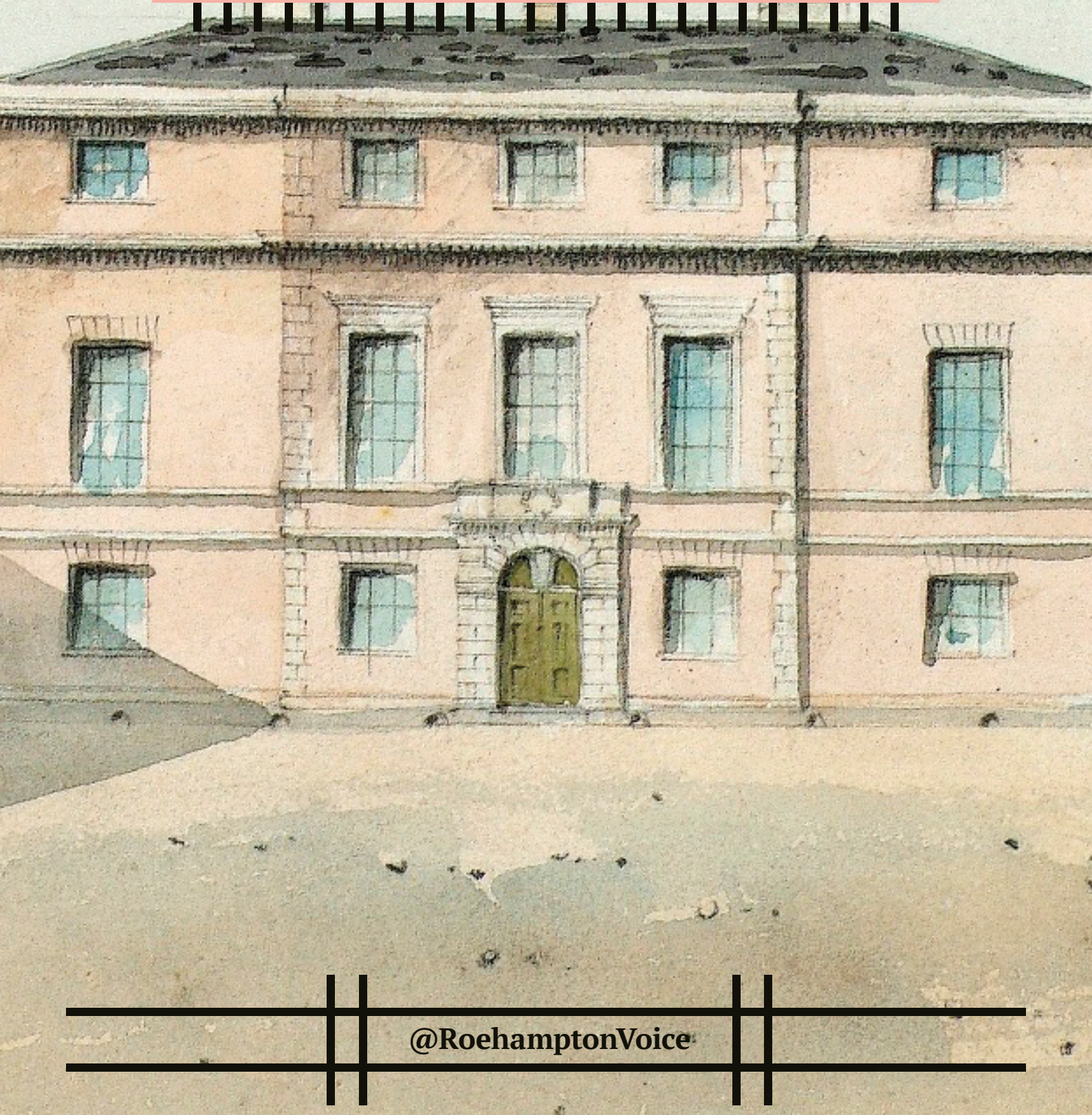


ISSUE 40 | SUMMER 2020

AN INDEPENDENT SOURCE OF NEWS,  
BY AND FOR ROEHAMPTON RESIDENTS

# ROEHAMPTON VOICE



@RoehamptonVoice

# Alton ANIMATES

by SIMONE FARR

Roehampton residents have been learning the fine art of animation at a new positive mental health art group, run by the Community Development Team from WBC Sheltered Housing. The group considered the theme of "change". They discussed many changes facing them, including their physical health, loss, the Roehampton Regeneration, and the changing world around them.

