

EALING

LONDON



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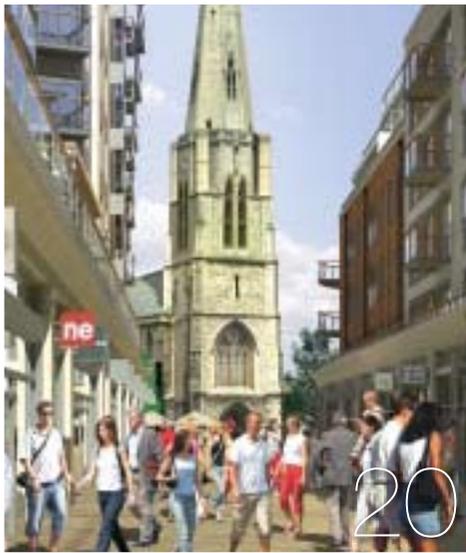
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The grass is greener in Ealing

A wealth of development opportunities and a progressive council are drawing investors and developers to the attractive, well-connected borough of Ealing, as **Charlotte Goodworth** discovers.

Ealing has much more to offer than green spaces. Great connectivity and rental rates make it a developers' paradise.



Ealing, at the heart of West London, is a popular commuter base with a broad range of shops, restaurants and green spaces. Its highly skilled and diverse community, strong creative sector and enviable transport links have all helped to make it a green and pleasant land for developers.

Ealing is diverse with a multicultural population. This 'Queen of the Suburbs' is made up of seven individual town centres (Acton, Ealing, Greenford, Hanwell, Northolt, Perivale and Southall), which joined in 1965 to create the third largest London borough in terms of population.

The borough's 'greenness' (it has more than three square miles of parks and open spaces) is firmly rooted in its heritage. Until relatively recently, life in Ealing centred around agriculture, with very little industry and comparatively small populations. This only began to change towards the end of the 19th century, when the introduction of trams, buses and trains improved access to central London.

The beginning of the 20th century brought more development, with Acton and Southall becoming centres for large-scale industry, and the construction of Western Avenue in the 1930s helped to expand industry in Greenford and Perivale. In the years immediately following the Second World War council houses were built in Ealing and Northolt, and new residents arrived from areas as diverse as India, Poland and the Caribbean.

Over the last 25 years, most of the former manufacturing sites in the area have become head offices, distribution hubs or centres for hybrid activities.

The resulting dependence on office, retail and leisure employment has boosted the importance of Ealing's town centres. Ealing Council has spent the last three years focusing on regenerating its town centres. Two strategic corridors have been identified as offering immense potential for investment: the A40 corridor, incorporating Europe's largest industrial estate (Park Royal – home to industry heavyweights Diageo and The Carphone Warehouse), and the Uxbridge Road

corridor, which follows the railway lines. The council is anticipating that 70% of all new housing in the borough will fall within one mile of the Uxbridge Road corridor.

"The time is right for Ealing," says David Millican, cabinet member for regeneration and transport at Ealing Council. "You've got a council that is business-friendly, and clearly there are opportunities here. The borough is open for business and we're keen to work with people who want to invest in this well-connected borough that offers such a pleasant environment in which to live."

Brendon Walsh, director of property and regeneration for Ealing Council, agrees that Ealing's time has come: "Ealing is a borough that has been punching below its weight for many years and hasn't necessarily attracted the right level of attention from developers, and yet it's the largest of the West London boroughs and its geographic location makes it very important. What we've seen is those developers who have come forward are now wanting to do more in Ealing."

Located between Heathrow – the world's busiest airport – and central London, Ealing is perfectly placed for the creation of strong business links regionally, nationally and internationally. West London is cosmopolitan, multicultural and thriving, contributing £27 billion towards the nation's wealth in 2008. With a population of around 1.5 million, it boasts a strong creative industries sector and some of the biggest blue chip businesses in the world. Its multicultural population creates a natural link with overseas communities and markets.

Ealing itself is particularly well connected. Its nine national rail stations and network of District, Piccadilly and Central Line tube stations provide direct access into central London as well as Reading and Slough, with journey times of just 10 minutes to Paddington and 20 to Heathrow. The borough sits snugly between the A40 to Oxford or Birmingham, the M4 to Bristol or Cardiff,

Ealing Council is business-friendly and clearly there are opportunities there. The borough is open for business



Ealing appeals to residents and developers alike with great transport links and a major £300 million Building Schools for the Future programme.

and the North Circular (London's inner ring road, the A406).

And this connectivity is about to be improved further still. Work is well under way on improving the borough's roads and footpaths as part of a £6.5 million repair programme and by 2017 the plan is to have five new Crossrail stations, each with its own development opportunities. Commuters will be able to reach Heathrow in 15 minutes, the City in 20 minutes and Eurostar services at Stratford in less than 30 minutes.

David Millican highlights the importance of Crossrail to the borough: "Crossrail will make a big difference. The whole borough of Ealing was established because Brunel built his railway 150 years ago, and Crossrail will have a similarly regenerative effect."

WITH SUCH IMPRESSIVE transport links, it's not surprising that Ealing's economy is equally remarkable, with more VAT-registered businesses than anywhere else in West London. Almost 150,000 people work in Ealing, and the jobs growth rate is three times faster than in the rest of the UK. The average household income is a prosperous £37,000 a year (higher than the London average), and a healthy 72% of residents are in paid employment.

Creative industries are just as crucial to Ealing's economy as they are to the economy of West London as a whole – in fact, the borough is a leading light in this sector. Ealing Studios has put the area on

We can achieve a healthy balance between development and improving the green environment

the international film-making map with hits like the St Trinian's films, and Thames Valley University (which has a campus in Ealing) focuses mainly on the creative industries.

Sizeable growth has also occurred in media, financial and business services, and the distribution, hotels and restaurants sector employs more people than any other in Ealing. Tourism also plays its part in the borough's economy, helped no doubt by films like *About a Boy*, *Bend it Like Beckham*, *Calendar Girls* and *Love Actually* that have been set within its leafy suburbs (figures suggest that one in five people who visit Britain are inspired to do so by a film). Tourism is said to generate over £2 billion a year for West London's economy.

With a greater emphasis now being placed on the borough's town centres, retail improvements are high up on the regeneration to do list, including plans for an additional 20,000m² of retail and leisure space in Ealing alone. Each of the town centres provides a different shopping experience, e.g. Southall's unique ethnic offer and Ealing's metropolitan vibrancy.

A major retail development in Ealing Broadway – Dickens Yard – has been supported by the council through the planning process.

Brendon Walsh explains why the council has been so encouraging to developers: "As an authority we're proactively working with developers, which is something that developers perhaps won't have picked up on. They would probably view Ealing from where we were a decade ago, which was quite a reserved and quiet borough. We think we can achieve a healthy balance between encouraging development and improving what we've got in terms of the green environment and quality buildings."

Ealing has one of the highest standards of living in the capital, and is made even more desirable by its location: nights out in the West End are just minutes away, but quiet weekends in the countryside are also within easy reach. Closer to home, residents can enjoy museums, cinemas, galleries and a diverse mix of restaurants and bars, as well as Europe's largest independent community theatre (Questors Theatre). And lovers of the great outdoors will not be disappointed: there are three golf courses, the Grand Union Canal and the River Brent provide great opportunities for tranquil walks, and Walpole Park is not only home to Pitzhanger Manor House (as seen in *The Importance of Being Earnest*) but is also the setting for the Ealing Summer Festival.

Ealing's large pool of highly educated and skilled people provides a strong draw for investors. There are 65 primary, ➔

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Residents benefit from three square miles of green open space and parks. Ealing's town centres (including Greenford, pictured right) are enjoying a £15 million programme of regeneration.



infant and junior schools, 12 mixed high schools and one girls' high school. In 2008, 52% of Ealing's GCSE pupils achieved five A*-C grades or equivalent, in subjects including English and Maths – beating the national average by four points. Results in Ealing's schools have improved recently by 11%, which is nearly three times the national rate. Pupils in further education – i.e. aged 16-18 – are achieving eight out of ten qualifications.

Ealing's Building Schools for the Future programme aims to rebuild or refurbish 14 schools and build a new school in the north of the borough, with work on the £300 million government funded project expected to begin in October 2010 and be completed by 2015.

Health facilities, while already rated as 'fair' by the Healthcare Commission (now the Care Quality Commission), are set to improve with the recent amalgamation of the Ealing and Harrow PCTs.

Home ownership in Ealing is high,

with almost 62% of properties owned by their occupiers, and demand for good quality housing remains high. The waiting list for council accommodation has been significantly reduced with 11,174 residents on Ealing Council's housing register in January 2010.

EALING COUNCIL IS IMPROVING the quality of homes across all tenures and dealing with the overcrowding issue. Current council housing projects include the regeneration of estates at Green Man Lane, South Acton, Copley Close, Allen Court, Havelock, Sherwood Close, Golf Links and Rectory Park. In September 2009 the building of 68 new council homes was announced, and the council is also committed to creating 3,000 affordable homes by 2013, several hundred of which are now complete.

The borough has already seen improvements to its town centres as part of the £15 million Ealing Council

has set aside. Completed projects include improvements to shop fronts, training of retailers to trade more effectively, resurfacing and cleaning of pavements and the installation of hanging baskets.

Ealing town centre had already experienced at least £70,000 worth of improvement works by July 2009, when the council decided to make the borough even leafier by doubling its tree-planting budget to £100,000. The Town Centre Development Framework sets out what the council hopes to create, including a minimum of 3,000 mixed-tenure new homes, approximately 21,000m² of mixed-use floor space, around 103,700m² of new and replacement office space and a range of social and community facilities to serve existing and new populations.

There are 32 potential opportunity sites in Ealing town centre, including the Arcadia Centre and Dickens Yard site (with plans for retail, apartments and cycle/car parking spaces) and the Heritage Quarter.



In five to ten years' time we expect Crossrail will have made a big difference in Ealing and we're hoping developers will spot that as a real opportunity

THERE ARE ALSO OVER 100 NEW development sites creating positive investment opportunities across the borough. Sites around the Southall station area have the potential for mixed-use development, Southern Gateway (Park Royal) has been identified as a key mixed-

use opportunity and Greenford Green lends itself to modernised commercial and employment opportunities as well as other uses such as canal-side housing.

