

711.506 LAD
K/15030/15

News from Ladbroke

The Newsletter of the Ladbroke Association

SPRING 1983

1 ARUNDEL GARDENS

In our last issue we mentioned another plan for the redevelopment of the site adjoining 1 Arundel Gardens. The existing building is on the south corner of Arundel Gardens and the land in question lies along Kensington Park Road. A first attempt at redevelopment was successfully resisted by the Council in 1967 and a further proposal was put forward in 1981. Then, the Council, with our support and that of many people living nearby, refused consent, and were upheld by the Department of Environment's Inspector at Appeal. The most recent scheme was for a six-storey extension to the existing building which would have comprised six self-contained flats and possibly a garage. The Association disliked what was proposed on architectural grounds, but even more strongly it deplored a plan which, in obliterating a whole open space would have further disturbed the balance between building and garden that is the unique feature of the Ladbroke Conservation Area. (The owners cheekily argued that to blot out the view was actually a virtue, in that to have done so would have hidden what they termed "excrescences" on the back of the Arundel Gardens' properties). As before, the Council refused consent, and an Appeal was held at the Town Hall on December 14th, with the Association giving evidence. We are happy now to report that the Appeal against the Council's decision not to allow building over the garden has been refused.

LADBROKE CONSERVATION AREA POSTCARDS

The Association has arranged for the reproduction of a set of 4 old postcards, depicting views within the Ladbroke Conservation Area. The views all date from around 1900, and the subjects portrayed are as follows:

1. Holland Park Underground Station.
2. Ladbroke Road and the Ladbroke Arms P.H.
3. Kensington Park Gardens and St. John's Church.
4. Stanley Gardens and St. Peter's Church.

The postcards, which have been reproduced in sepia tones, were selected from the Borough's postcard collection, and the Association is most grateful to the Borough both for allowing the Association free access to the collection, and for the efficient manner in which the necessary printing work was organised.

Copies of these postcards, which are available at a price of 6p each, can be obtained from Leslie Du Cane of Flat 1, Hanover Lodge, 14 Lansdowne Road, Holland Park, London, W11 3LW. It is also planned that they will be on sale at all future meetings of the Association.

KNIGHTS OF ST. COLUMBA

For years, the Association has held its meetings at the Knights of St. Columba Club in Lansdowne Road, which has now been sold. We shall miss its facilities. A proposal for developing the building for use as flats has been put forward, and is currently being considered by the Borough's Planning Committee. Our initial reaction is concern at the additional storey which would be added under this scheme, and a distinct lack of enthusiasm for some of the changes to the inside.

TREES: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

To coincide with National Tree Week last year the Borough organized the supply of trees (for planting in the Borough) to local residents through various conservation groups. The Ladbroke Association has selected a number of trees from the Borough list, and will be selling them either directly to residents or to the Garden Committees of the communal gardens in the Ladbroke Conservation Area.

The trees are about 2 feet high, and are easy to plant without stacks or elaborate preparation of the soil. They are suitable for planting in most front gardens. The trees cost 30p each.

LAST YEAR

The Association's Year runs from April to March and its activities are described by the chairman in his report to the Annual General Meeting, held last year on 21st June at the Knights of St. Columba Club, 11-13 Lansdowne Road.

Peter Thorold referred to a number of the more important planning applications, and in some detail to the Association's controversy with the Borough over our right to be consulted on changes in street-lighting. The Borough had argued that the introduction of new lamp-standards and lights in several streets was a matter of routine maintenance. The chairman was able to reassure the meeting that that contention had now been abandoned and to report that he and the vice-chairman had had a satisfactory meeting with Mr. Davies, the deputy director of Engineering and Works Services. We feel more confident of re-establishing good relations with this department, and Mr. Davies has in fact asked for the Association's help in notification of defective pavements in our area.