Under the guidance of local community artist Sam Haynes, the group used traditional art skills and learnt new animation skills using modern technology to create their own animation exploring the changes in their lives. The animation can be viewed online at the Wandsworth Arts Festival and on YouTube. The URL is [www.wandsworthfringe.com/whats-on-2020/alton-animates](http://www.wandsworthfringe.com/whats-on-2020/alton-animates)

The Community Development Team hope to arrange a premier of the film in a Roehampton venue for the wider community as soon as possible.

Contact [Simone.farr@richmondandwandsworth.org.uk](mailto:Simone.farr@richmondandwandsworth.org.uk) or [Elaine.curley@richmondandwandsworth.org.uk](mailto:Elaine.curley@richmondandwandsworth.org.uk) for more information.



Alton Animates participants



Artwork: Alton Anmitaes participants

# St Joseph's Church and Its Community in Roehampton

by MIRIAM HOWITT

St Joseph's Church has been central to the community since it was built in 1881, when Roehampton was known as The Last Village in London. The monument with horse troughs was the focus of the Village and St Joseph's Church's historic Lych Gate faced it with the fine moulded stone windows and great oak doors of the church beyond. It was built for the whole community as the Parish Church on the edge of the great estate owned by the Jesuits at Manresa (originally Parkstead) House, where they had a seminary (now Whitelands College).

Down Roehampton Lane – then a simple country lane – the Sacred Heart nuns had their Convent, primary school (as now) and senior boarding school, which transferred to Surrey, and was rebuilt (after being bombed in WW2) as a teacher training college, in extensive parklands, now the University of Roehampton. Up the High Street the SMG sisters still have their Convent and home for adults with learning difficulties, as well as Maryfield Convent and training for novices (down



Danebury Avenue), which has become the Kairos retreat and conference centre. It has always been part of their mission to care for the whole community, which has grown unimaginably. One Sister, now Sr Esther, is entirely devoted to pastoral work of the Church.

The great widening in 1962 of Roehampton Lane with its high brick wall, chopping off St Joseph's Church entrance, shattered the harmony of the village centre, but its life in the community continued with a new much-loved secular Parish Priest, Fr Symes, who rode around on a bicycle visiting every family in their own homes. He established a chapel on the new Lennox Estate at the end of Priory Lane which, with Woking Close, had been transferred to his parish. This closed after a few years with a new bus route to the church available.

The population swelled with the building of Council Houses on



the Dover House Estate in 1920 and beyond towards Putney and down in Putney Vale, then in the 1950s, on the huge Alton Estate. These became the much-needed homes of the bombed-out Eastenders of London, the Irish seeking employment, followed by families from East African countries achieving independence, the Philippines and the Caribbean. The congregation of St Joseph's Catholic Church really was and is the Universal Church and welcomes all, adopting the various traditions of its members, relishing their rich heritage. The population continued to grow with affluent developments on the former grounds of Queen Mary's Hospital and sites up and down Roehampton Lane as well as Roehampton University, absorbing also the Froebel Teacher Training College in Grove House and Southlands College re-built on the main campus. The congregation of St Joseph's Church therefore comes from all walks of life and worships in harmony.

We now have Fr Alberto (from Italy) and Fr Louis (from Togo), both of the Missionary order of the Comboni (or Verona) Fathers as our Parish Priests adding a new dimension, and reaching out into the wider community. They are very supportive of all our activities and concerned that we get the right solution for Alton Regeneration and more provision of facilities for the young.