The council is optimistic about how much can be achieved in Ealing; Brendon Walsh predicts a bright future. "In five to ten years' time, our expectations will be that Crossrail will have made a big difference to us as it starts to come on-stream, and we're hoping developers will spot that as a real opportunity now.

"I would anticipate that our town centres will be seen as better places to invest – so we will attract the best quality retailers – and also that local people will be using their local shopping centres rather than going out of borough. We haven't found that the new Westfield shopping centre in Shepherd's Bush has had a dramatically negative effect on Acton or on Central Ealing. That is a very positive thing. Ealing does seem to be turning the corner more quickly than other places." *

Ealing facts

- Ealing covers over 21 square miles.
- Ealing's current population is estimated at 305,300, compared to 285,200 in 1993.
- The average age is 35.6 years.
- 41.3% of residents belong to an ethnic minority.
- Ealing has 118,023 households, the average size of which is 2.5 people.
- 34.6% of Ealing's residents are educated to degree level or above.
- 68.4% of Ealing's 16-74 year old population are economically active.
- The two largest employment sectors are business services (20.4%) and retail (15.9%).
- Ealing's working age population (all residents aged 16-59/64) was estimated at 206,467 in 2003, compared to 184,100 in 1993.



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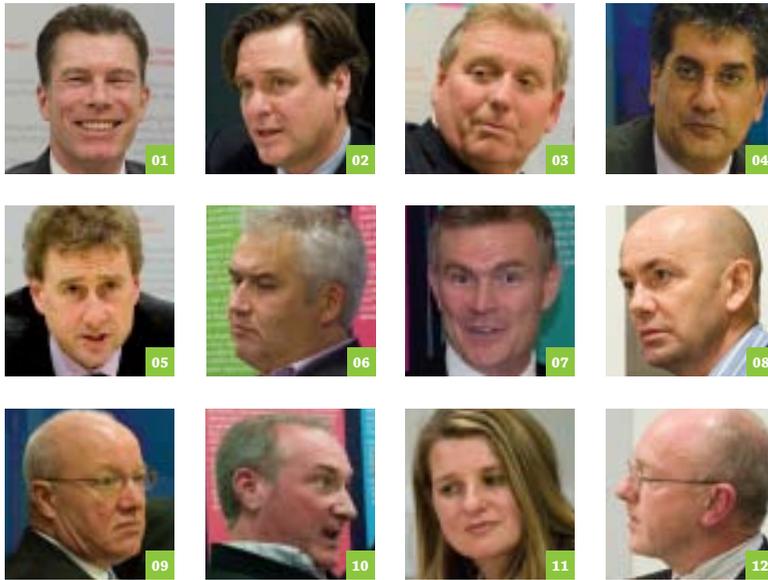
Brendon Walsh,
Director of Property and Regeneration,
London Borough of Ealing

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It's good to talk

We gathered some of the big names in Ealing's world of property and development to see how they rate the borough's future

01 BRENDON
WALSH:
Ealing Council

03 TONY
PIDGELY:
*Berkeley
Group*

05 PAT
HAYES:
Ealing Council

07 SIMON
KNIGHT:
Montague Evans

09 STEVE
PEARCE:
Tribal

11 LIZ
PILGRIM:
Ealing BID

02 TOM
TITHRINGTON:
*Network Housing
Association Group*

04 TONY
KHURLL:
*Monarch
Commercial*

06 JASON
WARWICK:
Glenkerrin

08 MIKE
TRAVERS:
*Franklin
Andrews*

10 TONY
FISHER:
*Lambert Smith
Hampton*

12 JOHN
BISHOP:
*Colin Bibra
Estate Agents*

IS EALING READY FOR CHANGE?

PH: In the past Ealing has rested on its laurels – as a desirable suburban location with a strong commercial base. But we've realised we need to embrace development, change our housing and update our town centres.

We've got to act decisively, to work with the commercial sector and be a catalyst for development. During the recession Ealing's shown economic resilience with its location being strong. We're a big borough, we've got a big industrial base. And we've changed our planning policies, produced town centre masterplans and are actively engaged in the development community. So yes, we are ready for change.

TF: Competing centres (Hammersmith, Chiswick and Stockley Park) have grown their office stock. But in Ealing there's only Ealing Gateway.

SK: There hasn't been any critical mass here to build a commercial centre.

TF: Not providing stock has definitely hampered you over the last twenty years. But Ealing Cross is probably the best building outside the central London linear core markets.

BW: We set our planning policy to be ambitious around the Uxbridge Road office corridor. Ealing is serious about investment and we're building a good track record – Dickens Yard is a real landmark development, at a time when not much else is happening in London. I think that's largely down to great effort from the developer and the council.

PH: The council is putting its money where its mouth is. Once Dickens Yard is complete that's going to have a big impact on Ealing centre. Having good quality accommodation in the town centre will start that change.

JW: I think that will affect the office sector as well.





SK: Where Ealing is falling down is the high street offer. People want gentrification of it. It's down to the Westfield effect, this type of high street's not kept pace with what the modern shopper and office occupier wants.

LP: I agree, I would definitely shop more in Ealing if it just had a few more decent shops on the high street.

BW: The Broadway shopping centre hasn't suffered from Westfield opening, because of our planning policy. We set our stall out with clearly defined shopping areas – the Broadway offers value, and [owners] Legal & General bought into that. They worked hard to change the shape of their shops by knocking units together providing bigger floorplates, and as a result, they've attracted Primark, H&M and New Look are arriving shortly. It just shows, by working together, we can deliver something very good for Ealing. Going back to the question 'is Ealing ready for change?', it's not just about the council, it's about the private sector wanting to work with us to make it happen. If the private sector people around this table are prepared to put some faith into that, then we're not just ready to change, we will change.

TP: It's about placemaking. We believe in these schemes but they've got to be sustainable. From a financial point of view, we've committed millions to this because Ealing's ripe and ready to bring forward.

SO EALING IS READY FOR CHANGE, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE ECONOMIC CLIMATE?

JB: I've noticed recently Ealing is suddenly a different place. New shops have opened, there's a H&M, and it doesn't take very much to change one's perception of Ealing.

LP: It's all about perception, isn't it? We just need a good department store, we have got a lot of decent shops but people need their mindset changing.

If the private sector people around this table are prepared to put some faith in us we're not just ready for change, we will change



JB: Many people like living in Ealing but don't want to shop here. And they feel slightly disloyal about it. People want to shop in Ealing and it wouldn't, in my opinion, take much of an effort to make that happen. The demand for property is huge because of the transport facilities. The only thing Ealing hasn't got is a decent shopping centre. It shouldn't take much to turn that around.

TK: The Broadway is 25 years-old and retailers now want larger units, providing bigger floorplates is attracting those anchors into the shopping centres, which will drive the retail forward.

TP: It needs vitality, though. It needs night life. The reason we're keen on developing here is because it doesn't have vitality and it's easy to deliver. Dicken's Yard is a big capital decision to make and we did a lot of work on the demographics before the decision was taken but I think you'll see great success.

TK: I want to expand the discussion, we're focusing on Ealing town centre. There's a lot of affluence in Southall and a number of schemes have come to fruition recently. It's probably the number one Asian market in the world



The optimism of the development climate is something that never went away in Ealing. I think we'll come out of recession before anybody else does



outside of India and Pakistan, if you go to India or Pakistan, people know about Southall. There are huge opportunities and I'm interested to see there is an understanding of that market.

TF: Southall just doesn't have the critical mass of office buildings to make it a market that would reach our radar.

TK: Ealing is the hub of the borough, but Crossrail is also coming to Southall and there are huge opportunities there.

PH: The optimism of the development climate is something that never really went away in Ealing. I think we will come out of recession before anybody else does. Investors have been talking to us about

substantial schemes; Tesco is putting a commercial scheme into Greenford, we've got a hotel proposal in Northolt, a lot of interest around North Acton tube station, and Ealing is such a desirable location with good housing that people continue to want to move here.

And we should mention the Southall factor. What people are paying for property there always amazes me. And that potential will grow with our vision for the gasworks site, to provide a real town centre in Southall not just based around the niche Asian market. It also has a lot of housing, which will bring a different dynamic into the area.

BW: The fact that it's known internationally makes it an ideal location





We're really happy with the transport offer in Ealing. Crossrail will be the icing on the cake. It'll have a massive effect eventually



for people to come in to, and we now have funding for projects to strengthen and formalise those links.

WHAT IMPACT WILL CROSSRAIL HAVE ON EALING?

SK: We're already really happy with what we've got – that's the major feeling in Ealing with regards to public transport. Crossrail will be the icing on the cake. It'll have a massive effect eventually.

PH: When it arrives it'll be fantastic for the borough, because of the number of stations and in terms of Ealing town centre, it'll be another reason to come here.

LP: That's when we'll get the shops and

restaurants Ealing deserves, people will really sit up and take notice then.

PH: Ealing is very robust, the location's very good already. The main potential from Crossrail is Southall. Will it happen? I'm confident it will because of where we've got to in terms of the contracts being let and work starting. The challenge for us is the quality of the offer – Ealing's five Crossrail stations are surface stations, where platforms need lengthening and signalling systems need changing and they don't actually have to do anything else. But what we want to see are substantial improvements, more than just a new sign saying Crossrail. That's the challenge for us.

TP: We can't see Crossrail not happening. They've started the bore holes, if they're committed to that, they're committed to the whole scheme.

HOUSING PLAYS A LARGE PART IN EALING'S REGENERATION HOW DOES IT TIE IN WITH THE REGENERATION OF THE WIDER AREA?

TT: We see Ealing as a borough with some real opportunities, in terms of the residential market, just like the office market, it's a pretty robust place. It has

a variety of markets and it's a stable place to work. The council has been intelligent in terms of how it's gone about regeneration, it's been committed to setting a timetable for its problematic estates which is incredibly ambitious but so far, they seem to be hitting it.

The council is looking to part-let with housing associations or the private sector to take on the management of sections of the social housing. They're expecting us to think through how the reinvestment in that housing changes those communities and look at the stock in terms of brown or green land and how this can benefit communities. That's really innovative, recognising you need partners to make that work, rather than on-going tender processes.

