

News from Ladbroke

The Newsletter of the Ladbroke Association

Autumn 2007



David Corsellis, the Chairman of the Ladbroke Association, introduced David Prout, the Council's Executive Director of Planning and Borough Development, who opened the Photographic Exhibition

VIEWES OF LADBROKE PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

Our exhibition of photographs of the Ladbroke area on 16-17 October was extremely well received. The exhibition took place in the 20th Century Theatre on Westbourne Grove. Eighteen large panoramas of streets within the Ladbroke Estate were shown, along with a number of single images of buildings. In addition there was an impressive display of photography of St Peter's Church in Kensington Park Road (*see right*), assembled by the Church's Appeal Committee.



Visitors at the Exhibition

The evening viewing on the 16th was attended by about 150 people. David Prout, the new Executive Director of Planning and Development of the Royal Borough, gave a most interesting and knowledgeable opening address on the history of the Ladbroke Estate from the late



Thomas Erskine getting ready for the opening of the Exhibition

CHRISTMAS PARTY

This year's Christmas Party will be held on Monday 10th December. Invitations will be sent out very shortly. Places are limited so please apply early.

18th century to the present day, revealing a real feel for the history and the architecture of our area.

There were many favourable comments, both that evening and the following day, on Thomas Erskine's photography (*see below*), the production of the panoramas and prints and the amazing variety of architecture shown. A number of the panoramas and prints were sold.

A poster of "The Houses of Notting Hill" which was produced for the exhibition proved to be very popular (*see page 2*). Copies of the poster are available which are

(Continued on Page 2)

THE HOUSES OF NOTTING HILL



COMMISSIONED BY THE LADBROKE ASSOCIATION

PHOTOGRAPHS BY THOMAS ERSKINE

WWW.LADBROKEASSOCIATION.ORG.UK

PRINTING BY FLASH PHOTODIGITAL

The Poster that was produced for the photographic exhibition showing some of the panoramic views of streets in the area.

printed on heavy high quality paper and cost £40; Email the Editor at: editor@ladbrokeassociation.org.uk for details of ordering. The unsold prints and panoramas from the exhibition are also still available. Several suggestions were made during the exhibition about staging a further showing of this photography and these are now being considered by the Association and Thomas Erskine.

Our thanks are due to Savills of Kensington Church Street, who sponsored the exhibition; to Jero-boam's for supplying the wine; and to Sandra Kamen for allowing us to use the 20th Century Theatre and for the huge effort she put into mounting and hanging the exhibition.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO PLANNING PROCEDURES

The Association was asked by RBKC for its comments on three government consultation papers on changes to various aspects of planning procedures. In producing its responses the Association worked closely with the neighbouring Norland Conservation Society.

The first paper put forward proposals to enable householders to install micro-generation devices such as wind turbines, solar panels and heat pumps under the so-called "permitted development rules" rather than having to apply for planning approval. The Association argued strongly that it

was vital in Conservation Areas for such installation to go through normal planning procedures. This applies especially to wind turbines, which have to reach at least three metres above roof level in order to generate any significant supply of electricity. The visual impact in our area could be catastrophic.

A second paper dealt with proposals to relax the rules applying to householders wishing to alter their houses. Householders would be able to make much greater changes to the rear of their houses without planning approval. The Association felt that the changes that would be allowable were too sweeping to be acceptable in a Conservation Area. In the Ladbroke Area, with its many garden squares, the architecture of the backs of houses is as important as the front.

The third paper proposed a radical speeding up of the whole process of appealing against a planning decision. Appeals would have to be made within a few weeks of the decision rather than within a year as now, and many appeals would be dealt with by a panel of local councillors rather than by a planning inspector. This would result in most appeals being decided within a few months. Charges would be raised for lodging an appeal. The Association did not comment on this paper.

PORTOBELLO ROAD

Since the Ladbroke Association was extended in 2002 to include the most significant parts of the Portobello Road, we have had to broaden our understanding to encompass the vicissitudes of Shopfront Design.

In 1989, the Council produced an excellent "Portobello Road Shopfront Design Guide", which makes clear, for instance, that shop-fronts inserted into older buildings should not interfere with the original decorative features of the surround. Sadly not much notice seems to have taken of it. Indeed, until recently, it has not even been visible on the Planning Information Office shelves. We were delighted, however, that Portobello Road was given its own section in the Royal

Borough's Retail Commission Report A Balance of Trade. This was prepared by a distinguished team consisting of Sir Terence Conran, Andrew Ashendon (of the de Walden Estate), Denis McCoy (McCoy Associates), Robin Price (Kensington Society) and Peter Simon (Monsoon), chaired by the then Mayor, Tim Ahern, and published in May 2007. In September 2007, the Council adopted 54 of the 60 recommendations made in the report for the Borough as a whole, marking in particular that it "recognises the unique character of the Portobello Road" with its designation within the forthcoming Local Development Framework as a "Special District Centre".