In its reviews of planning applications the Committee had become particularly alarmed at the pressure in the eastern part of the conservation area to allow alterations in the roof-lines of some of the most important terraces. Generally, the Association remained healthy. Membership, based as it is on households rather than individuals, had risen slightly to 324, and meetings had been very well attended. We had continued to hold the subscription at £1 level of 1976, although it would be wishful thinking to suppose that we could continue to do so much longer. No progress has been made, however, in strengthening our ties with Square Garden Committees or on joint ventures where we acted as sponsors. The Committee had considered the feasibility of publishing a booklet on stucco; happily, given its likely cost, the Borough are intending to issue an updated version of the Area Plan for Ladbroke which would include a section on stucco. They are enthusiastic about consulting us in advance. The Committee had also arranged for old photographs of the Ladbroke Area to be reprinted by the Borough in the form of postcards.

The chairman concluded by thanking the retiring members of the Committee - Elizabeth Bingham, Peter Chapman, Tim Herring, Tessa Reay - for all their work.

The Annual General Meeting voted in favour of the constitutional amendments circulated to all members before the meeting.

BOUNDARIES TO COMMUNAL GARDENS

Jeremy Lever writes:

As all must recognize, one of the main features of the Ladbroke area is the presence of the communal gardens. There are sixteen of them within the conservation area, each being controlled by a separate committee.

With limited financial resources, these committees have the difficult task of maintaining their gardens as well as making improvements. Requests for play equipment have to be balanced against the desire to secure the boundaries, plant new trees or the staging of social events. The decisions made by these committees not only affect those who use the gardens but also those who pass by outside.

In the past, the Ladbroke Association has applauded the work of the garden committees in planting suitable trees (and in fact has on occasion been able to give financial assistance), since they do so much to enhance the quality of the area as a whole. Recently the Association has had informal discussions on the possibility of setting up schemes which could be partly financed by grants from the Borough. It appears that the upgrading of the boundaries between the communal gardens and the highway is much favoured by them. Any scheme that a garden committee wishes to implement will require the co-operation of the Borough Council and it may be that the Ladbroke Association can help

THE COMMITTEE

The Committee for 1982/3 is as follows:— Peter Thorold (chairman), Ian Grant (vice-chairman), Hilda Edwards (hon. treasurer), Muriel Cosh (hon. secretary), Peter Austerfield, Leslie Du Cane, Kathleen Kinmonth, Jeremy Lever, David Marshall, Robert Meadows, June Park, Thomas Pakenham, David Posnett, Santa Raymond.

ACCOUNTS

At the 1982 Annual General Meeting, the Hon. Treasurer Hilda Edwards reported an increased income for the year to 31st March 1982 of £737 as against the previous year's £616. Expenditure was up to £611 from £514.

with advice and in acting as a coordinator to produce a unified result.

Glancing round the area it is apparent that security from intruders is a prime concern for most communal gardens. It is difficult to challenge the need for those defences, although some of them have obvious weaknesses and visually, most are extremely ugly. Concrete or metal posts and chain-link fencing, sometimes topped with barbed wire, is common in one area, while the inappropriate use of timber boarded fencing forms the boundary to another garden. Some gardens were fortunate not to have had their old railings removed during the war, but some committees have found it necessary to erect additional makeshift defences which are not always likely to be effective in keeping out unwanted visitors. One suspects that it is a question of finance rather than of aesthetics.

unwanted visitors. One suspects that it is a question of finance rather than of aesthetics.

With the present shortage of money

it may seem untimely to raise the subject now. However, we are confident that the Borough would be happy for the Ladbroke Association to submit proposals for one or two schemes which can be put into effect when times improve. The Association would welcome any comments, suggestions or

schemes for improving the boundaries between the communal gardens and the public highway. Solutions may be relatively simple; for example, the existing stucco walls may need painting to match the private garden walls at either end, or the boarding to be removed from between the railings when

suitable shrubs have been planted. However, it is more likely that new metal railings will be required. Please send your proposals to the chairman of the Ladbroke Association before the end of June 1983.