St Joseph's Church

Portrait photos: Karen Endozo

## ROEHAMPTON VOICE: ISSUE 40

### ADVERTISING

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Cover: The Earl of Bessborough's Villa at Roehampton, Edward Hassell 1826

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*The Roehampton Voice is published as a project of the Roehampton Trust.*

## RU a Good Neighbour?

by ALEX GAUTIER

When I was asked to write another article on TfL buses, my heart sank. When I read the Mayor's post about the buses, it fell another six feet. Sadiq Khan is pleased he improved efficiency and reduced TfL's losses. On Roehampton Lane all I have noticed is that there are far fewer buses. I did approach Roehampton University to ask them to consider allowing their neighbours back onto their double decker buses. No such luck, but when I looked into what it's like living beside other universities, I found some really good ideas.

Birmingham University applied for a green fund grant, just as Roehampton University did, and invested it in an efficient Combined Heat and Power plant. They now generate their own power, and also provide electricity to neighbouring developments. The University of Chester used their green fund grant to install a hydroelectric power plant which still allows salmon to travel upstream.

Closer to home, in Guildford, Surrey University put on lectures in the evenings once or twice a month for their neighbours on the subject of astronomy, and you can look through their high powered telescope after the lecture to

see the stars and planets. The Law School in Guildford puts on evening plays in the summer in their grounds that the local residents attend.

If you go online you can find evening events to attend at Roehampton University, but they do not have the general appeal mentioned above. The one I attended was a followup lecture on a day's workshop run for students. RU does have an outreach programme and perhaps I'm just a technological idiot, but I couldn't find anything about community involvement on it.

How about it, RU: summer puppet shows for children in the gardens, Midsummer Night's Dream for us adults. I'm sure you can come up with all sorts of ideas, much better than me, and surely we can socially distance outside with a property your size. But can we please have some community engagement, and if you start your Uni transport again, please be a good Samaritan and let us on the bus. We had noticed that your buses were often empty when going in the direction we want to go, so it would be great to take pressure off the TfL drivers who have done a valiant job during this crisis.

Artwork: Lydia Caires



## Save Putney Animal Hospital!

by A Concerned RSPCA Worker

For decades the RSPCA Putney Animal Hospital has been a vital community resource, rescuing sick and injured wildlife, treating stray animals and providing subsidised veterinary care for those on a low income. Sadly the RSPCA has now earmarked the site for closure in September 2020. This has come as a devastating blow to the hospital's devoted staff, as well as the many thousands of people who make use of the service.

The plans come as part of a restructuring programme announced by the RSPCA which involves the redundancy of over 300 staff, most of them frontline workers who rescue and treat animals. The effect on animal welfare will be undeniably catastrophic, and the charity has not provided detailed financial justifications for the changes.

Earlier in the year the executive forced all 1,600 staff to sign new, inferior contracts, which led to the first ever successful strike ballot in the organisation. Staff eventually signed the contracts under the assurance that this sacrifice would ensure the financial viability of the organization. Putney MP Fleur Anderson wrote to the CEO Chris Sherwood to express her concern, and was assured there would be no redundancies, but just months later hundreds of staff are on the firing line.

While most RSPCA supporters accept that there are financial challenges for charities since the pandemic, the Society has been running at a deficit for several years, largely as a result



of financial mismanagement and excessive executive pay. There are no contingency plans put in place for the animals that rely on the hospital, and it is unlikely that other charities will take on former clients. The hospital is the only place with facilities for the treatment and rehabilitation of wildlife – where will these animals go after the closure?

Our community campaign aims to encourage the RSPCA executive to halt the plans and find alternative ways of making savings. We have already received over 5,000 signatures on our petition against the closures, and have raised over £3,500 via our online fundraiser.