This, along with things like Crossrail, draw in the poorer parts of the borough and create access to wealth and jobs – although there may be jobs here it doesn't mean that everybody in Ealing is working, and those who aren't working are concentrated in social housing. So it will be a catalyst for getting people involved in the mainstream economy of Ealing.

PH: A lot of our social housing is spread down the Uxbridge Road spine. We are redeveloping the Green Man estate, we're transferring the site to A2Dominion and



The council has been intelligent about how it's gone about regeneration, it's been committed to setting a timetable for problematic estates

We've always been clear we don't want to see the whole borough going over to housing. We need the employment sites and employment particularly, could be enhanced if there were more people living close by and increased commercial activity – shops, restaurants and bars etc – helps support employment activity.

We also need to break up the mono-culture on these big estates – mixed communities give people a different view of life. And one of the things we want to do is get people working locally – people talk about sustainability but we've got strong apprenticeship schemes at the council, and that's something we want to develop with our partners.

DO YOU THINK THE MIX OF HOUSING WILL AFFECT THE AREA?

TP: It's all about management. The RSLs and the developers have come together in the last ten years to improve management. We've learned many lessons – we look after social properties the same way we look after private. The management, placemaking and the vitality we created is paramount. RSLs and developers have got to stop being just social landlords and become partners.

TT: In terms of management, it's the most fantastic opportunity to get in

Rydon who will knock down the estate and create a mixed community. That's going to make a big difference in terms of the people who are living in the centre of West Ealing. Acton will also have a major scheme, we're knocking down the existing South Acton estate and it will be re-provided as a community similar to the rest of Ealing, which works so well.

And we're taking a different approach on management. We're the landlord, but we want the stock to be managed by people who can look after the whole community so the social housing doesn't drag the rest of the community down. As a result the people in social housing have their aspirations raised and that'll have knock-on effects.

SP: It is a challenge to address the work issue and ensure the sort of opportunities that are going to be developed are directly made available for those people who need them most.

PH: Part of our policy is to turn around Park Royal, we've got to ensure commercial employment sites stay there as well as Southall and Greenford.





and talk to the residents, you're actually shaping your accommodation around them. Often it's the investor sales and then the subsequent lettings that create the problem in a new scheme.

BW: I think the management is really important. Ealing is pro-development, but not development at any cost. We want high quality design and we want high quality management. This is a good place – we can make it an even better place if we get the design right. We've insisted on the quality and design statements, and that goes right the way down to the sort of quality of materials used in the development.

PH: There's great demand for housing here, which is brilliant but in Ealing the ratio between house price and salary is one of the highest in the country. Clearly we need to continue to supply social housing and good quality new social housing.

DOES THE OFFICE SECTOR NEED DEVELOPING AND CAN EALING BE A COMMERCIAL CENTRE?

TF: Yes is the answer! Ealing is already a commercial centre, it is one of the major West London office locations. Perhaps

one of the problems is that we've got significant built stock but most of it is quite old and there's been too little grade A development, particularly speculatively.

When you look at other locations and their stock, they've been much more aggressive in providing buildings to attract tenants. It's the lack of vision that hasn't taken Ealing to the next stage – it is already a significant commercial centre with lots of boxes ticked. What it needs is one or two more blue ribbon occupiers.

There's generally a lack of grade A across the south east at the moment. So demand is weak, but the supply is very weak. Ealing are keen to arrange partnerships to facilitate development and that's very laudable and encouraging, but we've got to move it onto the next stage.

JW: Fortunately for developers – green standards will insist that instead of going to out of town ventures, people are coming back in towards Ealing, which has got an awful lot going for it.

PH: That's what we're trying to do – create an environment where everything works, where you've got schools, public transport, retail and variegated housing. *

Ealing is pro-development but not development at any cost. We want high quality design



“ Working with Ealing for a better, brighter community ”

We like to become part of the communities in which we work, by talking with residents, training, employing local people, seeking to offer work to local companies and engaging with schools and colleges.

By understanding what the community's needs and aspirations are, we are better able to provide them with the brighter future they deserve.

We are currently working with A2 Dominion Housing Association and Ealing Council as the principal contractor and developer on the exciting regeneration scheme at Green Man Lane, and we look forward to bringing about the transformation of this area into a wonderful new environment.

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Emma Peters, Croydon Council **Stephen Sorrell**, Eversheds **Trevor Beattie**, HCA **Chris Munday**, Welsh Assembly Government
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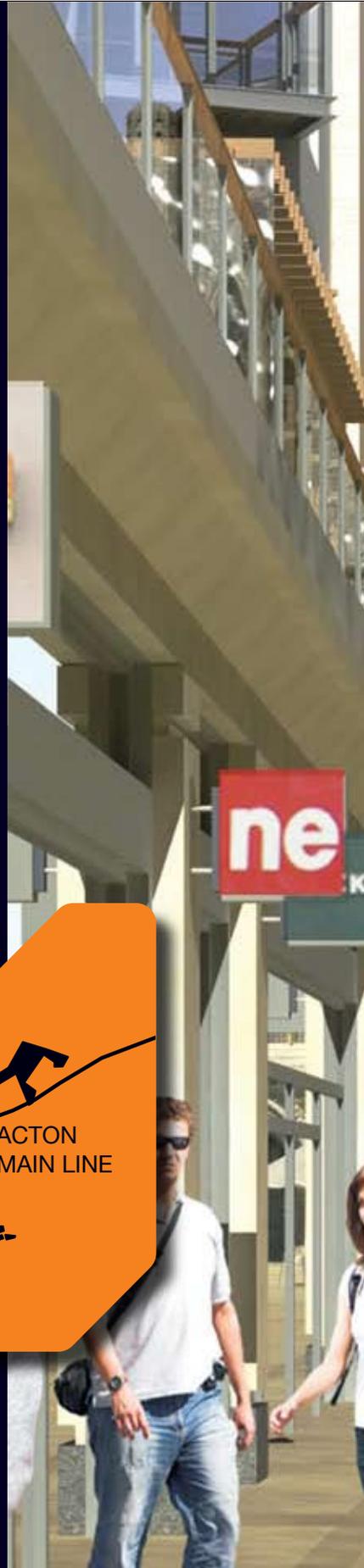
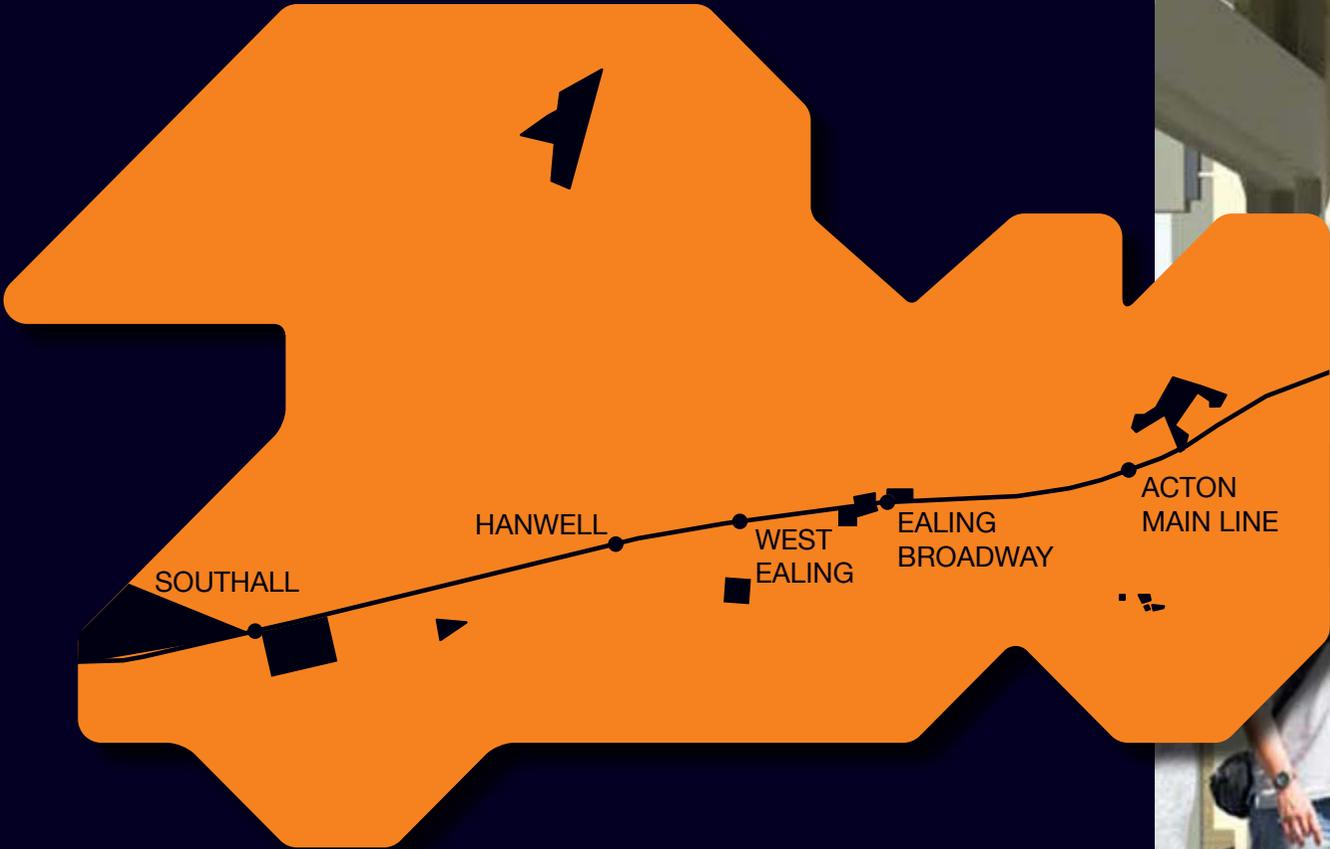
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Work in progress

Your complete guide to the schemes destined to shape Ealing's evolution. We take a look at who is doing what, where and when...