An essential part of Portobello's unique character comes from the glimpses of old and elegant shop-fronts and between the chaotic and colourful market stalls and stands. Too many shop-fronts have been ruined by brash and insensitive alterations. So we hope that action will now follow words.

It is not just the shop-fronts that are important, but also features on the façades.



Pawnbroker's Balls Feature

Recently, for instance, one of London's last set of pawnbroker's balls (*see above*) disappeared from the front of number 158. They had been there over a hundred years. We think that the Council should make greater use of "Article 4" planning directions in the Portobello Road. Such directions mean that planning permission is needed for even mi-

nor changes to the façade. If one had applied to number 158, the pawnbroker's balls might still be there.

Robina Rose

PLANNING MATTERS

EDF Site / 20 Victoria Gardens

Over the past 18 months the Association has consistently told RBKC and others that, in its view, the development in isolation of the northern slice of the EDF site which had been sold to developers would prejudice the much needed redevelopment of the northern side of Notting Hill Gate and this remains our view.

The developers have now submitted a formal planning application. They propose to build nine terraced houses in a modern style on this sliver of land along the northern side of the site, south of the gardens of numbers 17 to 55 Ladbroke Road. Originally they proposed ten houses. The houses appear to be slightly bigger than proposed before. To give an idea of the size, the nine new houses back onto about 20 existing houses in Ladbroke Road. Although the new houses only have three storeys above ground (plus a "lower ground" floor), we think that they are far too big for such a small site and have made that clear to the Council.

The fronts of the houses would face the back gardens of Ladbroke Road and there would be pedestrian access to their front doors from Victoria Gardens. There would be a separate vehicular entrance also from Victoria Road, leading to an underground garage with 25 spaces. Our view is that, if houses are to be built on this part of the EDF site, it would be far better if it were a news-type development providing more and smaller houses. We also recommend that the residents of the new houses should not be eligible for residents parking.

Security gates and railings

On a much smaller scale, one recent application that worried the committee was for high iron railings with big electronic sliding gates in front of a house in Lansdowne Crescent, which it was argued were necessary for security rea-

sons – even though the neighbouring houses all have lower front walls or fences. This particular application has not yet been decided by the Council. But we are concerned lest perceived security threats should cause a proliferation of such prison-like barriers, quite out of keeping with the neighbourhood, and we very much hope that the Council will not allow this case to set a precedent.