ST. JOHN'S PARISH CENTRE, 2, Lansdowne Crescent, W11

The Weld Trust

This charitable Trust was made in 1915 by Henry J. Weld who conveyed a property in Clarendon Road upon Trust to provide "a parish room and other premises for parochial purposes . . . and to equip and furnish the same . . . and to permit the said buildings . . . to be used with or without payment for the holding of services, meetings and Sunday Schools in connection with the Church of England and for such other parochial purposes as the Vicar or Incumbent . . . of St. John's shall think proper. . . Subject as aforesaid the Trustees shall permit (its use) for lectures, concerts, dramatic performances and other public or private entertainments and for meetings, classes and other assemblies connected with the parliamentary municipal and other elections or with religious philanthropic or other societies and for such ends, intents and purposes and upon such terms and conditions as the Trustees . . . think expedient (not being) inimicable (sic) to the welfare or contrary to the principles of the Church of England". The Trustees are the Vicar and Churchwardens of St. John's Church for the time being. The main Trust property later became part of the Church School in Clarendon Road and, upon the School being closed, the Trustees purchased 2 Lansdowne Crescent in 1968. Between 1968 and 1976 proposals for demolition and redevelopment were canvassed but the changing planning policy in favour of conservation rendered redevelopment impractical. In April 1977 the Secretary of State determined formally on a planning appeal by the Trustees that the

building should not be demolished. One of the main reasons for this decision was the fact that the property was situated in a Conservation Area. In 1974-5 proposals had been mooted for the Trust to provide a Parish Centre by the sale of 2, Lansdowne Crescent, and the adaptation of the internal arrangement of the West end of St. John's Church, so as to screen it off from the conventional part of the Church. This alternative had the dual disadvantages of resulting in a considerable sacrifice in the internal appearance of the Church and of being expensive in purely financial terms, and it was therefore abandoned.

The Clergy Houses Scheme

From 1976 to early 1979 plans and costings were prepared and canvassed with the Pastoral Committee of the Diocese and The Church Commissioners for the Commissioners to implement a Scheme proposed by the Trustees, advised by their architects and their surveyors, for two Clergy houses (one for St John's) to be provided, each with separate entrances, upon the upper floors of the building, whilst the Parish Centre of the Trust would be on the basement and ground floors. After initial refusal, both the Pastoral Committee and the Diocesan Synod resolved in the autumn of 1977 to support this Scheme and the Bishop of Kensington also favoured it. The Scheme for two Clergy houses and a Parish Centre foundered after a visit by two Church Commissioners to view the building in May 1979. It was the view of the Church Commissioners and their

surveyors and consulting engineers (contrary to the advice received by the Trustees) that both the condition of the building, which had been neglected and which was then structurally suspect, and its age (1845) were such as to render proposals for restoration to the standards of long term investment in Clergy Houses uneconomic. Despite strong representations from the Trustees and meetings between the respective surveyors, architects and engineers, the Commissioners were adamant and the project was abandoned. At this time the Incumbent of St. John's, who had been living in part of the property, was rehoused in temporary accommodation in Kensington Park Gardens.

The Development of 2, Lansdowne Crescent, W11

The Trustees had been advised that the building was now in such a parlous state that only a major reconstruction would be practicable. Since they were themselves unable to carry the considerable risks involved in such a reconstruction, they then, from June 1979, determined to see what could be arranged with a private developer. The inhabitable parts of the property were still occupied by a number of students, through arrangements with the West London Chaplaincy. It was agreed that vacant possession should be obtained, and this was secured by October 1979. The Trustees then had essential tidying up works undertaken by builders, and the upper floors of the property were placed on the open market early in 1980.

