

News from Ladbroke

The Newsletter of the Ladbroke Association

Summer 2017



"Elizabethan villa" in Kensington Park Road (see article on page 2)

IN THIS ISSUE

♦ Grenfell Tower	1
♦ Annual General Meeting	1
♦ Gothic villas	2-3
♦ Ladbroke website	3
♦ Garden sheds	4
♦ Other Article 4 directions	4
♦ Parking restrictions	5
♦ Hugh Thomas	5
♦ Telephone boxes	5
♦ Updates on nearby projects	5-6
♦ Protecting pubs	6
♦ Commenting on planning applications	6
♦ Refusals of planning permission	7
♦ Applications of interest	7
♦ Association details	8

GRENFELL TOWER

As a charity, the Ladbroke Association is precluded from activities that are not aimed at its charitable objectives, which are to do with conservation and the development of amenities for our area. However, we were all deeply affected by the Grenfell Tower tragedy, which showed up once more the huge disparity between our leafy streets with their multi-million pound houses and influential residents, and the area just a few hundred yards to the north with its deprivation and general feeling among the population that they have no control over their destiny. Many, we suspect, may feel uncomfortable to be living in one of the richest boroughs which boasts of its low Council tax, when there is so much to be done to improve the poorer parts of the borough.

Another thing pointed up by the tragedy is the essential role played by charities in the northern wards. It is they - bodies such as the Rugby

Portobello Trust and the Westway Trust who, along with the churches and other faith establishments, stepped up to the mark in the immediate aftermath of the fire. There are also many less well-known smaller charities active in providing services to different sections of the community. Many of these receive grants from the Council to deliver social services on its behalf (for instance adult education and support to find jobs). But most have far more demands on their services than they can cope with or can be financed out of Council funding. Many people in our area play a role in these charities as trustees or volunteers, and many donate to them. This is surely one of the best ways that we can help.

There is a plethora of charities to choose from, but when in doubt the Kensington and Chelsea Foundation is probably the best place to which to turn. The Foundation was founded in 2008 by Jeremy Raphaely, a local resident who had just retired from a

career in the City. He noted that many local residents gave generously to national and international charities, but were not always aware of the help that was needed closer to home. The Foundation does not itself offer services, but it raises awareness of needs in the community and champions local charities, linking local donors with local charities, as well as itself fundraising for local causes (it set up an appeal for the Grenfell Tower victims within hours), channelling the funds to appropriate charities. It raises its core funding separately, so 100% of all donations goes to the charities it supports.

AGM

The 48th Annual General Meeting of the Ladbroke Association will be held on Thursday 27 July 2017 at 7.30 for 7.45p.m. at St Peter's Church, in Kensington Park Road. Invitations have already been sent out to members. All are welcome to attend.



Former "Swiss Villa" in Kensington Park Road

GOTHIC VILLAS

During the 40-odd years that it took to develop the Ladbroke estate, its architects and builders mostly favoured a classical style, with pillars and pilasters, architraves and cornices, elegance of line and general symmetry, inspired by the architecture of ancient Greece and the Italian Renaissance. This was a period, however, when the so-called Victorian Gothic Revival was making itself felt, with its pointed gables and steeply pitched roofs, its arched porches and bay windows, its turrets and general exuberance. Gothic was particularly favoured for large public buildings (think Houses of Parliament) and churches. In the Ladbroke area, all our churches, with the exception of St Peter's, are firmly Gothic in style.

A handful of developers on the Ladbroke estate also experimented with Gothic elements on domestic houses. One of these was the builder-cum-architect-cum-developer William Chadwick, one of the first to take up building again on the estate after the collapse of the Hippodrome race-course. He built the long, well-proportioned

classical terrace at 8-30 (evens) Kensington Park Road (beginning by the cabmen's shelter) at the end of the 1840s. But he also seems to have been responsible, no doubt in a fit of experimentation, for the pair of villas at 32-34 Kensington Park Road, which are quite different in style, with mullioned windows (albeit with an Italian influence) and Gothic pointed gables.