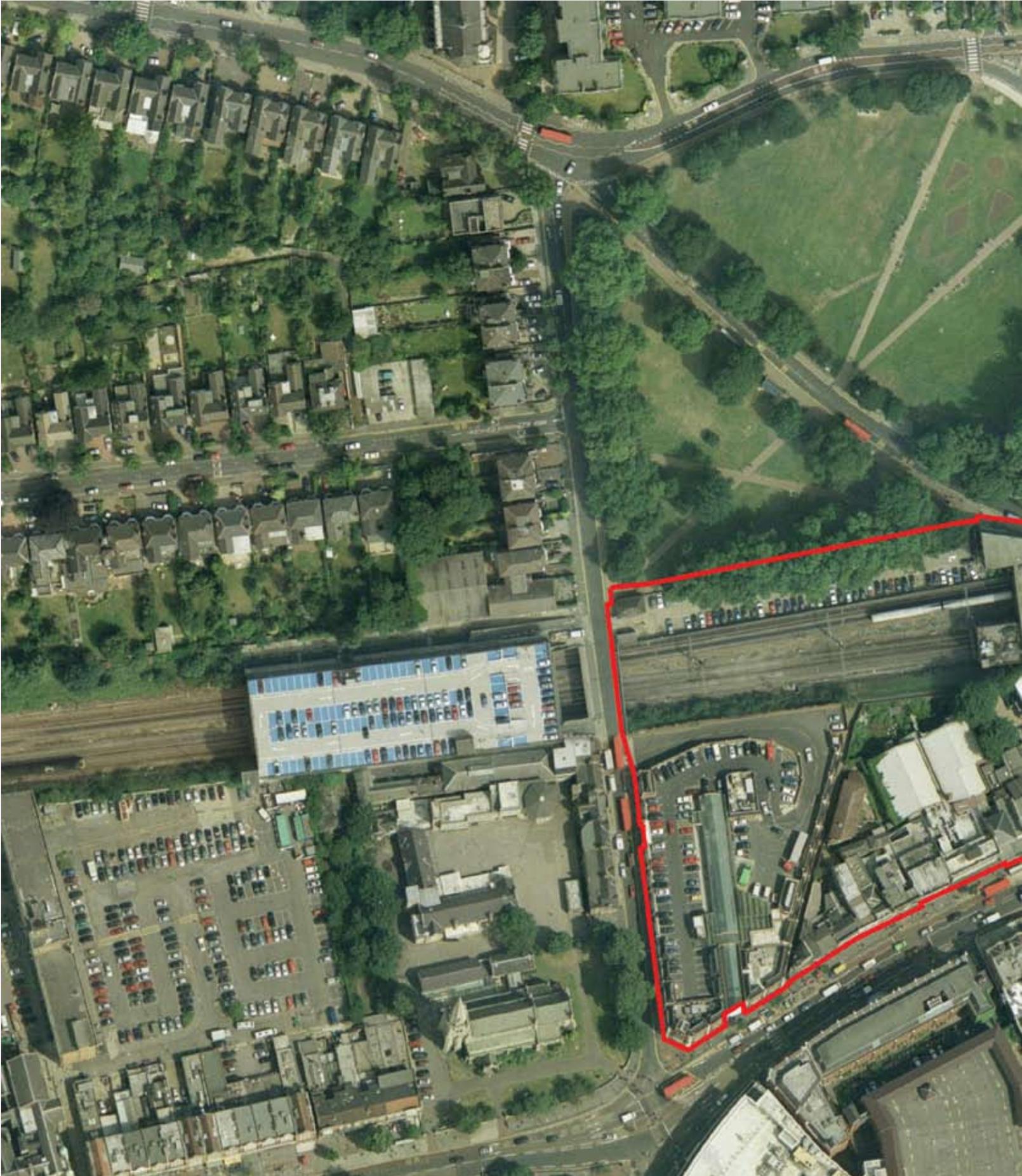
Dickens Yard

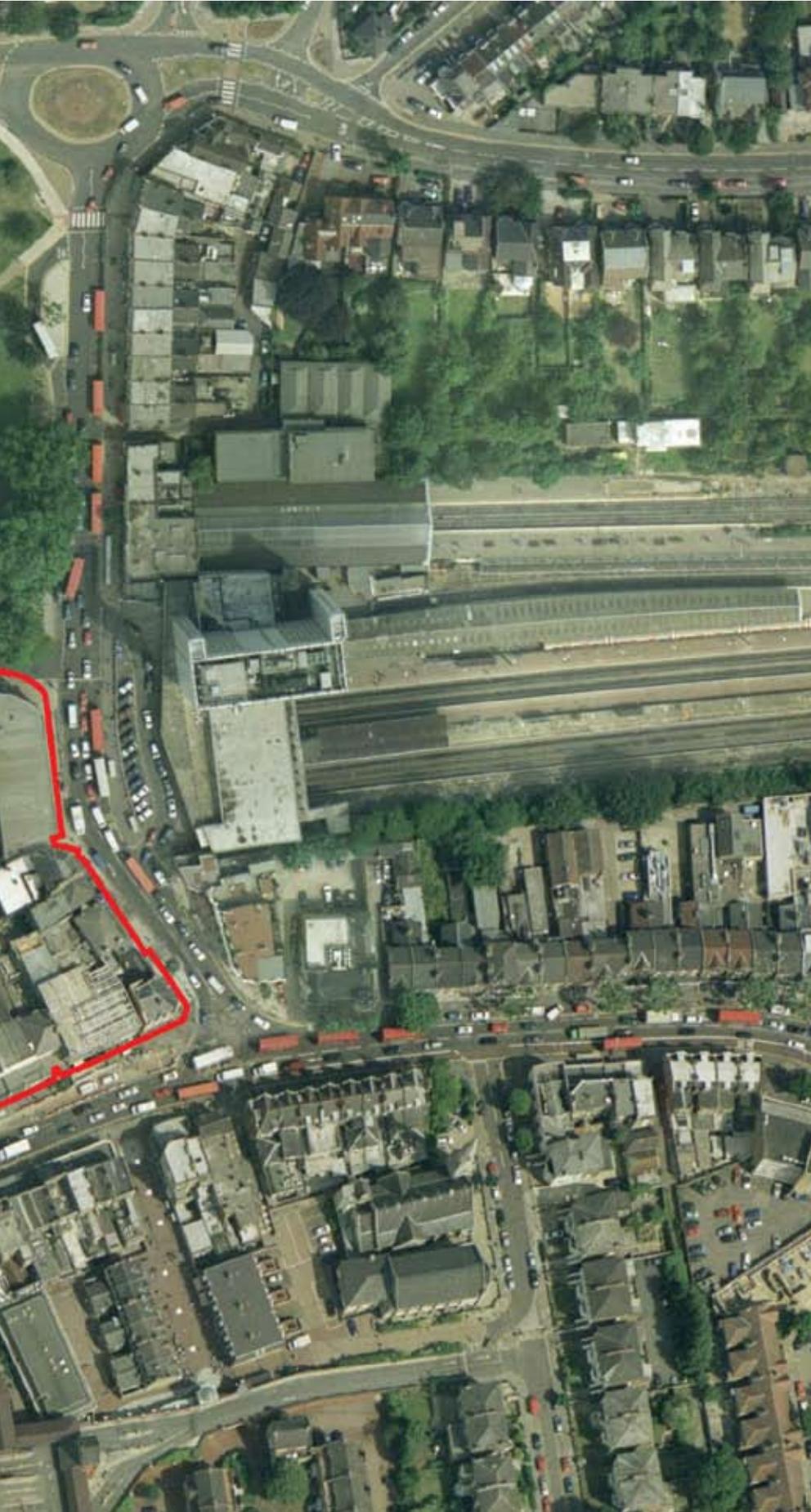
Mixed-use town centre redevelopment can be the key to regenerating formerly successful urban areas, and the plans for Dickens Yard on Uxbridge Road will go a long way towards achieving exactly this in the heart of Ealing. And no one is hanging around, with digging for the basement due to commence March 2010, and final completion due by the end of 2016.

Over 600 new homes, retail space and community facilities are to be created by the developer St George, and will be responsible for increasing footfall and boosting the relevance of an area, which is currently failing to realise its massive potential.

Far from becoming a stand-alone development, adding to the area's offer by default, Dickens Yard is designed to become part of Ealing's fabric. The development will be very much open to the public with links to other areas.

Brendon Walsh, Ealing's director of property and regeneration says: "The Dickens Yard development will create a new urban quarter in Ealing with homes, shops and a high quality town square. The development will bring new retail, cafes and restaurants to Ealing, increasing the quality and range available and encouraging people to shop in and visit Ealing. The council has a strategy for improving Ealing town centre and this scheme is a major step forward in achieving that."





Arcadia

This is a key site in Ealing town centre, assembled by Glenkerrin opposite Ealing Broadway station, with the potential to redevelop an existing shopping centre to offer a mix of uses, including new retail, residential, commercial, leisure and new public open space linked to Haven Green.

The scheme, promoted by Glenkerrin last year, received approval from the council, the mayor of London and CABE. The application was unfortunately refused by the Secretary of State after the council's decision was 'called in'. This site is a major opportunity and the right scheme, alongside the arrival of Crossrail, will transform the town centre increasing its offer as a leisure and retail destination.

Developers Glenkerrin are working on a revised scheme for the site and are optimistic about the positive impact the development will have on the borough. CEO, Ray Grehan says: "With the advent of Crossrail, Ealing is set for a transformation and the town centre needs to take this step up, so it reflects the 21st century. We are seeking a quality scheme that will boost the town centre and reflect where Ealing wants to be."





This page: Computer generated image of Dickens Yard.
Opposite page: Dickens Yard will enhance the area's range of shops, cafés and open spaces.



ST·GEORGE

Investors in Ealing

The heart of Ealing is set for a major change with the proposed Dickens Yard development which will breathe life back into the surrounding area.

The Developer, St George West London Ltd aims to create a new vibrant urban quarter. Dickens Yard, which is named after the builders' yard that used to occupy the site, will link three of Ealing's Victorian gems the Town Hall, the Old Fire Station and the parish church of Christ the Saviour – with traffic-free streets lined with boutique shops and cafés.

