

BETTER ARCHWAY FORUM NEWSLETTER No 7 - March 2008

1. ARCHWAY STATION

Transport for London is going to be spending £45 million to provide step-free access at Archway station. Installation work is planned to start next year, going on three years and causing us a lot of disruption, closing the mall, and bringing heavy plant and lorries to the centre of the area.

The scheme doesn't allow for any improvements to the station itself however – even though the project team working on the plan has admitted that a new façade wouldn't cost much more than refurbishing the existing one.

What is more, TfL's new head of design has announced improved standards of design on all new works and the need to connect underground stations better with their surrounding area.

This means that, whatever they are saying right now, TfL should be finding the money to replace the two-storey Portakabin they provided us with last time, building instead something more like one of the glass Jubilee Line stations, housing stalls selling things like coffee and papers.

A new and sparkling station would make all the difference to Archway, encouraging landowners, investors and shopkeepers to see the whole area in a more positive light. And given that TfL built the Archway Tower, they really do owe us one.

Both the mayor and the GLA assembly members are going to be elected on 1 May so we have the ideal opportunity to lobby them about this.

So please write to the GLA assembly candidates for our area:

Jennette Arnold (Labour) jennette.arnold@london.gov.uk

Meral Ece (Lib-Dem) meral.ece@islington.gov.uk

Aled Fisher (Green) a.d.fisher@lse.ac.uk

Alexander Ellis (Conservative) alexander@ellis4London.com

Please also write to the main major mayoral candidates:

Sian Berry (Green) press@greenparty.org.uk

Brian Paddick (Lib-Dem) brian.paddick@libdems.org.uk

Ken Livingstone (Labour) mayor@london.gov.uk

Boris Johnson (Conservative) info@backboris.com

2. ARCHWAY GYRATORY

The GLA has allocated £250,000 to consider the best way to redesign the roads at Archway. A consultant has been appointed and there are those black rubber lines across some of the roads to count vehicles and help come up with the best solution for both pedestrians and vehicles.

Counts show that almost as many pedestrians use the gyratory as cars, one strong argument for making it a lot more pedestrian-friendly - though there are plenty more.

The problem is, as yet no money has been allocated to do the work which will be recommended.

But again there's that chance to push for the money – the GLA elections.

We need to lobby the mayoral and GLA assembly candidates to make sure that they promise to deal with the Archway gyratory as a priority.

It's already on a list of 12 one-way systems to be removed – there's even a banner on the roundabout which says No More One-Way – End Archway's Traffic Madness. TfL just needs to agree when it will be done, and allocate the money for it from what is spent every year.

3. BAF STALL AND THE ARCHWAY MAP

Keep a lookout for the BAF stall in the library some Saturdays. It's there so you can offer comment on issues you think should be addressed in the area, and ideas for the London 21 Archway community map.

This is being developed by BAF with support from the London 21 Sustainability Network (www.london21.org) an environmental and community charity working throughout London.

The map – currently at www.communitymaps.london21.org.uk is designed so that we can share all kinds of information about the area.

Current sections include the following:

- Green areas and plantings
- Community organisations and centres
- Made in Archway – anything from furniture to honey

- Reuse, recycle and DIY – any repair and recycling services
- Classes - pilates, English as a second language and more
- Events

It will be online and interactive, and we can continue to build and develop the map into the future. Eventually you will be able to post suggestions via the site itself but that is not yet ready. In the meanwhile though, even if you don't get to chat at the stall you can get involved or just send ideas to Colleen Whitaker at London 21 (020) 7471 6795; colleen.whitaker@london21.org).

4. PEDESTRIAN SURVEY

Thanks to everyone who helped with the pedestrian surveys of Archway, carried out with help from London 21 www.london21.org and Space Syntax www.spacesyntax.org. They have now been analysed and are up on the web site www.betterarchway.info. They have also been sent to TfL to contribute to their study of the one-way system.