We are calling on local residents to:

- Sign our online petition against closure of the animal centres – <http://chnq.it/TDPSrMQmjp>
- Contact our CEO Chris Sherwood encouraging him to rethink the centre closures. You can email [chris.sherwood@rspca.org.uk](mailto:chris.sherwood@rspca.org.uk), or tweet him @RSPCAChris
- Donate to our online fundraiser – <https://gf.me/u/ydckpq>
- Follow our community campaign on Twitter @saveouranimalc1

With your help we can save our beloved centre from closure and continue to help thousands of animals a year.

## Managing Wellbeing after Lockdown

by TALK WANDSWORTH

The global lockdown in response to COVID-19 for many of us has stirred feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. Whilst some of us may be excited for the easing of lockdown restrictions, the emotional effects of COVID-19 remain for many. Talk Wandsworth Wellbeing Service acknowledges the importance of cultivating mental wellbeing and resilience in these uncertain times and provides wellbeing support for the community.

### WHO ARE WE?

Talk Wandsworth is an IAPT service provided by the South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust. The Wellbeing Service offers a range of talking therapies for individuals who are experiencing common mental health difficulties such as depression, anxiety, stress or sleeping difficulties and many other everyday difficulties.

### WHAT DO WE OFFER?

Wellbeing is at the core of Talk Wandsworth. The service aims to promote positive mental health and wellbeing through providing free one-to-one workshops. These are currently being offered via telephone and we have occasional online events. The workshops are a way for people to develop skills and techniques to help them cope with the difficulties they are facing in their lives. Some of the workshops we offer include:

- Coping with stress
- Self-care and relaxation
- Living with chronic illnesses
- Self-confidence and assertiveness
- Preparing for parenthood
- Managing anger and irritability

### MANAGING WELLBEING AFTER LOCKDOWN

The effects of COVID-19 for many have increased feelings of isolation and anxiety. Talk Wandsworth has adapted its services during the lockdown to support the community by introducing a Wellbeing Helpline which operates Monday-Friday 9am-5pm where members of the Wandsworth community can access support from wellbeing practitioners. You can call it on 020 3513 6264. Although the lockdown restrictions are gradually easing, Talk Wandsworth is still committed to providing wellbeing support to the community. The service has introduced new workshops promoting positive living and building resilience as a means of managing wellbeing post-lockdown. Feelings of fear and uncertainty are understandable at this time, so it is important that we look after our mental health and wellbeing. If you're a resident of the borough of Wandsworth, you can book your place online. Search for **eventbrite talk wandsworth** or look out for online events on our Instagram, Twitter and Nextdoor accounts.

Our address is **Talk Wandsworth, First Floor Office Premises, 56 Tooting High St, London, SW17 0RN.**

Please visit our website [www.talkwandsworth.nhs.uk](http://www.talkwandsworth.nhs.uk) and complete an **online self-referral form.**

You can also ask your GP to refer you.

## Roehampton Age Well – Calling out to people who are 60+

by **ANDREW LOXTON**

Hello, everybody, I work for a charity called Hestia. I am the newly appointed Coordinator of the Roehampton Age Well Project. Hestia run the Age Activity Café in Tooting, and we are now reaching out to all residents over 60 in the Roehampton and Putney Heath area (including the Lennox and Putney Vale estates).

As people get older, they tend to start considering what they want for their future, whilst also dealing with an increasing number of health issues. A report published by the Office for National Statistics in June 2020 showed that those who were entering older age were the least optimistic members of society when thinking about the long term impact of COVID on their lives. As we move out of lockdown, Roehampton Age Well wants work with the amazing range of networks and activities that existed before and build on the strong community response we saw during the COVID crisis - to make Roehampton an even better place to Age Well in the years ahead.

We want to work with the local community, businesses, facilities

and most importantly older people themselves; to develop activities and promote connections that are both fun and maintain mental, physical and emotional wellbeing and independence. We want to enable people who are 60+ to gain the skills needed in an increasingly digital age, and strengthen links between the generations in Roehampton.