Further along the same road, where the mansion blocks now are, there



32-34 Kensington Park Road

were once at least three more Gothic villas, sprouting turrets, fancy chimneys, rustication, mullioned windows and gables in all directions. All we have to show what they look like are some drawings in the Local Studies Centre (see above left, below and on the front page - reproduced courtesy of RBKC). But if the drawings are accurate, whoever designed them could have been the copying from a child's fairy-tale book.

Of the Gothic houses that remain, the most spectacular array is on the inner side of Lansdowne Crescent and also dates from the 1840s. At one end, next to St John's Church, stands the "Tudor Gothic" old vicarage, built, it is said, of stone left over from the building of



Another Gothic Villa where a Mansion block now stands

the church. There follow seven pairs of wonderful villas, some of the most interesting on the estate, all with Gothic features. Unfortunately, No. 5 has been altered almost out of recognition. But the original form of the others, despite some alterations, is still entirely recognisable. The villa pairs are in several distinct designs, some with pointed gables and some with turrets. The outer pairs are brick with stucco dressings (although the effect has been spoilt in the case of Nos. 5 and 16, whose brickwork has been covered in stucco). The villas in the central section are full stucco, including Nos. 9 and 10 which close the vista up Lansdowne Rise, one of the best vista effects on the estate, although largely hidden by trees in summer.

These villa pairs originally had wide gaps between them. Over the past 40 or 50 years, almost all have acquired side extensions, fortunately in most cases fairly small so that the gap is still very apparent. Most have or originally opted to follow the Gothic design of the houses. There is a frequent argument among architects and planners as to whether new extensions on old buildings



9 and 10 Lansdowne Crescent, closing the vista up Lansdowne Rise

should be a pastiche, seeking to imitate what is already there, or something frankly modern so that the distinction between old and new is evident. The Ladbroke Association debates this occasionally (we currently have three architects on our committee, and they do not always agree). But in the case of Lansdowne Crescent, we are agreed that the happier effect has been achieved by the Gothic extensions, like that with the pointed gable to the right of the picture above. We are sad that the pointy gable extensions on Nos. 13 and 14 have been replaced or are

being replaced with banal modern boxes.

There is also a good group of Gothic houses in Lansdowne Road, at Nos. 46-64 evens. No. 46 (which used to be known as Tuscany Villa) unusually is detached; the others are semi-detached pairs. Again they have prominent triangular gables, rustication and mullioned windows (see example below). These were built in the 1860s and were probably influenced by the Lansdowne Crescent villas.



56 and 58 Lansdowne Road

LADBROKE WEBSITE

We would like to redesign and modernise our website www.ladbrokeassociation.info and would like to use a local designer. Please let us know if you know of a good one.



The old vicarage

GARDEN SHEDS

The planning position on garden sheds is somewhat complicated. Generally, however, if a shed in a back garden does not exceed a certain size and is appropriately positioned, it can be built without planning permission so long as the person building it has the whole house. Owners of garden flats and maisonettes, on the other hand, need to seek planning permission, even if the garden belongs entirely to them. This effectively means that in an area like ours with many garden flats, it is a bit of a lottery as to whether planning permission is needed.

We are concerned that the permitted development rights given to householders have allowed some fairly hideous structures to be erected. Many of these are hidden away in back gardens almost entirely out of public view (although almost all are visible to some neighbours). But where the back

garden gives onto a communal garden, sheds can be a real eyesore for those using the garden. Even well-designed ones detract from the open greenery effect of the combination of private gardens and communal gardens. We are also worried that such garden buildings are likely to proliferate as more people install air-conditioning and similar facilities and need a shed to house the plant.

Even where there is no communal garden, one of the best features of our area is the frequency of generous back gardens, often back-to-back with others, creating quite substantial green spaces. These green lungs not only are good to look at but provide a refuge for wildlife and above all serve to help with drainage and to combat pollution by soaking up pollutant gases (and we are in one of the most polluted areas of London). By creating a cooler micro-climate, they also help with temperature reduction.