Meanwhile, the adjoining property at 63, Ladbroke Grove, (in a similarly depressed condition and formerly the Vicarage of St. John's Church) was sold by the Church Commissioners, and then refurbished as a private residence. At one stage the possibility of a joint development of both 2, Lansdowne Crescent, and 63, Ladbroke Grove, being undertaken by the Trust in conjunction with the Church Commissioners, had been envisaged.

By the early summer of 1980 the Trustees and their solicitors had formulated the appropriate documentation for the open market sale on long lease of the upper floors of the building to a developer who would create three or more flats for sale in the open market, and in consideration for the lease the developer would refurbish the roof, common drainage and other services and external walls of the building and would damp-proof the basement and refurbish the basement and ground floor as a Parish Centre for the Trust. Early in 1980 this scheme had also received the informal blessing both of the Charity Commissioners, who have to assent to all dealings in charitable trust property, and the Borough Planning Officer.

In the summer of 1980 Messrs Marsh & Parsons, who were assisting the Trust in connection with the proposed redevelopment, introduced the Trustees to Talbourne Limited, a small local development company with associated builders. Talbourne Limited had expressed interest in the proposed redevelopment; however, they required a major reorientation of the legal documentation, and, following intense negotiations during November and December 1980, the Trustees agreed in principle the terms of their deal with Talbourne Limited in January/February 1981. By May 1981 Talbourne Limited had obtained planning permission for development of the two upper floors and an additional floor to the building, with a roof terrace, and the conditions of a complex Agreement with an associated Lease of the upper floors to them for 150 years were virtually satisfied. Building works had begun and the works to be undertaken to the roof and

externals of the building, as well as a Specification of works to the Parish Centre on the ground floor and basement had been settled. The consent of the Charity Commissioners to the transaction had also been obtained.

The Building Work: Some Interesting Aspects

During 1979 and 1980 a rapid deterioration in the condition of the structure had taken place, to the extent that the central area of the roof and some of the flooring were literally in a state of collapse. If the building had been left to decay for much longer, then there would have existed the distinct possibility that it would have been classified as a Dangerous Structure. As it was, the Local Authority specified both that the building would have to be demolished down to the top of the first floor windows, and that the foundations would have to be underpinned, particularly at the corners of the building and at any projecting structure. Demolition work revealed that, in about 1890, extensive alterations had been made to the property. These alterations had been carried out to a high standard, and had resulted in a significant increase in the size of the building. Further alterations had been carried out in more recent times, but here the building work had been of poor quality.

2, Lansdowne Crescent, is a semi-detached house, which was built in about 1845 in the Tudor Gothic style. The planning permission for the development required that this style should, so far as the exterior of the building was concerned, be retained or, where necessary, restored. The Trustees were anxious to revive the Tudor Gothic features of the interior, especially with regard to the woodwork.

Architectural features discovered during the building work, and now preserved, include a number of fine Tudor-style arches and architraves, a set of very fine doors, and an ingenious shutter system for the main front windows. Regrettably, one door has been plastered over and "lost", fire prevention regulations making the re-use of this door impossible. Among other features retained are two fireplace replace-

ments, dating from around the turn of the century.

The original specification had required the preservation of a parquet floor in what is now part of the Parish Centre's first floor reception room. This parquet floor was inadvertently destroyed during the building work. However, in compensation for this loss, a modern parquet floor has been laid covering the entire floor area of this reception room. With regard to plasterwork, cornice mouldings have been replaced in the main rooms, and careful architectural treatment has been applied where R.S.J.s have been inserted, especially in the Parish Centre's first floor reception room.

As originally agreed, the Specification for interior restoration had been somewhat utilitarian, and it had not allowed for restoration to be carried out to the standard which the Trustees would ideally have wanted. As the building work progressed, it became apparent that the risk of structural failure had largely diminished. At this point the Trustees felt justified in approaching the developer and builder with the object of negotiating a number of concessions, regarding in particular the restoration of certain architectural features. In many instances the Trustees found the developer and builder to be most amenable to their suggestions.