Roehampton Age Well started work during lockdown, so we have not yet been able to meet many people in person, but have been building an increasing network of older people over the telephone to start planning what we do in the future. If you are over 60 or a local resident who feels you have ideas on what's needed, I would love to have an informal chat with you. You can telephone me on **07826 779 684** or email me on **Andrew.loxton@hestia.org**

So please do make contact now. I am really looking forward to speaking and meeting as many people as possible over the summer and beyond.



## Little Village

by **HELEN SPEEDY**

Hello, my name is Helen and in March, the week before the lockdown was officially announced, I joined Little Village to manage a new satellite service in Roehampton. Roehampton Voice has kindly allowed me some space to introduce myself and Little Village.

### WHO ARE LITTLE VILLAGE?

Little Village is like a foodbank, but for clothes, toys and equipment for babies and children up to the age of 5. We're a movement of parents committed to alleviating material poverty in London, and our mission is to build small, warm communities of families who support one another with dignity and love when times are tough. Our vision is that no child in the capital is without the essential things they need to thrive and that every parent can play a part in achieving that.

### WHAT ARE WE DOING IN ROEHAMPTON?

We launched our first site in Wandsworth in January 2016. We opened in Camden in 2017 and our Southwark site launched in January 2019. The plan (pre-COVID-19 and generously supported by the Wimbledon Foundation and the Wandsworth Grant Fund) was for Little Village to open a satellite service in Roehampton in 2020 and to work in partnership with the Early Help Cluster at Eastwood Children's Centre to support families in the



area. Having a satellite service in Roehampton will offer the opportunity for families referred to Little Village to access support locally, and create volunteering opportunities for local residents to build skills and confidence.

### SO WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING DURING THE PANDEMIC?

Unable to carry on meeting families in person, we very quickly launched an alternative "Virtual Village" and have been delivering hygiene essentials and emergency clothing bundles to families across the capital. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have supported over 1,900 families, provided nearly 400 babies and children with a safe place to sleep, and sent out 220 buggies to families needing to stay mobile.

In Roehampton, unable to open the service as we originally envisaged it, because the Children's Centre closed as lockdown started, we have instead been working with the team at Eastwood to distribute nappies and toiletries to families with under 5s, along with the amazing community food boxes supplied by Rackets Cubed in partnership with Heathmere School and Regenerate.

I've also been running a donation point and have been overwhelmed by the support of families in SW15, who have donated mountains of quality clothes and equipment. We are also grateful for the generosity and warm welcome and offers of help we have received from other organisations and individuals in Roehampton, in particular via the Roehampton Response Network. I'm really looking forward to meeting more of you and getting going with the full-scale operation in Roehampton when we are able. In the meantime, if you'd like to get in touch, please don't hesitate to email me on

**helen@littlevillagehq.org**

## A message from your local MP

by **FLEUR ANDERSON**



Thank you to all the Roehampton residents who have written to me or to Wandsworth Council with your views about the latest plans for the proposed Regeneration of the Alton Estate.

These new plans are much better than before, and they have made changes in response to concerns raised by local people. But I am disappointed that they still are not a good enough deal for Roehampton residents. We will have 10 years of building and so we need to know that it will be worth it.

I was among the people who asked the Council to extend the consultation period. Lockdown is not the right time to be holding this important consultation. I'm pleased to say that it is being extended for a further 30 days, and if you live in the immediate area of the proposals you should receive a letter in the next week confirming this. I have also asked the Council to try new and better ways to engage with local people about this most important issue.

Last summer, over 500 residents from Danebury Avenue, Allbrook House, Harbridge Avenue, Minstead Gardens and the surrounding area told me that they did not think the proposals were good enough. There are four big issues – more council homes rather than expensive private homes, more and better youth facilities, more space for community groups in the library building, and better transport links. I also have concerns about other aspects of the proposals, like the segregation of the houses into private and affordable blocks,

and have set out my detailed concerns on the Wandsworth Planning website for the public to read. You can go on the website and make your own comments too.