Obviously the odd garden shed will not make much difference to these effects. But too much of a proliferation is bound to have at least some impact.

The Norland Conservation Society had similar worries to ours. During its negotiations on its neighbourhood plan, it persuaded the Council to make an Article 4 Direction covering the Norland conservation area which inter alia removes permitted development rights in respect of buildings, enclosures and pools in gardens. We are planning to seek a similar Article 4 Direction for the Ladbroke area. There must be full consultation before it is imposed, so people will be able to have their say. And it is important to stress that an Article 4 Direction would not mean that sheds are automatically forbidden, but only that they would need planning permission so that there would be some control over what is built.

OTHER ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS

Most of the non-listed buildings in our area are subject to Article 4 Directions that mean that planning permission must be sought for changes to any front doors or windows and also to fences and walls facing the highway. Most of the houses with decorative backs facing communal gardens are subject to a similar restriction in respect of their rears. On the terrace at Nos. 126-184 Kensington Park Road, paint colour is also controlled and cannot be changed without planning permission. We are concerned, however, that some good buildings are not protected - for instance the very attractive terraces in Ladbroke Crescent. We have, therefore, been going through



Ladbroke Crescent

every street to see if there is a need for new Article 4 Directions. We have put our recommendations on the streets section of the Ladbroke Association website - see

www.ladbrokeassociation.info/STREETS.htm. Members might like to look at the entry for their street. We would welcome any comments.

PARKING RESTRICTIONS

At the moment, south of Westway, the residents' parking restrictions in Ladbroke Grove and the streets to the east of it have extended hours and apply until 10pm Monday to Friday and until 1.30pm on Saturdays. On the western side of Ladbroke Grove, however, normal restrictions apply, so the restrictions on residents' parking bays end at 6.30pm Monday to Friday and 1.30pm on Saturdays. One of our members who lives towards the north end of Clarendon Road has been finding it increasingly difficult to park his car in the evening and has suggested that it would be a good thing for the extended parking hours to apply to the west of Ladbroke Grove as well.

We have spoken to the Council about this. They have a well-honed system for assessing the need to extend parking hours. They carry out regular occupancy surveys of parking bays. When occupancy exceeds 80%, they are ready to look at proposals to extend the hours if there is some evidence that at least a third of residents would want it. They then do a detailed survey to check how many of the cars parked in residents' bays after hours have permits - as these cars could of course continue to park even if the hours were extended. They say that they often find that the main problem comes from parking by people from other parts of the borough visiting restaurants etc. outside their immediate area. If they decide there is a case for extending the hours, they then do a full-scale consultation of residents. They point out, however, that there are quite a few people who prefer shorter hours for residents parking as it makes it easier for their out-of-borough visitors to park in the evening.

The Council have shown us the results of their latest occupancy survey for weekday evenings (which we can send to any residents who are interested). This shows that most streets in the south-west of the Ladbroke area have occupancy rates of less than 70% (although it may be worth noting that

the survey was done in the period when Holland Park Underground station was closed). However, there are quite a few streets in the north of the area with occupancy rates over 90%, including Kensington Park Gardens, Ladbroke Gardens, Arundel Gardens, Elgin Crescent (east of Ladbroke Grove), Westbourne Park Road and Cornwall Crescent. The Council will be doing their next survey in 2018.

HUGH THOMAS

The historian Hugh Thomas, Lord Thomas of Swynnerton, a long-term resident of Ladbroke Grove, died in May aged 85. He was best known for his ground-breaking book on the Spanish Civil War, published in 1961, which earned him the opprobrium of Franco's Spain. For the Ladbroke Association, however, he and his wife Vanessa are mainly revered as part of the group which brought about the foundation of the Association. One morning in 1969, Vanessa Thomas looked out of the window to see a large cross marked on the plane tree outside their house. Enquiries of the Council revealed that the Council were planning to cut down a number of the plane trees. The Thomases, together with a group of other local residents, banded together and lobbied the Council, summoning the hapless councillor in charge to a meeting at the Thomases' house. The plane trees in Ladbroke Grove were saved - and still stand - and soon the idea was born of a more permanent association to protect local amenities.

