



EGRA 2022 Annual Report

There has been a huge amount going on in East Greenwich in the last year as anyone who has tried to walk around the area will know only too well. After three years with no real meetings, we hope to see lots of EGRA members and maybe some new faces at Enderby House on 21st February to discuss the many important local issues that confront us. Many thanks to the management of Enderby House for offering us a venue free-of-charge for our AGM.

Given the volume of things going on, we would welcome any new recruits who would like to get involved in local issues. Also, if you are comfortable with website development and membership systems, we would also welcome anyone who'd like to lend a hand.

Planning Issues 2022

- **Sale of Morden Wharf** - The original developers, U+I, were taken over by property giant Land Securities only weeks after the site got planning permission in October 2021. Now the site is back on the market. In the current climate with rocketing costs of materials and a dwindling labour force we probably will not be seeing the glittering towers for quite a while.
- **Riverside Revetment Works** - The two controversial planning applications dealing with the Sivyer waste processing site and the adjacent riverside finally got to RBG Planning Committee recently. Although Councillors were unhappy with the plans and sent the developers back to the drawing board, this has not gone away and we should be prepared for a renewed campaign this year.
- **Distribution Centres** - We now have planning permission granted for a cluster of distribution centres in the Tunnel Avenue/Blackwall Lane industrial zone. Despite asking planners to do a traffic survey and provide a traffic management plan for the area, planning permission has been granted without any real idea of the impact - particularly once Silvertown Tunnel becomes a reality. **Bloom's** (35,000 sq ft) on Tunnel Avenue and **Spicers** (124,000sq ft.) on Salutation Road are both likely to be "last mile fulfilment centres" receiving goods in by HGVs and distributing goods by a variety of means. RBG are apparently unable to impose any new planning conditions on the massive Spicers site so it will be able to operate 24/7 with no restrictions about lighting or noise.
- **Street Hubs and Advertising Hoardings** - EGRA and many local residents objected strongly to the proposal to put a BT "street hub" outside Boots in Trafalgar Road and the application was rejected. However, BT is currently appealing this decision. The other local "street hub" on Woolwich Road has finally been moved out of the new cycleway - onto the footpath - after much

head scratching by TfL's engineers. Pedestrians once again seem to come last in the priority list. Meanwhile the huge advertising hoardings threatened for the Angerstein roundabout are out to appeal by the applicants after being turned down by RBG.

- **47-53 Woolwich Road/Mr Fixit site** - The mock-Renaissance "Urban Palazzo" has yet to be decided as, once again, a decision was deferred until a councillors' site visit takes place. Officers have recommended refusal as the new development only provides nine flats. Local residents have been concerned about the loss of a key business and the absence of any business relocation advice for long-standing shops.
- **165 Trafalgar Road - Jolly Good Time Massage Parlour** - EGRA does not usually object to businesses on Trafalgar Road as we are all grateful that the majority of the shops are let. But we have submitted strong objections to a massage parlour with a tastelessly inappropriate name beside a bus stop. As far as we are aware the business is now trading without planning permission.
- **Ikea Car Park** - This 1290 residential unit development has not yet gone to planning committee and in the current situation with shortages and price rises the developers, London Square, are probably in no hurry. We have had a number of consultation meetings with the developers but we will not know if any of our concerns have been addressed until we see the finished planning application. While Ikea, the Odeon and Sainsbury's petrol station are staying for now, B&Q looks increasingly temporary.
- **Ocean Diva** - This giant new party boat (84m long by 18m beam) will be arriving in London shortly. Projected passenger numbers are for up to 1500 people. It seems likely that its main cruising area will be Tower Bridge to the Thames Barrier as it cannot transit London's low bridges safely at most states of the tide. The intended hours of operation are 11:00 until 02:00. The operators have designated Newham as the "home port" and so the alcohol licensing decision will be made there at the end of March. The City of London turned down earlier proposals about three years ago because of concerns about crowd management, security and likely breaches of the City's strict 23:00 to 07:00 noise curfew. The operators are now looking at Butler's Wharf for loading and unloading where there is a groundswell of opposition growing. We are concerned that piers in Greenwich will be next in line. The proposed Port Management Plan for North Greenwich Pier shows guests disembarking up to 02:30 with no dispersal plan once they have left the immediate pier area and no operational restrictions despite the considerable problems of anti-social and criminal behaviour already blighting the area around the O2. RBG licensing officers are aware and have submitted a very robust response to Newham. We will continue to monitor this.

