

WERA newsletter

Warner Estate Residents Association June 2010



Our heritage

IN MARCH OVER EIGHTY PEOPLE ATTENDED A WERA MEETING TO HEAR A PRESENTATION BY JANET OWEN ON "JOHN FARRER – THE MAN WHO BUILT THE WARNER ESTATE". JANET, A PARK AVENUE NORTH RESIDENT, IS THE AUTHOR OF A RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOK ABOUT THIS ARCHITECT AND SURVEYOR WHO WORKED OVER FIFTY YEARS IN HORNSEY.

In an eloquent presentation, Janet described Farrer's life – how he came from a rural Cumbrian background and moved to London as a young man to work for architectural and surveying firms before setting up his own business in 1877. He was thus well placed to play a prominent role – as a speculative developer, as a surveyor and as an architect – in the creation of the

middle-class housing estates being built locally at that time such as the Middle Lane, Cecile Park, Fairfield and Glebe estates. As well as building houses in Crouch End he built Bank Buildings, the terrace of shops in the Broadway. Around 1884 he became architect and surveyor to the Warner family who
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WERA MEMBERSHIP

Our 2009/10 membership was 283 households. Last year we raised the annual subscription from £2 per household to £3 – the extra subscription income enables WERA to be more active and effective on behalf of local residents. We hope you will be happy to pay your 2010/11 subscriptions. Please give your subscription to your road representative (see insert).

WERA

Since 1996, **WERA** has represented the residents of nine roads at the bottom of Muswell Hill: Redston Road, Danvers Road, Warner Road, Park Avenue North, Priory Avenue, Linzee Road, Clovelly Road, Baden Road and Priory Road (north side).

WERA acts on behalf of residents and monitors local issues, including those concerning Alexandra Palace and Park, road safety, and planning developments which affect the area.

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owned a sixteen-acre estate on the north and south sides of Priory Road (the present WERA roads plus Park Avenue South and Farrer Road). He produced the plans for the road layout of the estate. The Priory, the Warner family mansion dating back to the 1820s, was not demolished until 1902 and by then Linzee Road on the eastern side of the estate was already built up. The remaining roads were built up over the next ten years. Although we knew that John Farrer played a major role in the development of the Warner estate (hence Farrer Road and Farrer Mews), the extent of his influence on our estate was not apparent until Janet's research. This shows that roads like Farrer, Warner and Redston largely consist of Warner-designed houses. Although Farrer mostly built houses for the middle class, he also built the attractive maisonettes in North View, South

View, Beechwood and Hawthorn Roads, which were for working-class families. These have similar design features, although on a smaller scale, to his larger houses.

Previously one might have thought that Farrer just designed our Edwardian houses but in fact many of the post-First World War houses are also his. He also built the handsome parade of shops in Park Road and Priory Road (originally called "Palace Parade"), which still belongs to the Warner family and which, fortunately, retains almost all of its original features. The Warner estate can be seen as the culmination of Farrer's work.

Janet Owen's book "John Farrer – the man who changed Hornsey" is published by Hornsey Historical Society (www.hornseyhistorical.awardspace.com).



Priory Common – the Warner estate’s “front garden”

For the past five years WERA has worked to improve this quarter of a mile stretch of open land along the north side of Priory Road with bulb planting and regular clean-ups. Residents paid for the Paul Eddington memorial bench and WERA got funding for the attractive notice board.

In 2009 we succeeded in getting a “Grassroots” grant to improve the shrubberies. We held a series of work sessions between September and November at which Bernie Rees, a tree surgeon and community gardener, helped groups of local residents identify the many shrubs and trees as well as undertaking some pruning and replanting. We concentrated on the shrubberies in front of The Priory sheltered housing complex (discovering in the process two raised flower beds which had been

hidden behind overgrown bushes) and the shrubbery and grassed area at the bottom of Redston Road.

The culmination of the project was a Priory Common Spring Festival in March – fortunately we chose a warm and sunny day – at which, in addition to continuing the replanting work, local groups had stalls. These included Muswell Hill Sustainability Group, Transition Crouch End, Sustainable Haringey Food Group and the Alexandra Palace and Park Apiary, which attracted much interest as they demonstrated how to attract wild bees (which don’t need hives) to our gardens.