TELEPHONE BOXES

The ubiquity of mobile phones means that telephone boxes are hardly used nowadays. Yet they have proliferated on our bigger streets, including Notting Hill Gate. Nobody believes that this is out of a genuine concern to provide telephone facilities to the public. It is because the telecoms companies can make a lot of money selling advertising space on the sides of the kiosks (we say "sides", but most kiosks these days are no more than a hooded

upright stand with an advertisement on one side and a telephone on the other). Telecoms companies have been able to get away with erecting these unnecessary phone kiosks because kiosks occupying less than 1.5 square metres ground area have permitted development rights and do not need planning permission outside of conservation areas. The erection of an advertisement on a kiosk needs consent in conservation areas, but in major roads like Notting Hill Gate, which is not in any conservation area, there is what is called "deemed advertisement consent". This consent can be removed in the specified areas, but only by a government direction under the Control of Advertisement Regulations. RBKC recently approached the Government about making such a direction, but were told to come back after the election. We understand that they are now planning to do so.

UPDATES ON NEARBY PROJECTS

Dukes Lodge

This nicely solid 1930s block of flats just outside our area, at the Holland Park Avenue end of Holland Park, was acquired a few years ago by one of the Candy brothers. He bought out all the tenants and eighteen months ago obtained planning permission - on appeal - to demolish the block and replace it by a row of pastiche Victorian villas with luxury lateral flats inside. Despite covering most of the ground that is now garden and including a huge double basement, there are going to be only 24 housing units, three fewer than at present.

Since then, the block has stood empty and demolition has not yet started. Candy has now put it on the market for £75,000,000 (with Savills). This is a fairly typical move - obtain planning permission and then sell on with the permission, taking the profit from the added value and leaving another developer to implement the project. It is a great pity that it cannot be used in the meantime on a temporary basis to house victims of the Grenfell Tower fire.

Newcombe House

The application by developers to redevelop Newcombe House and the adjoining block (including Waterstones, the Kensington Place restaurant and fish shop and the car-park where the farmers' market takes place) was refused by the Council. It went to appeal and the Council's decision was upheld by the Inspector. He was not too concerned over the design, or by the size and shape of the proposed tower, which was the chief problem for the inhabitants of Hillgate Village. He was unhappy, however, about the failure to provide social housing on site (there are currently 20 social housing units provided by the Notting Hill Trust) and felt that the developer had overstated the risks to the viability of the scheme of providing such units. We now await to see if the developer will bring back a revised planning application.

PROTECTING PUBS

Kensington Park Hotel



We have reported in past issues on the attempts to save the Kensington Park Hotel or KPH pub near Ladbroke Grove Underground Station. It was acquired in 2013 for £3.2million by a developer who intended to let the ground floor to an estate agent and probably develop the upper floors for residential accommodation. The KPH is one of the few traditional ungentrified pubs in the area. It is frequented by the local community, is well known for its music and has been the venue for famous parties during Carnival. It also has a large first floor function room which has been a considerable local asset, given the paucity of spaces in the area that can be hired for local events at a reasonable rate.

Local residents subsequently got together and formed an association which applied successfully to the Council for the pub to be made an Asset of Community Value (ACV). That meant that planning permission is needed for any change of use from a pub. It also meant that, should the

landlord wish to sell, the community could be given six months to raise the funds to purchase it.

The ACV status seems to have caused the developer to have second thoughts. He had evicted the publican who had been running the pub for some years, but he put in another landlord and the pub continued to operate. He then decided to sell. The community body applied for the statutory six-month moratorium, which began in January, to try to raise the funds to purchase it. But they failed to come up with an acceptable offer. The pub has now been sold on to a company called Barts Pub Ltd, incorporated in February 2016. The company is registered at the same address as the Harcourt Arms in Marylebone, a traditional pub that still serves drinks but mainly operate as a restaurant. That may therefore be the fate of the KPH, sadly for local regulars and for the character of the area.