You may have read in the news that Redrow PLC (the developer which the Council appointed in 2017) has said that it is scaling back its work in London. I have asked the Council for an urgent update. Roehampton has been starved of investment for many years and we need a regeneration, but with a focus on what local people want and need. Your voice and your views matter very much.

Finally, I am working on a very wide range of issues for residents, including improved consultation with leaseholders, the Government's response to the crisis, economic support, food supply for vulnerable residents, Black Lives Matter and many more. I have also asked the Council to open the library as soon as possible, as this is such an important contact point and resource for so many people.

Thank you to everyone who has followed the rules and has helped others nearby to get through this very difficult time together. We should all be proud of the way that everyone has come together to help each other - neighbours, carers, your local councillors, community organisations, schools and faith groups.

To get in touch with me, come to a phone-in surgery, discuss the regeneration plans or any other local or national matter, please contact me via telephone on **020 7219 3348** or email **fleur.anderson.mp@parliament.uk**

## The 'revised' planning application came and went...

by STEVE FANNON

The "revised" Alton Estate planning application came without warning, and the fact that it came during the COVID-19 crisis is shameful. There are many residents who would not be able to work their way through the details of the online independently. This very much comes across as a desperate attempt to swat resident engagement aside to get this regeneration over the finish line.

The revised plans in themselves still prompt concerns regarding the amount of affordable housing, lack of community space (which has reduced with the planning application revision), severe loss of daylight in some cases for local residents, infrastructure concerns such as doctor capacity and water pipes (Holybourne Avenue has two major water ruptures in the past couple of years). Public transport will probably be overstretched even more than it currently is. Will leaseholders and freeholders be given a fair deal? How many of the original council tenants will be coming back (or have left already...)? What will happen to service charges?

It still raises the question of what happened to the Labour

Councillors. They expressed a lot of concern regarding a much smaller regeneration attempt circa 10 years ago, but have been broadly in favour of the current one.

This is history in the making and residents have been deprived of their chance to meet, to discuss and to engage on this topic at the final hurdle. For those of you that did get your comments in, Alton Regeneration Watch thanks you. Our view is that it might still be called in by the Mayor of London, since it may be questionable whether the Council has adhered enough to the requirements he made of them, such as not segregating affordable and private housing.



Photo: James Attree

## Alton planning application - Heritage hold-up

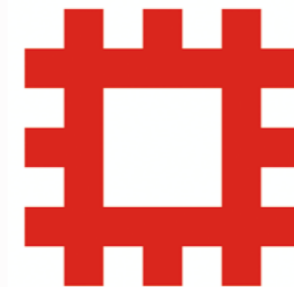
by JOHN HORROCKS

The Redrow/WBC planning application proposing the redevelopment of the central area of the Alton Estate was submitted last May. The application is still live and the public consultation on the application has been extended from the intended end-date of 1st July. This is because Heritage England wants to assess the development's impact on the newly Listed (in June) Alton West Estate's historic landscape. Given this, Redrow have had to submit a revised Heritage Assessment document and this was received by the borough council on 7th July.

So, the consultation period has been extended, by the council, to a new date. It is 7th August. If your comments on the application have not yet been submitted to the council, then you need to get them in quickly! But they will still be accepted – even after 7th August.

The council is writing to everyone to advise us of the new consultation end-date. Did you get the letter?

The planning application should now be going to the borough council's Planning Application Committee for a decision sometime in the Autumn.