The aims of the surveys were to:

- Check current pedestrian levels at different times on weekdays and at the weekend.
- Compare numbers with figures for other areas – the most heavily used streets should get priority for improvement
- Compare pedestrian and car use across the area (approximately 50:50) so that in any redesign each group gets an appropriate share of street space. (In the Walworth Road: cars have been reduced to two lanes and pedestrian increased from two to four lanes)
- Provide information on how well the layout meets current needs or whether at specific points certain pathways become too crowded and therefore uncomfortable to use. Examples of where this happens include:
 - in front of the Co-op (alleviated now that the pavement has been widened following BAF lobbying)
 - the top end of Holloway Road (e.g. between the Abacus show room and the Mother Redcap pub)
 - outside the tube station at certain time of the day (rush hour) where the number of users is often too high to move easily in the space left between the café tables and the kiosk stands when they are open at the same time
- The survey also shows that, subject to it being well designed, a street opened between the swimming pool and the current Archway Mall would probably be well used. Further investigation of the overall design will be necessary.

The next step is photographic surveys of pedestrian 'informal' crossings to identify and document pedestrian desire lines. Repeated 'informal' crossings indicate that the official pedestrian crossings may be regarded as safe under TfL's rules, but they don't take into account the way pedestrians tend to opt for the quickest rather than the official route, notably at the top end of the Holloway Road.

We'll be doing more on public space planning but in the meanwhile, the more you press for these improvements, the more changes we are likely to get – and the nicer Archway will be for you to walk around.

5. ESTATE AGENT SIGNS

These are a growing problem around the area because they make it look like lots of people are trying to sell up and leave – and it seems that at least half of the signs if not more are bogus.

The regulations are that signs are only permitted if a property is genuinely for sale or to let. But in Archway rogue agents are erecting signs on properties where that isn't true. Signs advertising 'Sold' or 'Let by' are allowed for just 14 days after the deal has been signed. In Archway they are being left up for months.

A BAF member who has suffered from one of the many unwanted signs made several requests to have it removed. She was eventually told to take it down herself. She commented that she doesn't have her own bolt cutters. Instead she amended the sign with a note saying 'This Sign is Unsolicited'.

You could do the same. We have also found that you can also report the agent to the compliance department at the National Association of Estate Agents (01926) 417 791 who can look into the agent's professional conduct and consider any disciplinary action.

The department prefers traditional letters – emails are not given priority – and they need you first to write to the agent concerned to give them a chance to take action.

If that doesn't produce the appropriate response, send a copy of any correspondence to Mrs Ann J Thomas, Professional Conduct and Best Practice Advisor, National Federation of Property Professionals, Arbon House, 6 Tournament Court, Edghill Drive, Warwick CV34 6LG. They will then register this as an official complaint.

If you do make a complaint it would be helpful if you can drop us a note at contact@betterarchway.info so we can track any improvements.

6. ART INSTALLATIONS

There have been a number of arts activities around Archway. Look out for the miniature paintings on the chewing gum on the pavement outside Resurrection boutique for example.

Look out too for the work of Jonathan Aldous who is offering comment on the state of the area through a series of 'repairs and renovations' like the wobbly new lines on the Girdlestone Estate football court and some mushrooms springing up on abandoned objects to point out just how long they've been sitting there. There'll be more to come.

7. BAF WALKS

BAF walks take place on alternate first Saturdays and Sundays, meeting 10.30am at Cafe Metro next to Archway Station. Wear comfy shoes.

Next ones are:

Saturday April 5th - A walk to Islington Green 3 miles via west of Holloway Road through the leafy squares of Barnsbury.

Sunday May 4th – Parkland walk 5 miles to Finsbury Park and then down the New River to Clissold Park.

In June the plan is to do a section of the Capital Ring rather than walking from Archway

As well as considering features along the way the walks are a chance to discuss ideas for Archway - experts of all kinds welcome.

8. ABOUT THE BETTER ARCHWAY FORUM

The Better Archway Forum (BAF) was set up in January/February 2005 in response to the Council's plans to promote redevelopment at Archway. We have been working since then with the Council and others to improve the Archway area.

To find out more about us see www.betterarchway.info, or come along to one of our events including our regular monthly walks (see below).

9. HELP US STAY IN TOUCH

Have we got your details right? If we've got any part of your name or address wrong, please let us know. You can leave a message on 020 7272 3989 or email BAF at contact@betterarchway.info.

BAF CONTACTS

Kate Calvert (Chair)

kate@kcalvert.me.uk

Alan Perry (Secretary)

baf@f2s.com

Jan Tucker (Treasurer)

jantucker555@hotmail.com

Or at BAF, Hargrave Park School, 51 Bredgar Road N19 5BS.