This saga, and a similar one concerning the Academy Pub in Princesdale Road, serve to point up the limitations of the ACV system in the case of high value London properties. The regime was designed and has been successfully used to allow village communities to purchase the local pub or village shop threatened with closure and run them as community enterprises. But unless there is a white knight in the wings, there is usually no way that a local community can find the necessary resources to purchase a neighbourhood pub in Central London.

Change of rules on planning permission

A piece of good news. It is possible that the developer who purchased the KPH would have been a lot less keen to do so if he had foreseen that it would be granted a status needing planning permission for change of use, with all the accompanying hassle. The Ladbroke Association had been pressing the Council for some time to make an Article 4 Direction on pubs in the borough (or at any rate in our area) so that any change of use would automatically require planning permission. We were getting nowhere when the Labour peer Lord Kennedy stepped in with an amendment to a Bill being considered in the House of Lords that did just that. The Government rejected the amendment, but rather unusually Lord Kennedy, instead of gracefully withdrawing it, pressed his amendment to a vote and won. As a

result, the Government has introduced new rules and since 23 May planning permission is required for a pub (a class A4 use) to be used as a shop (a Class A1 use), an estate agent or other financial or professional use (a Class A2 use) or as a restaurant/cafe (a Class A3 use.) Permission will not be required for the use of a pub as a mixed pub/ restaurant use, such as may be planned for the KPH.

COMMENTING ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

RBKC encourages anybody commenting on planning applications to submit their comments in electronic form through the Council website (www.rbkc.gov.uk/planningsearch). We accept that this is desirable, as it reduces work for Council officers and means that comments will reach the right person and will be dealt with quicker than if they are in the form of a letter or email. We suspect, however, that some people do not like the impersonality of filling comments into an online box. It is possible to write in the box "see attached letter" and then to attach a proper letter in the form of a pdf (but type rather than sign your name as the Council policy is - sensibly - to remove all signatures before putting letters on the website). Photographs or photocopies to illustrate your arguments can also be attached as jpgs.

The pro-forma on the Council website asks you to state whether your comment is a general comment, an objection or an expression of support. This makes it difficult to decide what to do if the comment supports some aspects of the application and objects to others. We also think that some people may be put off describing their comment as an objection to avoid unnecessarily antagonising their neighbours. We have urged the Council to have a fourth category of "part-support/part-objection". In the meantime, it is important to remember that if you do not classify your comment as an objection, it may not count towards the three objections that are needed to trigger the referral of an application to the Planning Applications Committee (where there are no more than two objections, an application may be accepted by Council officers without any reference to Councillors unless a ward Councillor has specifically requested that it be brought to the Committee).

REFUSALS OF PLANNING PERMISSION

The procedure for refusing planning applications is not always well understood. If Council officers decide that a planning application is completely against policy, they will refuse it without further ado and the matter will never go near the Planning Applications Committee (unless a Councillor has requested that the decision be taken by the Committee). The refusal notice always gives reasons for the refusal.

If the officers feel that the application could with some amendment be made acceptable, they usually suggest to the applicant that they withdraw their application and submit a revised one. Normally, no fee is charged for this second application - although the Council does charge for second or further revised applications.

The Council does not accept substantive amendments to applications once they have been made. They used to do so, but there were complaints (including from the Ladbroke Association) that amendments were often made late in the day and those affected by them not given sufficient opportunity to consider and comment on them. Hence the Council's decision to go over to the present system of inviting people to withdraw their application and submit a revised application which then goes through the full consultation process.

If a new application is submitted, none of the objections to the previous one is taken into account. So it is important for objectors to resubmit their objections if they are still unhappy with the proposal.

RECENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS OF INTEREST

13 Ladbroke Walk

Ladbroke Walk is an attractive mews that runs behind the Police Station. Its mews houses were built at different times, some quite recently, but almost all tend to have a traditional "mewsy" look, being low-built brick houses. No. 13 is one such. An application

was submitted in 2016 to remodel the doors and ground floor windows and to cover the whole lower part of the house with timber cladding, quite alien to the character of the mews. The application was withdrawn, probably at the behest of Council officers, and another submitted. This still involved inappropriate timber cladding and we put in an objection, as we had done in the earlier case. This second application was also withdrawn and a third has now been submitted, involving timber boarding for the doors only, which we welcome.



13 Ladbroke Walk

Some of our mews have lost pretty well all their original character, and in such cases we tend to take the view that – within reason – anything goes. Indeed, such locations can be a perfect place for some imaginative modern architecture. But where traditional houses remain, even if significantly altered, we do feel it is important that alterations or new houses should respect the character of the mews. The Council is generally sympathetic, as the Ladbroke Conservation Area Appraisal is clear that traditional mews make an important contribution to the area.

1 Ladbroke Square

This building (housing a play school at its lower levels) on the corner of Ladbroke Grove is a bit of a one-off. It was built in 1851, before the rest of Ladbroke Square and is lower than the other houses in the terrace - an effect that is accentuated by the high party wall parapets on either side of the roof of No. 2-3 (the latter was rebuilt after a bad fire in 1968 in which two people were killed, and the parapets are a protection measure to prevent fire spreading at roof level - see photo top right).

Two alternative applications were



1 Ladbroke Square

made in April, both aiming to turn the top floor flat of 1 Ladbroke Square into a two-storey maisonette. One proposed to replace the present mansard roof (itself a 1980s addition) with a two-storey mansard roof, slated and with two rows of windows, rather like a French château. The other was to remove the present mansard, add an extra storey matching the rest of the building and then recreate the present mansard on top of that.

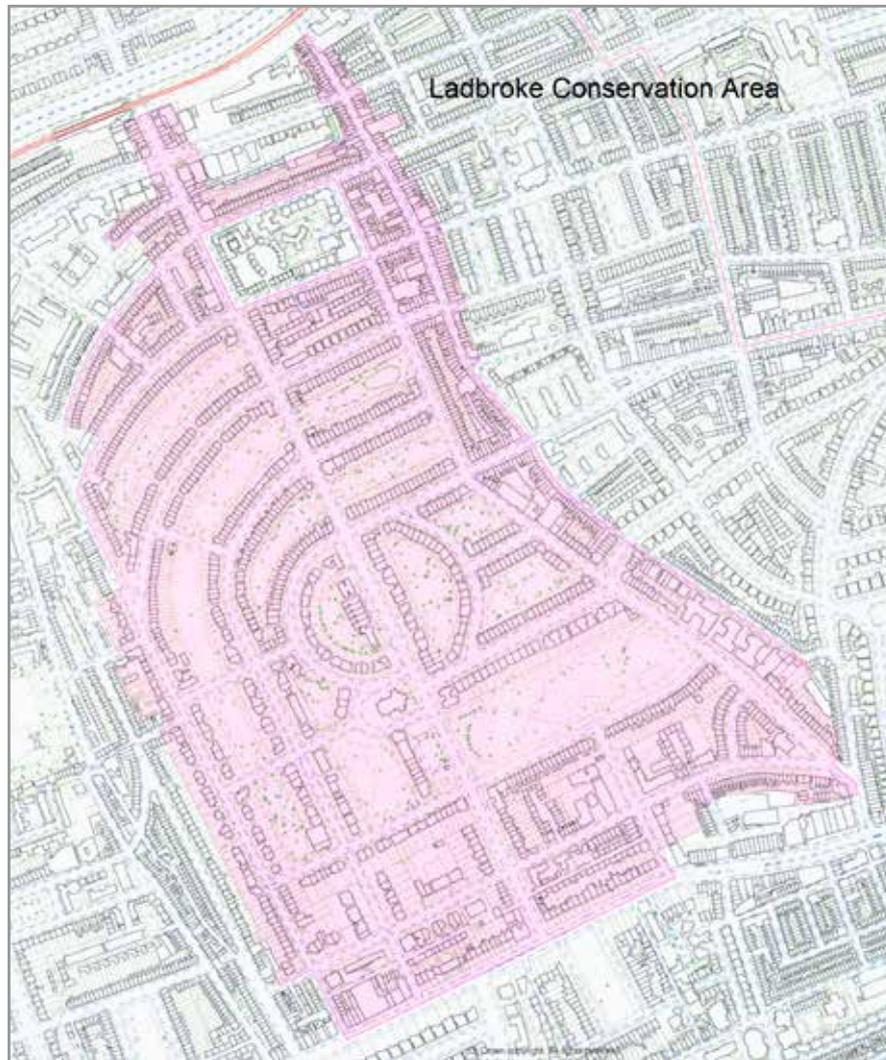
We saw no real problem with the principle of an extra storey in this rather odd case. But we did not at all like the design of the double mansard, alien to our area, and much preferred the second design. We are happy to say that this was what was finally agreed.