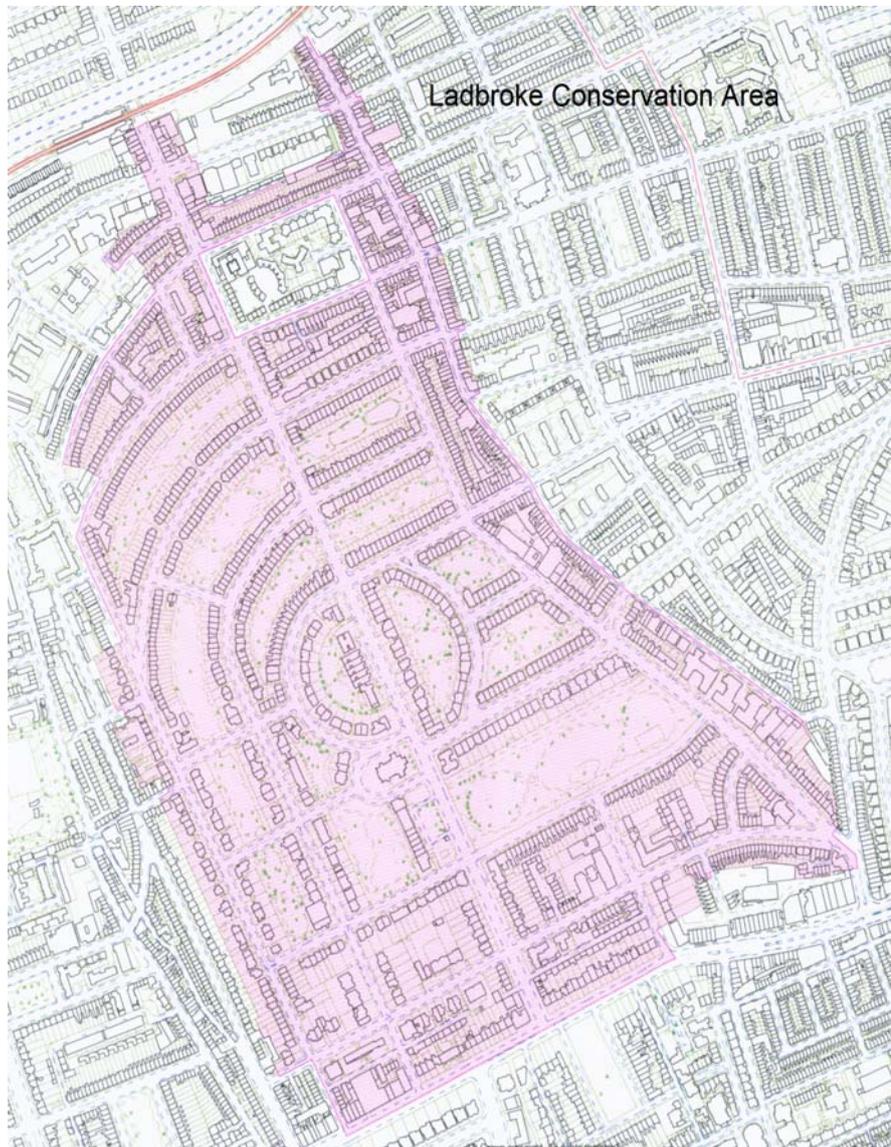
Modern buildings

Conservation associations are often seen as automatically opposing any building that is not in the style of the original architecture. The Ladbroke Association has always accepted, however, that historic neighbourhoods must continue to evolve and that well-planned modern buildings that fit well with their surroundings can enhance our neighbourhood. Indeed, we currently have architects on the committee who are themselves designers of modern buildings. So all modern developments are looked at strictly on their merits. There are some old but grotty buildings in our area that would positively benefit from a modern replacement, and one such in the view of the Committee was 76 Ladbroke Grove. This involved replacing the present one-story building with an elegant modern three-storey one that seemed to the committee to be well-designed and generally in keeping with the rhythm of the surrounding architecture even if quite different in kind.

MEMBERSHIP

We used to have a membership of some 400 people, but recently this has gone down as a result of members leaving the area. We hope that the photographic exhibition will have encouraged some new members. But we would be most grateful if existing members could also encourage any of their neighbours who are not already members to join. At £15 per annum for new members, it is a snip, and the extra resources will allow us to be more active in our work to protect and enhance the area. Membership forms can be downloaded from our website at:

www.ladbrokeassociation.org.uk



THE OFFICERS AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE LADBROKE ASSOCIATION

Officers:

President: Sir Angus Stirling

Chairman: David Corsellis

Hon Treasurer: Paul Bastick

Hon Secretary: Anne Chorley

Committee Members:

David Campion,

Maurice Frazer

Andrew Lamont,

Sandra Kamen,

David Marshall,

Peter Mishcon,

Malcolm Pawley,

Peggy Post,

Robina Rose.

Minutes Secretary: Teresa Flisek

Newsletter: Sophia Lambert

THE CONSTITUTION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE LADBROKE ASSOCIATION

The objects of the Society shall be to promote and encourage the following objects 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.

provided that the Association shall not join or be affiliated with any political party.

Anyone wishing to view the complete Articles of Association of the Ladbroke Association can do so via its website at:

www.ladbrokeassociation.org

Photos by David Campion. The artwork and layout for this Newsletter was composed by David Campion using the Adobe InDesign software. Printing was done by Prontoprint Notting Hill Gate.

TO JOIN THE LADBROKE ASSOCIATION

If you wish to join or support the Ladbroke Association, please complete this standing order form and send it to Paul Bastick, the Hon Treasurer, 75A Ladbroke Grove, W11 2PD. The minimum subscription is £15 for family or individual membership but many members pay more to support our activities. We would also greatly appreciate it if you could complete a Gift Aid Form which is available from the above address.

To:.....Bank plc Sort Code:

Address of Bank:

.....

Please pay to Barclays Bank plc, 212 Regent Street, PO Box 4BP, London W1A 4BP Sort Code: 20-71-74, immediately and thereafter on 1 April each year until further notice the sum of £..... for the credit of the Ladbroke Association (Account No: 80522635)

Signed..... Date.....

Address.....

.....

Postcode:.....