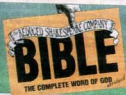


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GET READY FOR THE KICK-OFF

Watch out football fans! Next week's Gazette includes a colour pullout guide to the next season, with every fixture for both GPN and Brentford. Don't miss it!

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Labour says commuters should use public transport rather than A40

TRAFFIC JAMS FOR ALL TIME?

By **RONAN MCGREEVY**

MOTORISTS now face permanent delays on congested sections of Western Avenue after the Government cancelled improvements to the A40 this week.

Despite almost 30 years of planning and the demolition of 200 houses in Acton, plans to widen the A40 and build a flyover at Gipsy Corner and an underpass at Western Circus have been scrapped, probably forever.

Secretary of State for Transport Gavin Strang said that expanding the road would only further encourage people to use their cars to travel into central London. Alternative means of public transport were available, he said.

It means that the upheaval faced by 200 families who were forced to move after their homes were demolished has been in vain. And it has left a mile-and-a-half stretch of blighted roadway and graffiti-strewn boardings.

The decision to scrap the £79 million scheme has dismayed motorists and business people. The Park Royal Partnership, which represents more than 1,200 companies in the area, described it as "very disappointing".

A spokesman said the works would have "substantially improved" traffic congestion at the junctions with Horn Lane and Old Oak Road.

And Clive Soley, MP for Ealing, Acton and Shepherds Bush, expressed disappointment that his lobbying of Mr Strang in favour of the scheme had come to nothing.

Mr Soley said: "I am angry because it should have gone ahead after the demolition took place. If you start a scheme like that you shouldn't put it on hold."

But the chairman of Ealing's environment committee, Cllr Stephen Sears, welcomed the decision, which he said was in line with the council's own strategy of shifting the emphasis from private to public transport. The move was also welcomed by the West London Friends of the Earth.

The Highways Agency said the possible landscaping of the blighted area would be an "urgent priority".

And Tory Cllr Jeremy Mandell suggested that trees should be planted in place of the demolished houses.

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It can only get worse: congestion at Savoy Circus in Acton looking towards Shepherds Bush

Pictures: SHANE DEMPSEY

200 homes knocked down for no reason

THE DECISION to scrap the A40 road improvement scheme will be galling for many householders bought out of their homes five years ago.

In 1991-92 the Government demolished 200 homes on Western Avenue to make way for proposed road improvements.

Many of the people displaced were glad to have the chance to move off a noisy, congested road.

But others are angry that their lives had been disturbed for nothing. The Lawrence family lived at 109 Western Avenue for 25 years.

Sophie Lawrence said: "I do not understand why they pushed us out of our house. We feel terrible about this decision."

There is also uncertainty for many householders whose houses front on to the blighted area. Edwin Cloud, from Gibbon Road, Acton, said householders on his road had "mixed feelings" about the cancellation.

He said: "We are glad the scheme isn't going ahead, but we fear that the area will be built on again. We want it landscaped permanently."



Not pretty: graffiti on one of the many boarded-up homes in Western Avenue

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