



## The Better Archway Forum

[www.betterarchway.info](http://www.betterarchway.info)

### **BETTER ARCHWAY FORUM NEWSLETTER NO 1 – AUGUST 2005**

#### **Introduction**

The Better Archway Forum was set up in February 2005 in response to the announcement by Islington Council that it was embarking on the redevelopment of the Archway Site.

We are a non party political organisation working with the council and others to improve the Archway area. The group acts as a voice for residents, businesses and other users of the Archway, in particular on its proposed redevelopment. We pass on information about the redevelopment to the community, and lobby Islington council and other related bodies on behalf of the community.

The group invites all local organisations and individuals to become involved and there are regular group open meetings to discuss issues and decide on courses of action.

We have drawn up a constitution for the Forum and elected a committee (see end of this newsletter) There is also a BAF website where news and views are posted up, results of our own consultations are noted, and residents and others can sign up to support BAF ([www.betterarchway.info](http://www.betterarchway.info)).

#### **SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES SO FAR**

##### **Council consultation March 2005**

BAF commented on the council's consultation on the future of Archway in spring 2005, asking for a detailed and representative survey, and a full programme of meetings and displays. The Council decided that a short postal survey and a few displays was all they could afford, so we decided to run our own programme of focus groups to supplement this. We also commented on the Council's draft questionnaire, which we thought did not include enough development options, and sent them a list of ideas created in a brainstorming session.

The focus groups were carried out in March with eight groups from different areas around the Archway site and a report was submitted to the Council in April 2005, and was included in their report on the consultation. A copy of the focus group report can be read on our website, or can be sent to you on request.

## **Meetings**

Since March 2005 we have held open meetings for the general membership and anyone in the community who is interested, at the Hargrave Park School. These have included a meeting to elect a committee and decide on the aims of BAF, meetings with Islington Council Department officials, Islington and GLA councilors, and other bodies such as the Development Trust and Planning Aid.

We have also attended all relevant meetings of the North Area Committee, the Council committee which will make the planning decisions for the Archway site.

## **Informal meetings and information gathering**

Kate Calvert has drawn together a great deal of information about development issues, the history of attempts to change the Archway area and the experiences of others who have been involved in similar projects.

Kate has also been in contact with a wide range of people able to give useful information and advice about urban development such as the Environment Trust, academic bodies, URBED, English Partnerships, Transport for London and various property developers and architects.

## **Development of BAF's ideas for the site and impact on Islington Council**

At the start of the consultation BAF took an open view on the kind of development which would be suitable for the Archway site. Based on the results of the Council consultation, our own focus groups and our meetings with the community, we have now drawn together a set of ideas which we believe fairly represents the views of the majority of those affected by the development.

The current BAF position is set out in the document "Rethinking Archway", the main points of which are listed on our website under "Planning Recommendations". A copy of the full document is available on request.

There was a large amount of agreement between the results of the Council survey and the focus groups eg. on the desirability of a town square or piazza, markets, more greenery, small shops and restaurants (but not a supermarket), low to medium rise buildings, and the need to preserve a library and a swimming pool. (For full report of the consultation see the Islington Council website)

However, the Council started with the assumption that that the great majority of the buildings should be demolished and the site should be rebuilt from scratch. This was therefore the only option presented to people in their consultation other than leaving things as they are. This resulted in most people choosing the demolition option.

However, the BAF focus groups gave them a further option, ie. a partial and gradual redevelopment, and this proved to be what most people in the groups wanted. The Council has now included this option in their thinking about the development of the site.

A further point on which BAF did not agree with the Council was their claim that most people in the survey preferred a radical realignment of the road system at the Archway, to a scheme which preserved most of the current roads, but installed a two way system at the gyratory with a space for buses outside the Tower.

We dispute the Council's view because it was based on biased questions in their survey, and have therefore held a second set of focus groups to examine the issue in detail. The report of this will be sent to the Council shortly, and the results will be presented at our open meeting on 22nd September.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The Council has recently appointed Building Design Partnership, a firm of consultants, who will take forward the next stage of the development process. They are being assisted by Donaldsons who are providing financial expertise, and MVA who will deal with the traffic issues. Their main task will be to draw up a brief to be sent to developers in Spring 2006. They will be drawing up various options for this, and consulting further with the community, probably in November 2005.

BAF will be closely involved in this process, and we have already sent our "Rethinking Archway" document to them in order to feed in our ideas at an early stage. The Council hopes to be able to identify a development partner later in 2006 and determine planning permission for the site by Spring 2008. Their estimated date for completion of work on the site is end 2012.

We hope to arrange an open meeting of BAF in October at which the consultants can tell us about their plans, and hear our views.

## **Community initiatives**

BAF wishes to encourage and be involved in a range of initiatives which will make an impact on the quality of life in the area in the short term.

We are investigating the possibility of getting regular markets set up in the Archway Mall, to build on the success of the existing Christmas market. We would also like to make it possible for some of the empty shops on the site to be used, possibly as workshop spaces.

We are encouraging the development of community activities, in particular for young people. Most kids are interested in popular music and dance. DJ'ing and MCing are two facets some of you might not have heard of. We have arranged taster session on September 16th at 6:00pm and 17th at 11:00am at Hargrave Park School, and hope to run courses thereafter in these topics. Other ideas are hip hop, break dancing and film making. In order to proceed we need funding and a volunteer to help the existing team progress matters.

We are also active in helping the residents of the Girdlestone Estate in their efforts to reduce the serious ill effects created by the bus stand in Vorley Road. Contact is Annette Potter, 7281 7814.

**THE NEXT OPEN MEETING OF THE BETTER ARCHWAY FORUM WILL BE AT 7.30 pm ON SEPTEMBER 22<sup>ND</sup> AT HARGRAVE PARK SCHOOL. WE WILL BE REPORTING ON THE RESULTS OF THE RECENT FOCUS GROUPS ON TRANSPORT ISSUES, AND ASKING FOR YOUR VIEWS ON THE NEXT STEPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS. EVERYONE INTERESTED IN THE FUTURE OF ARCHWAY IS WELCOME.**

**IF ANYONE IS INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED IN ANY BAF ACTIVITIES OR BELIEVES THEY HAVE AN EXPERTISE WHICH COULD BE USEFUL TO THE GROUP, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH KATE CALVERT OR ANY OF THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS LISTED AT THE END OF THIS DOCUMENT.**

**ALSO, PLEASE TELL YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS ABOUT US AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO BECOME SUPPORTERS.**

**Better Archway Forum**

**September 2005**

## BAF COMMITTEE

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