1950s photo of Alton West



The Alton School



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[www.altonschool.org.uk](http://www.altonschool.org.uk)

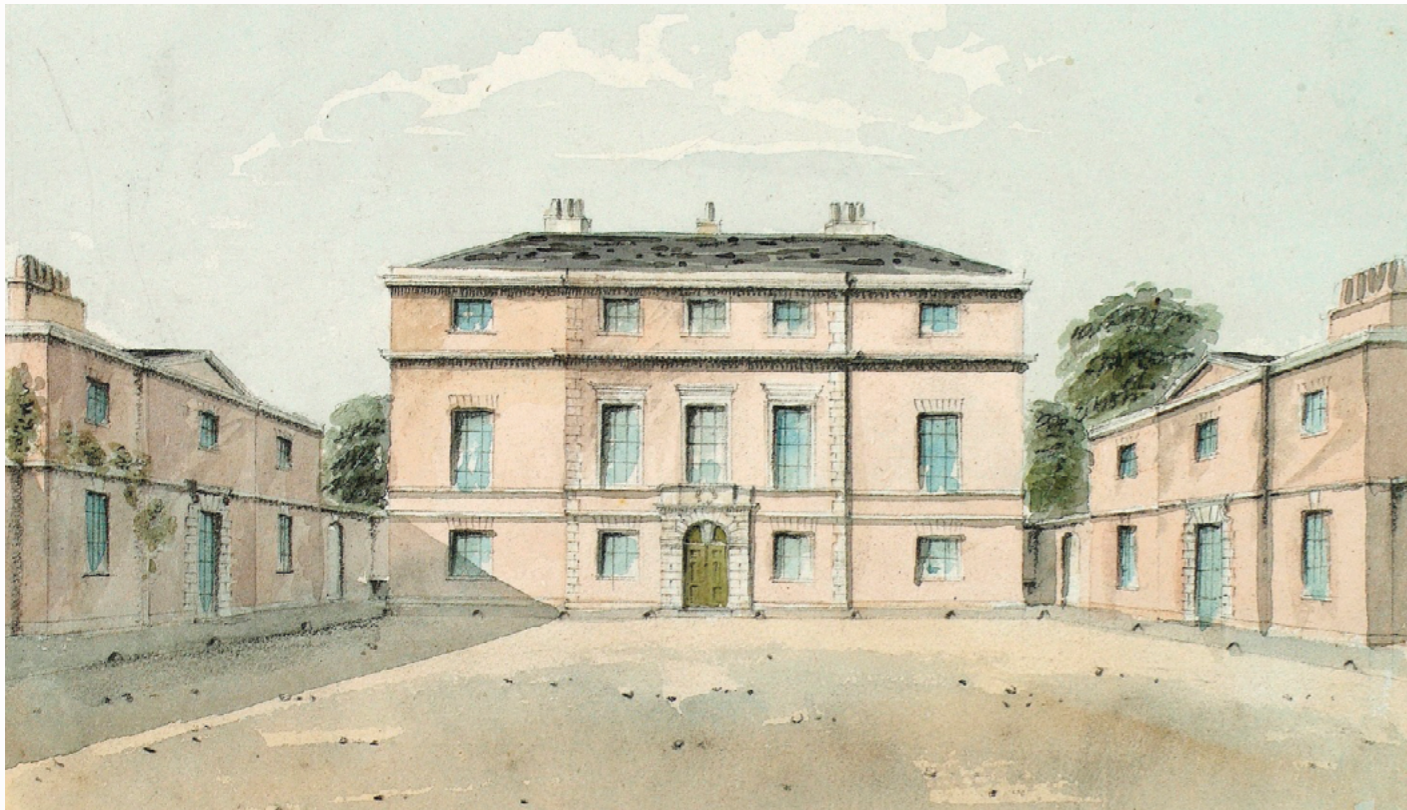
The Alton School, Danebury Avenue, London SW15 4PD



@TheAlton



the\_alton\_primary\_school



## A Brief History of Parkstead

by **GILLY KING**, History and Heritage advisor, University of Roehampton

Parkstead was designed for the second Earl of Bessborough. It is a fine example of the suburban villas that were designed by Sir William Chambers in the villages of London, including Roehampton, Twickenham, Richmond and Whitton. The 1750's and 1760's saw the British aristocracy wanting houses away from their main estates and within easy reach of London. Today, Parkstead is exceptional as it contains the most complete surviving interior by Chambers, except for Somerset House. The Villa faces Richmond Park with a six-column Ionic portico and pediment accessed via two curving stairways. These lead to the Hall, with a stair-well behind, with four rooms of different sizes on the corners. At the back were stable buildings and a rear entrance.

