

News from Ladbroke

The Newsletter of the Ladbroke Association

Spring 1977

PROFESSOR E.M. CARUS-WILSON

The Association has suffered a sad loss through the sudden death of our Chairman, Professor Eleanor Carus-Wilson. Her many and internationally acclaimed academic achievements have already been described in the long obituary in "The Times", but this gave little idea of her own delightful personality.

Professor Carus-Wilson was a founder member of the Ladbroke Association and became the Association's second Chairman. We shall deeply miss her charm, tact and effectiveness on the Committee, and the Association will be the poorer without the devoted and extensive work which she carried out on its behalf, in her quiet and unobtrusive way.

1. PLANNING

PLANNING FORUMS

A series of meetings described as "Forums" have been called by the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council in order to enable local residents and representatives of local societies to discuss the group of Context Papers on Borough affairs, prepared by the Council's officers.

The findings of these "Forums" will be incorporated into the Borough Development Plan, which the Council is required, by law, to prepare. The findings will be submitted to the Department of the Environment by the end of 1977 and will determine future planning strategy for the next 10 years.

Members of the "Forums" have been drawn from the Pembridge, Norland, Avondale and Colville Wards. Although local problems vary somewhat between one Ward and another, the combination has provided a considerable cross-section of local opinion and interest, and discussion so far has been constructive and wide-ranging.

The "Forums" which have already considered papers on "Movement", "Social and Community Services" and "Shopping", meet approximately once in every three weeks and will continue to do so until June. An extra meeting was recently given over to discussion of and support for the Kensington and Chelsea Corporation Bill, which is at present under consideration in Parliament.

The Ladbroke Association Committee is also submitting written comments on the "Forum" papers to the Borough Council.

EXTENSION TO THE NORLAND CONSERVATION AREA

The Association was recently asked for its views on the incorporation into the Norland Conservation Area of the piece of land which lies between it and the Ladbroke Area. Mr. Ian Grant, Acting Chairman of the Ladbroke Association, replied to the Council, as follows:

"Proposed extensions to the Norland Conservation Area"

... "The Committee of the Ladbroke Association has now been able to consider the question, and whilst the members appreciate fully the remarks and the bearing of your report, they are, nonetheless, in favour of the proposed extensions to the Norland Conservation Area.

"My Committee is of the opinion that the disadvantage of the possible "sterilisation" of the area which might be capable of redevelopment would be outweighed by the advantages to be derived from the extra controls which Conservation Areas enjoy.

"It seems to my Committee that a "laissez-faire" situation, if allowed to continue in an area as sensitive as that which is bounded by two Conservation Areas of "Outstanding Architectural and Historic Interest", might eventually result in such a situation as is to be found in, say, St. James's Gardens, which is completely dominated by unsympathetic high rise blocks in a neighbouring locality."

RESTORATION OF ARCH, STANLEY GARDENS SOUTH

The Association has given its full support to the proposal by the Stanley Gardens South Committee to restore the ruined arch which gives access from the gardens into the centre of Kensington Park Gardens.

It is the Garden Committee's intention that the restoration should mark the Queen's Jubilee Year. Grants of money have been applied for from the Department of the Environment and the Greater London Council.

HIPPODROME PLACE

The Association has been pressing, with successful results, for the closure of Hippodrome Place to vehicular traffic. The narrowness of the carriageway and pavements, the blind corners and the constant use of this road by school children, all combine to make it a dangerous hazard. Its exclusive right to pedestrians is much needed. It will be replaced, for vehicular traffic, by a small slip road linking Walmer Road and Portland Road, across the north end of Hippodrome Mews. Although, strictly speaking, Hippodrome Place lies outside the Ladbrooke Area, many members of the Association who live nearby on the western edge of the Area have expressed concern about the dangers of Hippodrome Place for the pedestrian.

77 LADBROKE ROAD, W.11.

The Association has opposed the granting of Planning Permission to use this house as a language school for adult pupils. The Association believes that the building should provide residential accommodation and will always strongly resist the encroachment of office and business usage round the edges of the Ladbrooke Area.

It is understood that the Council is taking enforcement action to end the present use of 77 Ladbrooke Road.

22 HOLLAND PARK AVENUE, W.11.

The applicants are appealing against the Council's decision to refuse Planning Permission for certain alterations and additions to this house.

The Association is supporting the Bouncil in its refusal, and the Committee does not consider that the proposed alterations are in harmony with the existing early 19th century character of the building.