There will be three new public piazzas where markets, street theatre and jazz events can be held. Dickens Yard will contain places where people can meet, chat and relax surrounded by landscaped squares, streets with trees, plants and sculpture. This would ensure that cultural life in Ealing, already thriving, will get a welcome boost.

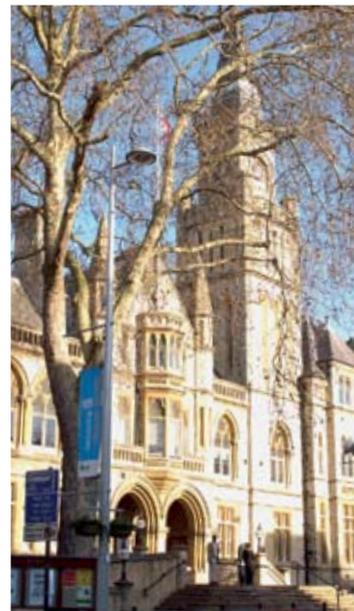
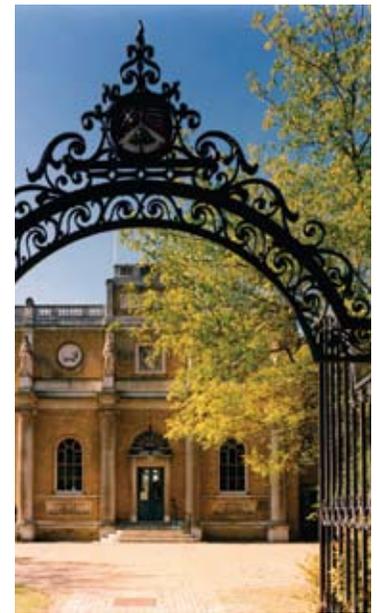
The 698 new apartments built above the ground level shops are designed to look out either over the active streets or onto quiet garden terraces. It is intended that the residents and visitors to Dickens Yard will bring life to the area throughout the day, reviving the neighbourhood.

For more information please call: 020 8917 4000

A sense of place

Dickens Yard will create an exciting urban quarter in the heart of Ealing, combining historic buildings with cutting-edge design

**DICKENS
YARD** W5



“ Dickens Yard will link three Victorian gems – the Town Hall, the Old Fire Station and the parish church of Christ the Saviour – by traffic-free streets lined with shops ”

Green Man Lane

Housing is central to Ealing's regeneration programme and the scale of what is taking place as part of the £137 million Green Man Lane project is testament to the council's commitment to transform the borough's communities.

The estate's 464 homes will be demolished in a series of phased development by Rydon and A2Dominion, allowing for the creation of new properties for affordable rent, shared ownership and outright purchase. Of the new houses to be built 346 will be for affordable rent, 91 will be for shared ownership, and a further 309 will be made available for sale.

But the proposals go further than just replacing houses, as new

community buildings and facilities are also to be created as well as better links to West Ealing town centre.

Residents have been included throughout the scheme's development, with comprehensive consultation and feedback opportunities throughout the process. In October 2009 a public exhibition detailing the latest draft masterplan for the area was unveiled and as *Ealing in London* went to press the masterplan was being finalised and submitted for planning permission.

Tom Rigby, development manager at Rydon, is confident the project will help Ealing's wider regeneration efforts: "Housing

is one of the key catalysts for change. The Green Man Lane estate is central in terms of the overall regeneration of West Ealing. There is work to be done on the high street, but one way to help spur that on is to work on its surroundings by bringing different households to the area. It provides a stimulus for everything else. It draws in new commercial operators and they see the physical and the demographic changes, and the training opportunities coming forward. If you get the housing and the facilities sorted, and create some real opportunities, it spurs on the wider regeneration that is needed."



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North Acton Station Square

First impressions count and plans to redevelop the area outside North Acton station will ensure people have a positive opinion of the area on arrival.

Options described in the design documents put together by Tribal Group would boost the quality of the area immediately outside the station with the creation of new commercial and retail uses at ground level, as well as improvements to the public realm as a whole.

Steve Pearce, director at Tribal Group, explains: “The station square has the potential to provide a new civic space that forms an arrival point at the public transport gateway to the area. Alongside remodelling of the station, this could facilitate improved access to underground

services and interchange with local bus services. The square could also provide a focal point for the emerging community of the North Acton area, including residents and an expanding workforce.

“Furthermore, the square could contribute to unlocking development opportunities in the wider area. These commercial uses together with local community and leisure uses would provide the vitality and focus for the longer-term establishment of North Acton as a place to live and work.”

Ealing Council is working with Design for London and TfL, as part of the Mayor’s Great Spaces programme, to find the optimum solution that can be developed in the area alongside development proposals.



Ealing Apprenticeship Scheme

Since Ealing Council set up its apprenticeship scheme in 2007 it has helped place over 60 young people (aged between 16-24) in full-time work. The scheme provides up to two years of on-the-job training for local 16-24 year-olds where they gain invaluable work experience as well as NVQ level qualifications.

The scheme offers youngsters places in a variety of departments within the council and also through council funded organisations such as Learning Curve, which is for people with disabilities. Twenty young people become apprentices in the council each year, a private sector arm of the apprenticeship scheme also exists and there are plans to increase efforts with external partners and place up to 80 apprentices in the private sector annually through the council's supply chain and projects such as Building Schools for the Future.

According to Vanita Nicholls, apprenticeships and youth opportunities co-ordinator at the council, the benefits of the scheme have been fantastic. "Currently 4% of the council workforce is aged between 16-25 and we need to change that. The scheme has had a huge impact internally and really shaken things up. Young people challenge assumptions and bring fresh energy.

"Many young people don't know what they want to do, they just need an opportunity, we give them that opportunity and some of them are so proud of their work and want to stay with the council. Importantly, it's a two-way street, the council is benefiting from better managers as they become role models to these young people."

Acton Town Hall

Acton Town Hall is set for a complete overhaul as part of the plans to upgrade the town's swimming pool, library and community centre. The project could also include the creation of new residential, retail and office space on the site to help fund the community uses.

The Edwardian town hall, library and baths, owned by Ealing Council, are located in a conservation area and elements of the town hall building are listed making it a challenging project.

Urban Initiatives is advising the council on the community involvement process, which has involved gathering a team of 35 local people, young and old, who're interested in the future of the buildings, to discuss the issues frankly. Dan Hill, associate director at Urban Initiatives, believes the process has been more productive than a round of public meetings where it can be hard to hear everyone's opinion.

Hill explains: "This is a

very challenging project. The community involvement is necessary to develop an understanding and sense of trust between the parties involved, a momentum has built up during the process and people are excited. We need to make sure the momentum is not lost and that will be the main challenge for the council."

Ealing Council has yet to decide on their preferred method for finding a development partner but the project should be out to tender by autumn 2010. *






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Home from home

Park Royal, dubbed the engine room of London, is home to a myriad of businesses that employ around 40,000 people. **Noella Pio Kivlehan** discovers what the businesses like about it so much

CONTINUED OVER PAGE ➡



Berkeley First plans to transform the BBC's former costume store with a student accommodation led mixed-use development.

When describing Park Royal, the words “unique” and “perfectly located” are often spoken by those companies which have space within the 750-hectare industrial and business park in North West London.

With a multitude of different businesses, with a heavy component of food production firms, warehouse/distribution and office occupiers, the business park is on the sought-after location of the A40, serviced by several tube and railway stations and runs alongside the Grand Union Canal.

Park Royal has changed over the past decade. As times have moved on, so has the site. More amenities have been developed and public spaces have been opened up. A growing variety of companies have been taking space, swelling the number to 1,200 businesses, employing an estimated 40,000 workers.

The park covers three local authority areas, with approximately 50% in Ealing, 40% in Brent, and 10% in Hammersmith and Fulham. Park Royal Partnership, an urban regeneration and business development organisation was set up in 1992 to support the park. It serves to improve the environment for residents as well as to attract and support the growth of new businesses. Park Royal Partnership is focusing on creating a sustainable environment through investment in transport infrastructure and public realm.

The boroughs are working with the GLA to set the planning policy framework to enable a more mixed-use development at the gateways to Royal Park. In Ealing this relates to North Acton and the area around North Acton station. One of Ealing’s largest companies Carphone Warehouse is located here. The aim is to create a more attractive environment and bring a variety of amenities to the area to support the business community.

THE HOUSEBUILDER

Matthew Biddle, *managing director*, Berkeley First

Berkeley First has bought the former BBC costume store site on Victoria Road opposite North Acton station, where it is planning a 15,500sq m mixed-use student



accommodation-led development for the University of Arts London.

The proposal is for 800 self-contained study bedrooms for students plus shops, perhaps a café and gym, and a gallery where students can display their work.

“It will be open to local residents, so there will be benefits for the neighbourhood too,” says Biddle. He adds that his company will be creating a square in front of the building opposite North Acton station to improve the public realm.

Biddle gives one word for why Berkeley First chose Park Royal: accessibility.

“[The site] is bang opposite the tube station, on the Central Line. The university has got campuses on the Central Line – they have one just three stops from this site. There are bus routes directly opposite so it’s got excellent public transport.

Berkeley First is developing the former BBC costume store into student accommodation

Express by Holiday Inn’s 104-bed hotel has been consistently occupied since it opened in 2003

Express by Holiday Inn’s 104-bed hotel on Park Royal benefits from business and leisure visitors here to shop or visit Wembley.



"It is a relatively affordable location for students at around £135 a week, including bills. There is scope for more mixed-use development in that area due to the park's fantastic links."

In the past, the park has been criticised for its lack of amenities – but that is changing now. "Amenities are coming as there is more development and we would like to think of the costume store site as being a catalyst for regeneration, whether through public space, shops, gyms or crèches. I don't see it as a business park – it's a mixed-use area," says Biddle.

He adds: "We are talking to the Park Royal Partnership to see if there are any links we can make between the university and other companies already on the park." The scheme is now at planning stage.

THE HOTELIER

Stella Fernandes, general manager, Express by Holiday Inn

The 104-bed hotel opened in July 2003. Fernandes says it was an ideal opportunity at the time because the area was developing, and there was a need for additional accommodation.

