



The Better Archway Forum

www.betterarchway.info

BETTER ARCHWAY FORUM NEWSLETTER NO 2 – DECEMBER 2005

About the Better Archway Forum

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 currently have 360-plus individual members, and many local organisations support our aims.

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

Activities during 2005

BAF worked with the Council in the first stage consultation carried out in the Spring, including running our own focus groups with a cross section of the community. We have held numerous open meetings for residents and businesses, and met with Islington Council Department officials, Islington and GLA councillors to discuss the development possibilities. We have also been in contact with many bodies as the Environment Trust, the Metropolitan University bodies, URBED, English Partnerships, Transport for London and various property developers and architects.

We have attended all relevant meetings of the North Area Committee (the Council committee which will make the planning decisions for the Archway site). The Council clearly takes us seriously, even if they do not always see eye to eye with us, and we have managed to get them to do more consultation than originally planned. We have also obtained a lot of press coverage, and delivered numerous leaflets about the redevelopment.

Development of ideas for the site and BAF's contribution

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 the only option presented to the community in the Spring consultation.

From the start BAF took a more 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 concluded that, if presented with the option, the majority preferred partial and gradual redevelopment to wholesale demolition and rebuild.

We were successful in persuading the Council to take this possibility seriously, and it was included in their brief to the consultants (the Building Design Partnership) who are currently producing a "Scoping Document" on the possibilities for the site, from which a brief for development contractors will be produced.

In August BAF carried out further focus groups on possible road changes and a report was sent to the Council in September. The findings did not agree with the Council's 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.

In the early summer we produced a document "Rethinking Archway", the main points of which are listed on our website under "Planning Recommendations".

More recently we have been developing specific ideas for the option of partial redevelopment with supporters who have experience in architecture and urban development. The reason for this is that we believe that this option is unlikely to be adequately developed by the consultants, and we do not wish to see it dismissed out of hand by the Council because of this. We are being supported in this approach by both the local Labour and Conservative parties.

Problems with the Council's consultation with the community

BAF has had reservations about the quality of the consultation so far, and we recently wrote to Graham Loveland, the Head of Planning at Islington, to register our concerns. These can be summarised as:

- The original Council survey was inadequate for establishing a representative view from the community and was poorly distributed
- There were not enough public exhibitions either in the first round or in the consultants' recent efforts.
- The number of meetings at which the public and local stakeholders could give their views was too small, and very badly organised
- The use of the local press was inadequate and other means of publicising the events such as posters have been poor.
- The Better Archway Forum has made a major contribution to remedy these defects, eg. by running focus groups in the first round and by helping with publicity. Without our (entirely voluntary) efforts, things would have been even worse.
- The Council has failed to follow its own Statement of Community Involvement in planning matters which says that involvement must be inclusive and representative, timely, convenient and give enough information about the issue in an understandable way.
- The consultants and the Council have adopted a process of continual alteration to their original timetable, at very short notice, changing both dates and the sequence of steps.

The Council have taken this matter seriously and replied in detail, although they have contested many of our points.

Timetable and next steps

- The draft scoping document now looks as though it will be a full two months late, leaving little time to offer comments before the final version is presented at the North Area Committee on 9th January. We will however notify members when it is available.
- After this the consultants are due to work up two master plan options in January and February, one large scale, one smaller.
- These options will be presented to the North Area committee, probably some time in March.
- There will be statutory consultation on these options, probably in March, possibly April.
- The final options should be presented some time after that.
- There will then be a final presentation to Council's Executive.

The delays to the timetable mean the final decision on which scheme to adopt may now fall after the Council elections on May 6th. This means that the Lib-Dems will be able to delay the decision in order to be able to make a choice unaffected by election issues.

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.

Trees for Archway

BAF made a submission to the council for some of the A1 Borough money to be spent on a lot more green planting in the area - in accordance with a scheme put together by the local green ranger. It seems that the money may not be available from this source so a team of four members has volunteered to seek alternative support and funding with organisations like Street Trees.

Cheaper Food/Buying Co-ops

Some people in Archway feel that the food here is not cheap enough. Even if a supermarket did open here, it is unlikely to do so for at least 10 years. What we would like to do is organise alternative better priced sources for them. Two potential projects are organising weekly minibuss trips to Morrisons for OAPs and bulk buying for staples like tinned baked beans for example for those with children for whom a supermarket trip – whether to Archway or further afield, is a trying experience. Food co-ops are a good way of doing this and Sustain would be willing to offer us support, but, as with the trees, we would need people willing to take on the project.

Youth Activities

Consultation of all kinds has shown that there is a real need for activities for young people in the area. A team of members has therefore volunteered to work with people with experience of running such programmes and of the required fund-raising to try to set up suitable schemes. There is potential for offering a great deal here, so the more volunteers who could join the small existing team, the better.

Farmers' market

We have found that there is very strong support for a market in the area and recently a local resident called Stephanie Smith has obtained exclusive rights to the use of the Archway Mall as a trading area and is seeking to set up a market on the site. As her expertise is in crafts she will start with those, but she reports that she is also investigating options for a farmers' market.

Next Meeting

**The Better Archway Forum
will be holding a public meeting with
Local Works
Thursday January 26TH
Hargrave Park School
7.30pm**

Local Works www.LocalWorks.org is the campaign for the Sustainable Communities Bill. If made law the bill would give communities like ours much greater control over what happens to the places we live and work.

Speakers are Jeremy Corbyn MP, Marta Nowicka of the Metropolitan University on achieving regeneration without massive rebuilding, plus speakers from Local Works and the New Economics Foundation.

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

December 2005

BAF COMMITTEE

	Tel. No	Email
Kate Calvert (Chairperson)	7272 1286	kate@kcalvert.me.uk
Kathleen Greaves (Secretary)	7263 3324	greaves.rmc@blueyonder.co.uk
Jan Tucker (Treasurer)	7272 6010	jantucker555@hotmail.com
Amy Silverton (Press)	7485 7625	amy.silverston@virgin.net
Adrian Betham (Roads)	8340 1368	betham@hotmail.com
Wendy Meredith (Schools)	7272 3989	headteacher@hargravepark .islington.sch.uk
Alan Perry (Community)	7272 3530	resident@f2s.com
Christine Greenwood	7263 2327	