Licensing

- **Angle 90** - This bar/restaurant /club was inexplicably given a 02:00 operating licence in July 2022 only a few months after the same extension had been refused with strong objections from the police. Since then there have been endless issues with noise and anti-social behaviour from patrons leaving in the

early hours as well as some disturbing incidents in local streets. Local residents along with Ward Councillor Rowshan Hannan have spearheaded a number of mediation sessions with council officers and Angle 90 management to attempt to improve behaviour and this process is ongoing.

- **Star and Garter, now Star of Greenwich** - Following the closure of the Star and Garter after a violent incident, there are now firm plans for a community-led and managed pub. This has licensing approval but no opening date has been fixed yet.
- **River Gardens Development** - There have been a couple of contentious applications for new licensed premises in the last block of River Gardens. EGRA objected to an application for a Thai Restaurant and Sports Bar on Banning Street as the applicant wished to open till 02:00. They have since reduced the opening hours to 11:30. The latest application is for **Quy Sports Bar** on the riverside of the block. EGRA is concerned that this is intended to be a 'wet-led' premises with no catering except via moped delivery services open until 01:00 at weekends. We believe this would result in unacceptable noise and disturbance for residents in the flats above and could cause danger to children using the adjoining playground. We have submitted objections.

Traffic and Roads

- **Silvertown Tunnel** - The tunnel-boring machine has now reached Greenwich from Newham and is being prepared for turning around to drill the second bore. More immediately concerning to those of us living in East Greenwich, is the large number of impending road and lane closures on the A102 and its slip roads in the next few months which will have knock-on effects in the area. Road closure information does not seem to have been disseminated widely. EGRA members attend the Riverlinx Community Liaison Meetings quarterly though there is no evidence that any of our comments influence decisions. Liaison Group attendees have been very concerned at the poor design of the replacement footbridge which bears any uncanny resemblance to the TfL bridge at the Odeon.
- **Cycleway 4** - We seem to have got a cut-price version of Cycleway 4. A few quick observations would include a lack of the customary blue junction treatments, filthy road surfaces and inadequate or blocked drainage with the resulting flooding of the footpath as well as the cycleway. This is a far cry from the level of finish on the rest of Cycleway 4 between Tower Bridge and Deptford Creek.
- **Vanbrugh Hill** - After many months of campaigning by residents to stop dangerous driving, RBG has approved a plan for two crossings, subject to a public consultation this month. These will be island refuges rather than controlled or zebra crossings (allegedly because the road is too narrow) but will allow for ANPR cameras to catch drivers passing them on the wrong side of the road. There are no plans to impose a 7.5 tonne HGV limit on Vanbrugh Hill currently.
- **Restricted pavement width in Colomb Street** - The endless saga of providing a route to Trafalgar Road for all residents continues. Residents with mobility

issues petitioned the council for a solution over two years ago. A bump-out in the pavement around the tree or a dropped curb on one side to access a similar curb on the other side of the street would be a simple solution. Instead, they have had to put up with numerous meetings, consultations, and hours of officer time with a solution still nowhere in sight. It seems that the loss of a single parking space still trumps access for all despite all the Council rhetoric about inclusivity.

Greening and Public Realm

- **Rubbish and Fly tipping** - The constant topic of conversation locally for months has been the filthy state of our streets. Woodland Grove, Fingal Street and the Aldeburgh and Fearon neighbourhood have been specifically flagged up by EGRA members as fly tipping hotspots while the Thames Water works on the riverside of Trafalgar Road have made the area absolutely squalid. We would welcome some sort of clean streets initiative by RBG.
- **State of the Roads** - The endless digging up for utilities means that most of our streets would be a disgrace to a developing country. The number of unrepaired water leaks has increased - adding insult to irony in the disruption caused by the installation of the new water main for the Peninsula. Trafalgar and Woolwich Roads are regularly underwater from blocked drains - making a very poor pedestrian environment.
- **Greenwich Gardeners** - An East/West Greenwich gardening group has recently been set up in collaboration with the Greenwich Society. This came about after a factfinding visit to Abundance London, an established group based in Chiswick, after seeing them featured in *Gardeners' World*. We hope that EGRA members might be encouraged to join in as projects are developed.

On a slightly more positive note - The Council has agreed some extra funding for street services and greening in the proposed budget for the next financial year. Let's hope this will translate into more care being taken of the streets and public spaces in East Greenwich. The council has also just launched a public consultation on a 'Greener Safer Greenwich'. This can be found at greenersafergreenwich.commonplace.is. There will also be public meetings to discuss this on Wednesday 22 February from 7:00 to 8:30pm at the West Greenwich Library and Tuesday 28 February, same hours, at the Greenwich Centre Library.