"The site had good public transport links, plus accessibility to the motorway," she says. For the past six years the hotel has been consistently occupied. "There is a good market niche on the estate due to the number of businesses and corporate companies who use our facilities," she says.

"And, we get a lot of the hotel leisure market too because of easy links to the centre and because our rates are cheaper than central London."

Fernandes says the opening of the

Westfield shopping centre last year, which is 15 minutes by tube, has created even more opportunities for business. "We do promote it as a shopping destination," she says. "We also pick up good business from events at Wembley Stadium and Arena."

The residential element around North Acton has added to Park Royal's appeal, believes Fernandes.

"It has given the park a bit more of a buzz than it had in the past," she says. "And I think it is positive that the Old BBC Costume Store is being redeveloped - it's not such a glamorous building and the plans we have seen will add glamour to the area. The student housing may also open up opportunities, with parents coming to stay when they visit their children."

SEGRO is one of Park Royal's largest occupiers with property valued at over £500m

Carphone Warehouse, has almost 2,000 employees on site

THE BUSINESS SPACE DEVELOPER

Phil Redding, business unit director, London markets, SEGRO

SEGRO is one of Park Royal's largest occupiers, with property valued at over £500 million in 20 industrial estates. Redding is full of praise for the site he calls "the engine room of London".

"Park Royal has a long-established history of food production and that still remains. There are an amazing number of food catering industries there, as well as media companies with the BBC and BSKYB, and also just straight warehouses."

Covered by three local authorities with a multitude of landlords, it can result in "any move forward with pace being difficult", says Redding. But he says that the establishment of the Park Royal Partnership – a regeneration and inward investment agency – has been changing that, and there have been improvements in terms of amenities.

Park Royal is important to SEGRO. Redding says: "We'll continue to have a presence and invest money here and we will play our part in seeing things develop."

He firmly believes that Park Royal needs to continue to progress as "the pattern of the work/life balance evolves".

"Encouraging mixed-use development here is good, and thinking about other uses like hotels and bringing amenities that service the people who use the park is great, as is thinking about congestion, access to roads and investing in more public space."

The area should remain predominantly a business area, he believes, arguing: "I think it would be a great shame if other uses were introduced leading to businesses having to move away from the park because Park Royal is uniquely placed as an employment-generating area. I would put the benefits of the employment uppermost and, if other uses come in to complement that, then that is great."

THE TELECOMS/ RETAIL COMPANY

Richard Collier, property director, Carphone Warehouse

Like other occupiers, Collier says the attraction of Park Royal to the Carphone Warehouse was "obviously down to location".

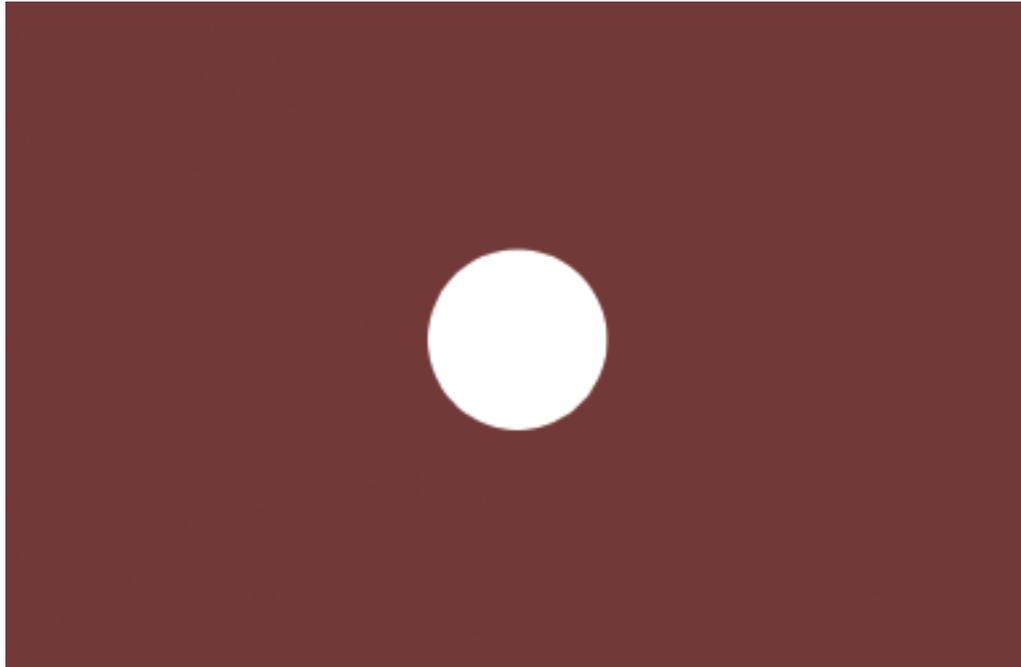
"A lot of people seem to work in the area around the A40 and quite a few of our employees live in London. Plus, there is great accessibility on the Central Line and the overground. We are on Gypsy Corner, so, yes for us, it was accessibility and transport," says Collier.

The company moved from its central London base to Park Royal 10 years ago, and functions as two businesses – Best Buy Europe (formerly the Carphone Warehouse) as the retail side, and TalkTalk as the telecommunications side. These arms are housed in two adjoining buildings on Park Royal; one is the 14,800sq m main Best Buy Europe site, with 1,600 employees, and the other is the 3,700sq m building occupied by TalkTalk with around 300 employees.

Following a number of deals and takeovers, it is consolidating in Park Royal, and is looking to redevelop the TalkTalk building. Last year, Carphone Warehouse signed a partnership deal with American retail giant Best Buy and, in May 2009, the company bought Tiscali's UK businesses for £236 million. *

Carphone Warehouse (left, top) has been based here for ten years and is looking to redevelop the building.

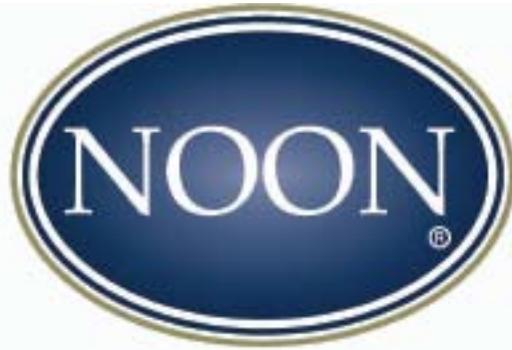
SEGRO hope the Park Royal Partnership will attract mixed-use development on the site to encourage diversity.



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Business matters

With better transport connections than Docklands and a town centre with the cafes and shops employees want, what more can Ealing Broadway do to make itself West London's premier business destination?

David Blackman finds out

Two underground lines and a railway station that is just one stop from Paddington – with excellent transport links like these, it is hard to see why Ealing town centre isn't one of London's main office hubs.

But it isn't – at least not yet anyway. "It should be a better office centre than it is," says Angus Malcolmson, director of office agency at GVA Grimley. GVA Grimley are working for Neptune Land, who are letting the 12,500sq m grade A space in Ealing Cross.

The main reason for Ealing's relative underperformance is the town centre's current shortage of high-quality office space.

"What has dragged it down is the availability of grade A office buildings," confirms Malcolmson.

Tony Fisher, head of outer London office agency at Lambert Smith Hampton, agrees: "I don't want to talk Ealing down, but it's allowed itself to be overtaken," he says, "Ealing has got good buildings but they are refurbishments."

Over the past decade and a half, the town centre has seen just three major office developments – Aurora, Ealing Gateway and Ealing Cross (see boxes).

"There's been little new office development in Ealing over the past 15 years, which means that it's fallen behind its neighbour Hammersmith," says Simon

Knight, a partner at Montagu Evans, letting agent for Ealing Cross.

Following its recent spate of development, Hammersmith now has approximately 10m sq ft of office space, putting Ealing's 3m sq ft in the shade.

Getting the right product is therefore crucial for Ealing's prospects, so Ealing Council is encouraging a new wave of office development. And Fisher is very impressed with the go-ahead attitude displayed by Brendon Walsh, the council's director of property and regeneration and Pat Hayes, its executive director for regeneration for housing.

"It's refreshing to see a council that understands what is needed by the business community," he says.

The market's sentiment towards Ealing has shifted in recent years following the development and letting of HBG's Ealing Gateway project.

The success of this project has reawakened interest in Ealing's potential as an office location.

Knight explains: "People realised there was a latent demand in Ealing by tenants who want to move into contemporary offices, not 1960s stock. It proved that the demand is here – and you have to satisfy it."

EALING'S TRUMP CARD IS ITS aforementioned public transport. The town centre is a terminus for the Central and District Lines, and sits astride the Paddington to Thames Valley rail route.

Knight points out that Ealing has a score of 6B on the PTAL public transport accessibility grading system used by Greater London Authority's planners. To put this score into context, King's Cross with 6A is just half a notch higher.

Ealing has better public transport ➔

Ealing Cross: major space in the Thames Valley

If HBG's Gateway development raised the bar regarding perceptions of Ealing in the mid 2000s, a new development by Neptune Land could confirm that Ealing is the place to find high-quality office space.

The eight-floor Ealing Cross scheme contains around 135,000sq ft of grade A space on the Uxbridge Road, making it one of the biggest schemes on the market in the whole Thames Valley.

Recently completed, the scheme delivers two and a half times as much floorspace as the two buildings it replaced. At 85 Uxbridge Road, it is in the heart of the town centre area earmarked by Ealing Council for new office development. It is described by one agent as "the best new building in the London suburbs".

More than half a dozen would-be occupants have been shown around the property recently, demonstrating that, while the commercial property market is slow, the right product can spark interest.



**Ealing Cross
delivers two and a
half times as much
floorspace as the
two buildings
it replaced**



connections than Docklands, despite the hundreds of millions of pounds poured into the latter area's infrastructure.

What this means is that the town centre is within half an hour's commuting distance for much of the population of west and north-west London, a valuable asset for employers keen to attract and retain staff.

In addition, Ealing Broadway – which already has a tube and railway station – will be a stop on the Crossrail line.

Once the scheme is completed, Ealing will be just two stops from Bond Street with a direct connection to the City and Canary Wharf. "It will put Ealing even more on the map," says Knight.

And, lest it be forgotten, Ealing has good road connections too, with easy access to both the M4 and the M40.