As a result of being able to revise the original Specification, one beautiful feature, the plaster and wood ribbed vaulting of the rear garden entrance, was restored. In addition a set of the original shutters was retained, fire-proofed doors were mock panelled, and brass door and window furniture introduced.

The garden and grounds of the property are in the process of being improved. One notable piece of work, which has been carried out, was the restoration of the original railings, which separate the property's own garden off from the Lansdowne Crescent communal garden.

In 1981 2, Lansdowne Crescent received an Environment Award from the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, and a plaque recording this fact has been affixed

o the wall above the front door. The ward was presented to Mr Philip Vagner, who was the architect responsible for the development of the property.

, Lansdowne Crescent Today

St. John's Parish Centre occupies most of the basement and ground floors of the property. On the basement floor of the Parish Centre there are a large reception room, toilets, a store room and a kitchen. An original stone stair with iron banisters leads up to the ground floor, where there are a large

prestige-standard reception room, a kitchen and a cloakroom/toilet. The remainder of the basement and ground floors is occupied by a maisonette, which is owned by the Trust and which is let out on the open market as residential accommodation. This maisonette, which has been fitted out to a high standard, comprises a sitting room and a kitchen on the ground floor, with an entrance from the property's main hallway into an interior hall. Access to a bedroom and a bathroom, which are situated on the basement floor, is by means of a spiral staircase,

which descends to a lower hallway. The upper floors of the building are now divided into five flats of varying size. The developer obtained planning permission to create an extra storey, and at the top of the building there is now a sun room and a roof garden, from which there are extensive views to the north and west.

This article was compiled by Leslie Du Cane and based on an article written by Jeremy Francis, a former Churchwarden of St. John's Church, and on information supplied by George Scott.

GRANTS OF PUBLIC MONEY TO ASSIST BUILDING WORKS

Ian Grant writes:

In recent years the policy of making grants of public money to enable property owners to maintain or improve their buildings has gained much wider acceptance at all levels of Government, but many members of the public are themselves unfamiliar with the relevant legislation or how to set about obtaining any money.

It must of course be accepted that at the present time of financial stringency there is much less public money available than, say, two years ago, but given this factor, there are basically two types of grant aid. These are:—

1. Mandatory Grants
2. Discretionary Grants

The first category is hardly relevant to the Ladbroke Area, since it provides moneys for basic essentials such as indoor water closets and hot water supply where such amenities do not already exist, and these grants are closely related to rateable values at a level which is probably below any within the Conservation Area. On the other hand, there may be some money available through the Environmental Health Officer for works deemed to be of Public Benefit if they are to be executed within a General Improvement Area; such moneys will be at the discretion of

the Public Health Department however, and not mandatory.

In the second category, Discretionary Grants may be made by the Department of the Environment, the Greater London Council or the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council, and they in their turn are attracted by three different types of operation:—

1. Works to Listed Buildings (of which there are, at present, few in the Ladbroke Area).
2. Works on Group Schemes or Town Schemes, wherever these have been specifically designated. The Blenheim and Elgin Crescent Scheme has now ended, that for Kensington Park Terrace North still continues).
3. Cases deemed to be of

architectural or historic interest, if these are considered to be of communal rather than personal benefit (Mews Arches or railings fall into this category, and some grants have been made to key buildings in Conservation Areas). The Department of the Environment does not contribute to this category.

Finally, it should be borne in mind that if an application is to be made to any of the interested Authorities, they will require evidence of appropriate professional involvement in any scheme, and will also require the safeguard of three competitive tenders being obtained for the execution of the works.



A view of Holland Park Underground Station, dating from around 1900, as depicted on one of the Association's Postcards.