Thanks to those residents who came to the work sessions, to Bernie Rees, to the groups who came to the spring festival and to Robert Mangal of Haringey Parks Department.

Local activities 2009/10

Alexandra Palace and Park

Things have been quiet on the Ally Pally front but the long-standing problems remain.

The Grade II listed building is in a state of disrepair and needs massive investment. Serious questions are being raised about the governance of the Palace and Park. Alexandra Palace is a registered charity but is governed and managed by Haringey Council, which delegates the operation to a board of trustees made up of local councillors. A public consultation exercise is being carried out to look at options for a new management structure but WERA representatives and others concerned about the Palace feel that wider issues need to be addressed. The frequent change in trust membership does not help to resolve the problems of the Palace's future and there can be a conflict of interests with councillors as trustees. The idea of an independent board (the

so-called "ultimate solution") is being canvassed.

There was a planning application to erect an "Adizone" sports unit on Newlands Fields near the Campsbourne estate. Whilst it was recognised that there is a need for more facilities for young people it was felt by many that this particular project in this location was inappropriate. The application failed to get planning permission.

There have been various developments in the Park such as the Little Dinosaurs play centre and restoration work to the Redston pond. The flower beds and shrubberies are now very well looked after. A proposal for surfacing the path across Redston Fields (supported by a majority of WERA members) was presented but did not go ahead because of lack of funding (it could be said that it was kicked into the long grass).

Hornsey Central Health Centre

This grand new NHS building opened in Park Road last year.

James Slater, Director of Performance and Primary Care at NHS Haringey, came to the WERA Annual General Meeting just before it opened to talk about the services to be based there. He explained that two group GP practices (with a total of 15,000 patients) would be transferring to the centre, to be followed over the years by more GPs. The centre would

also house community health services, a dementia day care centre and a pharmacy.

WERA members raised concerns about the financial aspects of the public-private partnership scheme: private developers paid £13-14 million to build the centre and the local health service will pay an annual lease of £890,000 for 30 years until ownership reverts back to the NHS.

WERA as a community

WERA meetings and work on Priory Common help to bring local residents closer together.

So too does the WERA Yahoo group, which now has 140 members and which is a lively forum for exchanging information about recommended trades people and local events, offers of unwanted goods and warnings about possible dubious callers. To join the Yahoo group, email Dick Hudson on dick@ling.ucl.ac.uk. The archive of past messages is at <http://groups.yahoo.com/>

[group/wera-n8/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wera-n8/)

In spite of poor weather last summer, Danvers Road, Redston Road and Warner Road once again held street parties. Congratulations and thanks to everyone who organised these events; they are much appreciated. Priory Gardens, the area surrounded by Priory Avenue, Clovelly Road, Linzee Road and Priory Road, which was purchased by local residents following a campaign against a backsite development, is now a successful community garden.

Crime

WERA is a Neighbourhood Watch group and regularly receives information about local crime from both the Muswell Hill and Hornsey Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

Following concerns raised on the WERA Yahoo group about a number of local break-ins and attempted break-ins, WERA held a meeting in November. Twenty-five residents attended and heard two officers from the Muswell Hill SNT talk about prevention measures and the role of the SNT. Hornsey SNT officers had been invited but phoned during the meeting to say that they couldn't attend because they were in the process of making an arrest.

SNT officers are keen to make contact with local residents and to hear about their concerns. The phone numbers of the SNTs are 020 8721 2765 (Muswell Hill) and 020 8721 2905 (Hornsey). Obviously in an emergency you should phone 999.



Many areas have lost their local shops so we are lucky to have the Park Road and Priory Road shops as well as the shops in Hornsey High Street, but it is difficult for some of them to survive, particularly in a recession.

Just Natural, the organic shop, had to close but fortunately has reopened as a branch of the Haelan Centre. A large loss to us will be Coral Pharmacy, which is moving to Muswell Hill because of fear of competition from the pharmacy consortium planned for the Health Centre. Vinay Mehta, Tracey Brooks and Tara Benjamin have been valued members of the local community. Although we can still go to the shop up the hill, it won't be the same as having them on the corner for a chat. They will be sadly missed.

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Alexandra Palace and Park Statutory Advisory Committee

David Liebeck and Harry Aspden

Alexandra Palace and Park Consultative Committee

Dick Hudson

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