But transport isn't Ealing's only plus point. The town centre is surrounded by some of the capital's most desirable homes.

"Office occupiers want the right environment and that's not just the office stock – it's retail provision and housing too," says LSH's Fisher, who insists Ealing is already a well-established employment hub. "It's not a question of potential – it's already a recognised office location."

Ealing Council is the town centre's biggest occupier, but a number of significant private sector outfits are based there too.

AURORA, EALING'S SIGNATURE town centre office development of the 1990s, has been occupied for nearly a decade by Dunnhumby, the retail data analyst responsible for Tesco's Clubcard. Other major occupiers include the British Marketing Research Board and Catalyst Housing Group.

"Occupiers who are here tend to want to stay here," says Grimley's Malcolmson, giving as an example his client Danone Water. Based in Ealing, it is currently seeking 20,000-30,000sq ft of new space, preferably in the town centre. "They don't want to move," he points out.

But Ealing needs to improve its image, currently tainted by the bars and takeaways near the station. As Fisher points out, it's not an environment that will impress a businessman straight off the plane from Dallas.

Much of this low-grade stock will be swept away through the redevelopment of the site opposite Ealing Broadway station (the site was assembled by Glenkerrin). The developer is working with the council

Office occupiers want the right environment and that's not just with regards to the office stock, it's the retail provision and housing too



Ealing Gateway: the return of grade A

The success of the Ealing Gateway scheme represented a turning point for the town centre's fortunes.

The first grade A office space to be developed in Ealing for over a decade, the 84,324sq ft scheme provides seven floors of accommodation. Developers HBG Properties built it to a high standard, and it has a BREEAM excellent rating.

Ealing Gateway was not only a design success but also a commercial one. Within three months of completion, the scheme was fully let to the British Market Research Bureau and Catalyst Housing Group, one of London's biggest registered social landlords.

With these tenants in place, HBG was able to sell the development to New Star property unit trust last year, generating a healthy yield.

to create a workable scheme. This together with St George's Dickens Yard project is intended to create new high-quality retail and residential development, improving perceptions of the town centre.

According to Knight, rents are holding up relatively well in Ealing compared to other outer London office centres. A new building can command around £30 per sq ft, says Knight, while good-quality, secondhand stock should fetch £25 per sq ft. "Ealing offers good value for money," adds Malcolmson.

None the less, recessionary pressures are bearing down on Ealing, like everywhere else. Frogmore has currently put its 135,000sq ft Point West Five scheme on hold because of the downturn while, on another Uxbridge Road scheme, the developer has switched the use of the office element to data storage.

But Fisher believes demand is beginning to tighten for office space across London.

KNIGHT PREDICTS THAT, ONCE Ealing Cross is let, there will be a surge in interest in development along the Uxbridge Road, much of which is occupied by low-grade office accommodation built in the 1960s. Planners' high density and anti-parking policies mean that such sites can accommodate at least twice as much space as they could when the existing buildings were erected four decades ago.

On this basis, Knight estimates that Uxbridge Road will be able to accommodate nearly two million sq ft of offices. "It will have a critical mass," he says, "spurring the provision of amenities like coffee shops".

A mix of planning policy and changing taste means that a growing share of the borough's new office space will be provided in the town centre rather than on office campuses like Chiswick Park.

Fisher believes that Ealing town centre leaves business parks in the shade.

"Chiswick Park gets the attention because they have new buildings with fairly large floorplates, but what it doesn't have is the critical mass, there's no retail and Ealing is three to four times the size in terms of floorspace."

Besides which, Knight says, tastes are changing: "More and more people don't want to move out to business parks because they feel they are soulless. The business park is great for the boss who wants to be driven out to Heathrow, but staff need good public transport and coffee shops, so we are seeing a shift." *



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New beginnings

Creating a successful and sustainable borough requires the provision of good quality amenities, transport links, employment opportunities and housing options, the last of these is a particular focus in Ealing



Ealing Council's ambitious regeneration programme for its housing estates is one of the largest in London. Improving the quality of the borough's housing stock is seen as being key to its wider regeneration. There are eight housing estates planned for regeneration, affecting around 5,000 properties. The council believes that creating new homes and a range of property options is likely to help prevent future deprivation and crime, while providing houses fit for 21st century demand and making the borough more desirable, in terms of relocation and future inward investment.

Unsurprisingly the borough's largest pockets of deprivation are situated within its council estates and though there are new development sites away from these areas, much of Ealing's housing-focused regeneration is tackling the areas most in need of attention. Transforming the borough's council housing is a huge challenge, one that involves different

solutions for different estates. The council is working closely with residents to develop these solutions and ensure the right development partners are brought on board to deliver the vision to transform the estates.

Of all the large-scale housing projects planned in Ealing the redevelopment of the Green Man Lane estate is the most advanced of the council's recent regeneration projects. The West Ealing estate, which exhibits all the hallmarks of deprivation and the associated ills, is

Ealing has one of the largest regeneration programmes in London, affecting around 5,000 properties



Ealing's South Acton Estate (above) is just one of the council housing estates undergoing major redevelopment.

to be knocked down and entirely rebuilt – creating 346 affordable homes and 91 for shared ownership, as well as a further 309 homes for outright sale.

Investment on this scale is not common. The scheme has the potential to make a real difference not only to the people living there but also to the borough as a whole, something which makes the project's successful completion even more essential.

Rebuilding an entire estate could be regarded as an impressive feat in itself but simply providing newer structures to replace the outdated ones is not the whole answer.



THE GREEN MAN LANE PROGRAMME is designed to create a sustainable community, one that will enjoy the benefits of improved community facilities, better life opportunities and connectivity with the rest of the borough. A huge emphasis has been placed on ensuring the mistakes of yesterday are not repeated. And to make sure this does not happen the council and its delivery partners have been working closely with those the project will affect most, the estate's residents.

Tom Rigby, development manager at project developer Rydon explains: "Throughout the bidding stages Ealing made sure we met with and involved residents and other stakeholders and listened to what they were saying. We also did two public exhibitions at that stage too. It really allowed us to get the resident's thoughts on what we were planning. Since then we have been working on numerous

different fronts, with three public exhibitions, focused design workshop groups, and a few more in the pipeline before the planning application goes in. It makes us head in the right direction.

"At each stage we progress with the design after getting feedback, taking into account all the opinions. Obviously you can't include everything people say but we try and go back with something that addresses as many of the issues and concerns as possible. I think we have demonstrated this quite well, and we have changed the initial design quite a bit to reflect resident's aspirations. By engaging with people all the way through and listening to their opinions, and by adding our own opinions and decisions, it should help us long term."

Not far behind Green Man Lane a similar process, although on a much grander scale, is under way on the South

A huge emphasis has been placed on ensuring the mistakes of yesterday are not repeated

Acton Estate. Parts of the estate have already undergone large-scale change and most recently Ealing has been working with a developer selection group made up of residents to identify a development partner for the regeneration of the remaining parts of the borough's largest housing estate.

Many of the original blocks of flats in South Acton date back to the 1950s, 60s and 70s. They were not designed to modern standards and do not meet



The development plans for Green Man Lane will transform the area and create a sustainable community.

the needs of today's residents. The proposals for the estate will involve the redevelopment of new mixed-tenure homes on a prominent 16-hectare site. Plans will also ensure that the estate is linked more closely with the regeneration of Acton town centre to the north of the estate. This is seen as crucial to the successful regeneration of the estate.

Potential partners were asked to take resident's feedback onboard and suggest which blocks should be demolished or improved. No decisions have been made, but it is likely that a large number of blocks will be demolished.

The vision is to reconnect the South Acton Estate to the wider neighbourhood by creating an urban village with traditional tree-lined streets, human scale buildings, a sense of place, and safety and security for its residents. The new homes will be environmentally sustainable with

very low heating, power and water costs.

The proposals will see half the new homes as affordable rent or buy with the remaining developed for private sale. The emphasis will be on traditional family housing within a broad range of homes comprising one- to four-bedroom apartments and maisonettes, through to four- and five-bedroom houses across all tenures.

After a review of all the council's housing estates it was agreed that the original masterplan for the area should be updated to take into account current and future housing needs. The revised masterplan for the area will be completed this summer with a planning application to be submitted in the winter. Work is expected to start on site in early 2011. Due to the size and complexity of this project, it is envisaged that the project will take at least ten years to complete. *

House prices in Ealing

Average house price:	£320,260
Detached:	£690,458
Semi-detached:	£373,593
Terrace:	£357,274
Flat:	£222,953

*based on figures from the Land Registry of England and Wales from June 2009

Points of view

John Bishop, of Colin Bibra estate agents, which has been operating in Ealing since 1988, sees reason for both change and optimism in the borough:

"Regenerating the housing stock in Ealing is important from the viewpoint that the regeneration that is taking place seems to be about getting rid of problem areas, and this is important. These areas can have an effect on other things such as shops and areas nearby and this can affect investment and interest levels.

"The key thing that needs to be done is when the estates are rebuilt they have to be done so without creating new problems for the future. I think there is reason to be optimistic about Ealing's future. The council seem to be very focused on getting this right."



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Top of the class

London's third largest borough boasts an impressive level of educational success, and this is set to improve as its Building Schools for the Future programme takes off. Alex Aspinall spoke to the man overseeing the transformation, programme director Simon Hurrell

October 2010 will see the start of the first phase of Ealing's £300 million Building Schools for the Future (BSF) project. The complete rebuild of Dormers Wells High School and the remodelling planned for Cardinal Wiseman School represent the early stages of an inspirational transformation of the borough's education offer.

Those involved are enthusiastic about how the project will develop. Simon Hurrell, Ealing's BSF programme director, says: "We are certainly very excited about the prospect of the construction and the ICT investment that will be made as part



Everyone recognises the change BSF can facilitate and also the opportunities it creates



of the BSF programme, as are the schools. People describe it as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and for most of these schools that is exactly the position. It is a fantastic opportunity.”

And an opportunity set to be utilised to its fullest in Ealing. Its BSF team, head teachers and school governors are researching what has and has not worked elsewhere to ensure their schools are redesigned appropriately.