PLANNING

Ladbroke Gardens and Stanley Gardens

There has been a lot of activity in the eastern part of the area. This is partly generated by the Women's Pioneer Housing Association which owns a block of houses in Ladbroke Gardens and a block of houses in Stanley Gardens. The WPHA is in the process of upgrading its property and proposes to alter the roofs of these houses in order to improve or add to the accommodation. These houses form part of two of the grandest terraces in the area and the proposals would damage the character and unity of their roof lines. Moreover, the WPHA has not a good reputation for care and sensitivity in the way it treats the exteriors of its buildings in the Ladbroke Conservation Area.

Also in Ladbroke Gardens, the four houses forming the former Ladbroke Hotel are being converted into flats and maisonettes.

43 Ladbroke Square

The proposal to establish a music school instead of the former nursery school caused controversy and local opposition, and finally the proposal was turned down.

The Ladbroke Arms, Ladbroke Road

Proposed alterations to this well-used and much-loved 'local' included the building of a glazed canopy over the forecourt. In some ways this proposal was attractive, but its further implications and local opposition lead to the Planning Application being refused.

Lansdowne Mews

This mews has a mixture of residential and commercial property and there is a tendency for the commercial element to increase. This causes traffic congestion and has a damaging effect on the environment for the residential property.

The Association has expressed its views on all these matters to the Borough Planning Officer. However, the final decision does not always agree with the Association's views.

THE FRIENDS OF HOLLAND PARK

Leslie Du Cane writes:

The Friends of Holland Park are a local amenity group of some 400 members whose aim is to improve and protect the unique and beautiful character of Holland Park. They have the following objectives:

1. To preserve both the natural areas and the historic layout of the Park.
2. To monitor any changes which may be proposed by the Greater London Council and to make known local feeling about the changes.
3. To work towards a reduction in vandalism in the Park.
4. To make positive contributions towards improving the Park, such as the donation of trees, nest-boxes, benches, etc.
5. To organise walks and lectures on the many interesting aspects of the Park.

More specifically, each month the Friends arrange for a conducted bird-watching walk, during which on any one occasion some 20 different species of bird will be spotted. To date more than 50 different species of bird have been seen in the Park. Another regular monthly activity of the Friends is that of tending those young trees that have been donated to the Park by the Friends.

In addition, the Friends are currently in the process of creating a nature trail, with the object of stimulating greater public awareness of the unexpectedly wide variety of flora that is to be found in the Park. To give just one example, there are more than 10 species of oak tree growing within the Park.

The Friends naturally encourage the use of the various facilities which the Park provides, and from time to time they arrange for their events to be held in the Orangery. This spring they are holding an exhibition of paintings, drawings and sculpture there, and the Orangery is to be the setting for a concert to be given by the Bryanston Chamber Orchestra. The object of such activities, and other social functions arranged by the Friends, are fourfold, namely:

1. Fund raising.
2. To gain favourable publicity for the Friends.
3. To interest members.
4. To attract new members.

Membership of the Friends of Holland Park brings with it an entitlement to receive the Friends' quarterly newsletter. This newsletter gives details of coming events and usually includes a small number of articles of general interest. A recent development has been the printing of a seasonal sonnet in each issue of the newsletter.

Enquiries concerning membership should be addressed to, and details of subscriptions etc. are obtainable from, the Secretary of the Friends of Holland Park, who is Mr C.W. Wood of 48A, Addison Road, London W14 8JH.

CHANGE OF EDITOR

During 1982 Peter Chapman retired from his position as Editor of the Association's Newsletter. While he was Editor, Peter was responsible for many improvements in the layout and style of the Newsletter, and the Association wishes to record its gratitude to Peter for his valued contribution to the Association's work.

The Editor of the Association's Newsletter is now Leslie Du Cane.

The new Editor would like to apologise for the absence of an Autumn Newsletter last year. This absence was the result of pressure of work during the latter part of last year. By way of compensation, this Newsletter is, and it is planned that the coming Autumn Newsletter will be, longer than usual.

**The Ladbroke Association,
41 Ladbroke Square,
London W11.**