### THE BESSBOROUGH'S AT PARKSTEAD

The title of Earl of Bessborough was originally created in the peerage of Ireland in 1739 for Brabazon Ponsonby (1679-1758). His son William (1704-1793) held parliamentary seats

for Irish and English constituencies, until he succeeded to the title on the death of his father. The second Earl of Bessborough's country seat had been Ingress Abbey, Kent. However, when his wife died in 1760 he sold the Kent house and built a villa at Roehampton. The villa, originally known as Parksted, was designed by William Chambers, and built by William Wilton.

The second Earl lived part of his time at Parkstead but gave over the house to his son Frederick Ponsonby (1758-1844) on his marriage in 1780. Frederick married Henrietta Spencer, known as Harriet (1761-1821), sister of Georgiana who became the Duchess of Devonshire. Lady Bessborough, like her sister, was one of the foremost Whig hostesses of the age. She raised her four children by her husband at Parkstead for much of the time. Her two illegitimate children by Lord Granville were raised by their father and his wife. Harriet also had an affair with the Irish writer Richard Brinsley Sheridan, who visited Parkstead to see her. Harriet Spencer was without a doubt one of the most

**The Earl of Bessborough's Villa**  
at Roehampton [rear entrance]  
Edward Hassell 1826

glamorous, influential, and notorious aristocrats of the Regency period!

### SIR WILLIAM CHAMBERS (1722-1796)

In 1757, William Chambers was appointed as architect to the Dowager Princess Augusta, and tutor in architecture to her son George, Prince of Wales. Within Kew Gardens he designed many fanciful buildings, some of which are lost. The remaining ones are the Pagoda, the Orangery, the Ruined Arch, the Temple of Bellona, and the Temple of Aeolus. Parkstead dates from this period of Chambers' work with the structure being completed in 1762. It is interesting to note that the Pagoda at Kew can be seen from the roof of Parkstead House. The Pagoda was also completed in 1762.

### AFTER THE BESSBOROUGH'S

After his wife's death the third Earl preferred to live in London, and Parkstead was leased to a banker named Abraham Wildey Robarts. He first used the house as a summer



**Elevation of Parkstead House**, Vitruvius Britannicus 1771

residence and then, on the lease being extended by the fourth Earl, it became his permanent home. After Robarts' death in 1858, the fifth Earl sold the property to the Conservative Land Society. This Society's aim was to buy up land, sub-divide it into smaller plots and sell them on to freeholders to increase the number of Conservative voters. The house and 42 acres of land were sold on to the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits), who occupied it as their Noviciate from 1864 until 1962. The Jesuits renamed it Manresa House.

In 1962 the land and house were purchased by the London County Council. The land was used in the creation of the Alton Estate, and the house was used by various educational bodies until sold to a private developer in the late 1990s. Whitelands College purchased the house and the remaining 14 acres of land in 2002.

This beautiful Georgian Villa, Grade 1 listed, stands resplendent as the centrepiece of the Whitelands College campus.



**Manresa House**, Quadrangle c 1910



**Parkstead House**, Whitelands College 2006

# Wandsworth Library Services



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(please leave a message, if your call goes to the answerphone) and more details at <https://www.better.org.uk/library/london/wandsworth/home-library-service-wandsworth>

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**1.** Complete the online form at: <https://capitadiscovery.co.uk/wandsworth/join>



**2.** Then email the temporary code to [libraries.administration@gll.org](mailto:libraries.administration@gll.org) to receive their library card number



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To find out more visit:

[www.homestartwandsworth.org.uk](http://www.homestartwandsworth.org.uk)

or email: [enquiries@homestartwandsworth.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@homestartwandsworth.org.uk)