The link between educational attainment and the quality of the built learning environment is undisputed. An inspiring space designed to meet the demands of 21st century learning is far more likely to encourage student success than drab, outmoded buildings. But improved grades and the life opportunities they create are not the only advantages of the successful completion of a BSF programme.

Schools often form the hub of local communities, so investing in and

upgrading the facilities offered can only benefit the wider community it serves. Facilities associated with schools, such as recreation and sport spaces, are often made available for public use. Better schools also generate interest in the area among people looking to relocate, and improved standards can help build a better skills base for local businesses. The benefits are widespread, and certainly difficult to create without BSF investment.

But these advantages don't come without considerable planning and co-operative working – and there are a great

many challenges and hurdles to be avoided en route, with logistical arrangements ranking among the most difficult to manage. The process of constructing new buildings and refurbishing others while students are still learning on site is not without its difficulties, and working through these problems requires considerable forethought.

“It is a key issue,” admits Hurrell. “It is probably the hardest single thing you have to deal with once these schemes get going. In the Cardinal Wiseman case we are fairly lucky because, although there is a lot of



BSF timeline

This timeline is subject to planning approval.



2010

- Cardinal Wiseman School: new construction work, remodelling, refurbishment and ICT upgrade
- Dormers Wells High School: complete rebuild and ICT upgrade

2011

- Acton High School: new sixth form college and ICT upgrade
- Elthorne Park High School: new construction work, remodelling, refurbishment and ICT upgrade
- Featherstone High School: new construction work, remodelling and refurbishment
- Northolt High School: new build, remodelling and ICT upgrade
- Villiers High School: new construction work, remodelling, refurbishment and ICT upgrade

new build to be done, the new building is to be placed on an existing hard play area. The contractors will have to construct the new building, and be able to use the area to decant the learning space while they do their remodelling.”

Central to avoiding these problems is the existence of healthy working relationships between all stakeholders, and in the first instance this applies particularly to the local authority and the individual school in question. Luckily this is a constituent part of the Ealing programme.

Hurrell adds: “We have to work with the schools. The authority has to have a view of how it sees secondary education developing over the next ten years, and this has to be a clear strategic position, as you would expect. It also has to be mirrored at school level.

“We do have outstanding schools, and I think the head teachers and governing bodies all think strategically. There are a lot of similarities between what a head teacher would want for a school and the borough’s wider ambitions. This is the starting point.

“Everyone recognises the change BSF can facilitate and also the opportunities it creates. We are pulling in the same direction, which is important.” *

A bright future

Ealing’s Building Schools for the Future programme is about much more than just erecting new buildings, and education in the 21st century is about more than just textbooks and blackboards – which is why £30 million is being invested in upgrading ICT facilities in schools throughout the borough.

Simon Hurrell explains: “The ICT investment is absolutely essential. We are proposing a managed IT service, which will be for all the schools, so they all get the benefits of economies of scale. At the end of the process we will have a world class ICT provider working across all the schools making sure that they all benefit.

“But it is not just about the hardware, or even the software – it is about modern teaching methods. It is not just a case of providing schools with new machines and walking away. It is going to be much more hands-on, with the provider being there all the time to help them make the most of what they have been given.”

The battle to build

February 2010 saw the two remaining bidders submit their final tenders for Ealing’s £300 million Building Schools for the Future contract. And they won’t have to wait much longer to discover the result of almost a year’s worth of planning, preparing and submitting, as the winner was due to be announced in April.

Balfour Beatty Education and QED Education Environments are hoping that the comprehensive plans they have each put together (following detailed discussions with the council) will be enough to see them take on the responsibility of bringing Ealing’s educational facilities into the 21st century.

2012

- **Belvue School: rebuild, ICT upgrade**
- **Drayton Manor High School: new construction work, remodelling and refurbishment**
- **Springhallow School: rebuild, part-refurbishment and ICT upgrade**
- **The Ellen Wilkinson School for Girls: new construction work, remodelling, refurbishment and ICT upgrade**
- **Twyford CofE High School: new construction work, remodelling, refurbishment and ICT upgrade**
- **New High School: Work starts on construction of a new high school in Greenford**

2013

- **St Ann’s School: new construction work, remodelling and ICT upgrade**
- **Study Centre (Group Provision): new build extension and ICT upgrade**
- **Brentside High School, Greenford High School and John Chilton School are all set for ICT upgrades**

Ealing's moving picture

While famous for its film industry, Ealing is host to many different types of creative companies, which make major contributions to the borough's economy. **Pamela Buxton** finds out about these creative companies and why they're flocking to Ealing

Ealing will be forever associated with the golden age of British film in the 1940s and 1950s. The *Ladykillers*, *The Lavender Hill Mob*, *Kind Hearts and Coronets* and many more classics were all made at Ealing Studios, the oldest working film studios in the world.

Those heady film heydays may be gone, but the studios are still going strong as studios for film and television – more recent films include *Notting Hill* and *Star Wars – Episode II Attack of the Clones* – as well as providing space for film schools and business units.

What is less well known is that film makes up just a small part of a much broader range of television, production and software companies taking root in the area including Technicolor, Panalux, Island Studios and Artem (a physical special effects company). Together with creative companies in publishing, fashion, design and media, these contribute £2 billion to the local economy.

So far so good, but Ealing Council believes this is just the beginning of what could be a far larger community of creative businesses in the borough, and is working to expand the sector.

"We have such a broad spread of creative businesses from architecture to fashion and music – a bit of everything. It's unique really," says Mike Liddall, head of the West London film unit at Ealing Council.

"We are keen to be a creative borough.... There is an opportunity here if the council

makes proactive contact with specific creative firms who are looking to relocate and who can be attracted to Ealing. This would act as a catalyst to an invigorated creative sector providing grass roots and cutting edge training and employment opportunities for the future."

So what makes Ealing so good for creative businesses? Traditionally, Soho has been the place to be for post-production companies but high property costs are pushing them out. Many are moving to West London, attracted by the proximity of the BBC and other media production companies at White City.

EALING AND NEARBY ACTON and Southall can offer fast transport into central London and small, flexible space for creative start-ups and niche companies. Park Royal (see page 31) has scope for larger units that are suitable for creative content firms and studio providers.

According to Liddall, there is also scope to attract Bollywood investment to tap into the creative talent in Ealing's Asian communities. Already, there is a Bollywood acting school at the Ealing Institute of Media at Ealing Studios and the area is often used for shooting.

Ealing Council has been researching the potential to develop creative industries further to maximise the benefits to the borough and its residents.

In order to do this a survey was commissioned covering everything within the creative sector from leisure software through to art and antiques. The survey, by TBR, found that the creative sector in Ealing represented 23% of the economy. Although a lower proportion than that in Hammersmith and Fulham (29%) – which is home to the BBC – this is higher ➔



We have such a broad spread of creative businesses from film and architecture to fashion and music. It's unique



Ealing is a hotbed of film activity with A-list film stars and directors such as Woody Allen regularly on set on the streets of Ealing.

than in Hounslow (21%), Brent (20%), Harrow (19%) and Hillingdon (16%).

Creative businesses come a close third in the most important sectors in Ealing's economy, after business services and wholesale retail. This represents employment of 15,100, some 15% of the workforce.

The survey revealed some surprising statistics about the creative sub-sectors in Ealing. Film and video, despite the area's impressive film heritage and profile, represents just 7%, while leisure software is by far the largest discipline at 34% of the entire creative sector. This follows a huge recent growth of 30% in the last three years – although most businesses employ fewer than four people.

One of the council's aims is to provide more business space to rent for creative businesses, since most businesses with fewer than 10 staff rent rather than buy space. Although satisfaction with Ealing as a location for business was high, scoring 7.5 out of 10 for location, there was some dissatisfaction at the condition of business premises and the lack of room for growth.

As a result, the council is actively looking at "characterful" sites in the town centre, rather than anonymous glass boxes, that it hopes will appeal to small creative businesses, such as former banks, pubs, shops and a gym. By finding new uses for these buildings, the council hopes to both regenerate the town centre and encourage creative businesses.

"We're dealing with people dealing in ideas. They need to be inspired," says Liddall.

While the area is already home to big publishers such as Random House, Liddall sees Ealing as being best placed to attract smaller, creative businesses.

"That's where our niche could be. We don't have big sites to attract multinationals. We can't compete with White City. But we can look at smaller venues – the vast majority of creative firms are quite small," he says.

THERE IS SCOPE FOR DEVELOPERS to make the most of Ealing's growing creative hub by providing suitable business space, according to Ross Sturley, organiser of the Place West London regeneration event and a consultant on inward investment to the area.

"There's an opportunity for those who are good at developing workshop-style space. If they can do that, they'll do well in Ealing," he says.



Part of Ealing's appeal is its heritage, but what people don't know is there are lots of different creative companies - new media, digital...



Sturley says Ealing's potential should be seen as part of a broader West London regeneration, led by organisations such as the BBC with its White City Media Village development, plus the Park Royal hub of post-production businesses. Many staff working for these companies live in Ealing, contributing to a growing pool of talent attractive to other creative businesses which have been clustering in the surrounding area.

One business that has moved to the borough is Met Film, which last year moved all its divisions under one roof at Ealing Studios, where it runs a film school. Russell Stopford, managing director of Met Film Post and Met Film Creative, says the proximity to other creative businesses is one of the big draws, both for Met Film Post and others.

"Ealing Studios made sense. Part of the appeal is its heritage, but what people don't know is that there are lots of different creative companies – digital, new media. Like-minded people create a hub.... We'll be able to offer services to other businesses in the area," he says.

Another important element to building



Ealing Studios has big plans to develop the existing site and expand the buildings and facilities on offer.

a creative hub is education. Here, Ealing is well placed, with both the Ealing Institute of Media and Thames Valley University, which has a strong arts focus at its Ealing campus and is running a series of events on various creative sub-sectors.

"They're encouraging people to go into the sector and start companies in the area. They're trying to keep the brain drain from Ealing," says Liddall.

As Stopford argues: "You don't need to be in central London. Ealing is very well placed for the next five to ten years, as more media moves out of central London. Clients like Ealing because of the shopping centre nearby. It's calmer than central London. It's greener. All those aspects are in its favour." *

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