67 Clarendon Road

One application that we particularly welcomed was a proposal to reinstate a porch on No. 67 Clarendon Road. This is one of a pair of villas (Nos. 65 and 67) which must once both have had attractive pillared porches with ionic capitals. That on no. 65 survives. The pillars on No. 67 seem, however, to have disappeared years ago, no doubt as a result of neglect. The applicants are planning to rebuild a porch to match that on No. 65 - and indeed on the similar pair of villas at Nos. 69 and 71. The applicants are also proposing the removal of an ugly dustbin shed in the front garden.



65 - 67 Clarendon Road



THE OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE LADBROKE ASSOCIATION

President: Thomas Pakenham

Officers:

Chairman: Sophia Lambert

Vice Chairman: Peter Chapman

Hon Treasurer: Paul Bastick

Hon Secretary: Anne Chorley

Committee Members:

Kay Broadbent

David Campion

Tom Croft

Catherine Faulks

Sandra Kamen

David Marshall

Peter Mishcon

Malcolm Pawley

Peggy Post

Newsletter: Sophia Lambert

editor@ladbrokeassociation.info

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE LADBROKE ASSOCIATION

The Association is a charitable non-political organisation. Its constitution requires it to promote and encourage the following objectives by charitable means but not otherwise:

- ♦ To encourage and promote high standards of architecture and town planning within the Ladbroke Estate Conservation Area
- ♦ To stimulate and promote public interest in, and care for the beauty, history, and character of the neighbourhood
- ♦ To encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity or historic interest.

The complete constitution of the Ladbroke Association is on its website at:

www.ladbrokeassociation.info

and the website also includes much historical information about the conservation area.

This edition of the newsletter was edited by Sophia Lambert and the printing was done by The London Printing Company.com in Notting Hill Gate.

MEMBERSHIP

The Ladbroke Association was founded in 1969, in the same year as the designation of the Ladbroke Conservation area. The original impetus for the setting up of the Association was a proposal by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to cut down and replace the plane trees along the southern end of Ladbroke Grove. Led by the well-known architect and town-planner Robert Meadows and other local residents, the Association was successful in opposing the proposals, and the trees remain.

The Association is registered as a charity (Charity No. 260627) and is therefore subject to the strict rules governing charities.

The Association receives notices of planning applications and inspects, discusses and comments on those which affect the Ladbroke area in any significant way. In addition, the Association has been involved in (and sometimes initiates) discussion with the planning authorities on wider questions of conservation policy.

We are concerned that we should reflect the views of the broad community who live in the area. Everyone who is a resident of the Ladbroke Conservation Area should be a member of the Association so that their views may be heard in the debate on continuing issues in the area.

The more members we have, the more influential we can be. At present we have under 400, as many people have moved away. If you have new neighbours, please do encourage them to join. Membership for a person or family costs only £15 a year, which is we reckon a bargain in this day and age.

Would-be members can download a membership form from our website:

www.ladbrokeassociation.info

or apply to the Hon Treasurer:

Paul Bastick, 75A Ladbroke Grove, W11 2PD