2. CONSERVATION GRANTS FOR 'TOWN SCHEMES' IN LADBROKE

There is provision in the 1972 Town and Country Planning Act for financial aid to be given, on the advice of the Historic Buildings Council, to assist with the preservation or enhancement of outstanding Conservation Areas. The Ladbrooke Conservation Area has been classified as "outstanding". It therefore qualifies for conservation grants. Projects which attract such grants are sometimes called "Town Schemes".

It is important to realise that the particular characteristic of "Town Schemes" is that they apply to areas or groups of buildings – **not** to individual buildings. Grants for the restoration of individual buildings may normally be made by the Borough Council or the G.L.C., whereas grants for "Town Schemes" are made by the Department of the Environment.

There appear to be three types of strategy, each or all of which might be chosen for a "Town Scheme" in the Ladbroke Estate.

1. Specific and Concentrated

This would involve the choice of a specific area, street or group of buildings for a scheme of restoration and enhancement. One of the more complete and outstanding terraces of houses might be chosen, such as Kensington Park Terrace North. Here the scheme could involve the restoration of such features as cornices and decorative ironwork to the balconies, and also the co-ordination of the painting of the facades.

A more ambitious example would be a scheme for the enhancement of a fine street such as Kensington Park Gardens. This would involve not only the restoration of the buildings, but also improvement of the street by the possible modification of pavements, more aesthetic street furniture and tree planting.

2. General and Dispersed

This would be a scheme for general enhancement throughout the Estate which might include the planting of trees and shrubs in suitable places in streets and gardens, the improvement of lamp standards, street furniture and the railings of communal gardens. The communal gardens are a most important aspect of the Ladbroke Estate and the cooperation of their management committees would be vital to the success of such a scheme.

3. Indirect

A scheme aimed indirectly at enhancement could be sponsored by the Ladbroke Association and the Borough Council. Such a scheme might involve published information giving guidance on restoration to building owners to whom restoration kits could be made available. These kits could include drawings, moulds for cornices, templates and spare parts for decorative plaster and metalwork.

In devising a "Town Scheme" it is important to consider how it would be put into operation and what problems might be associated with this. It seems that the fewer the parties involved in a scheme, the easier it is to put it into practice. An example of a most straightforward scheme would be one involving only a single owner or the Borough Council. An example of a complicated and difficult scheme would be a terrace of houses each in separate ownership or not owner-occupied. Here it would be necessary to get all the owners to agree to the scheme and to their share of the cost.

Royal Crescent is a local example of a "Town Scheme". This was started in connection with Architectural Heritage Year. The Department of the Environment and the Kensington Borough Council are both paying 25% of the cost of the restoration, leaving 50% to be paid by the house owners. This scheme is being co-ordinated by the Royal Crescent Residents' Association. The Ladbroke Association is giving active consideration to the promotion of similar schemes.

3. COMMUNAL GARDENS IN THE LADBROKE CONSERVATION AREA

The Ladbroke Association has always been anxious to promote liaison between Garden Committees who are responsible for the maintenance of the communal gardens in the Ladbroke Conservation Area. These gardens form an integral part of the original lay-out of the Ladbroke Estate and remain a unique and significant feature of this area. They are an important amenity to the households which subscribe to their upkeep and are a visual pleasure for everyone in the area.

Of the thirteen gardens in the Ladbroke Estate, eight are administered under the Town Gardens Protection Act of 1863 and the remaining five are administered under the Kensington Improvement Act of 1851. The Garden Committees are understandably conscious of the authority vested in them by this legislation and it is essential that this autonomy is preserved, since individual gardens differ in character, size and appeal.

The Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (in particular Mr. J. Barrett of the Rates Office) are most helpful in supplying copies of the relevant Acts which define the responsibilities of Garden

Committees, to whom they also provide, annually, the lists of garden rates levied by each communal Garden Committee.

A brief survey of matters affecting all communal gardens in the Conservation Area, was recently made by the Arundel and Ladbroke Gardens Committee. The results were circulated to all those who gave information.

The Association is concerned to be of assistance over problems of garden maintenance and to provide information on general matters affecting the communal gardens many of which are severely affected by the ravages of Dutch Elm Disease. The consequent expense of tree felling and replanting and most of the other garden problems are not unique to an individual garden. An exchange of information could often help reduce garden expenditure through joint action rather than "going it alone".

The Ladbroke Association Committee hopes that the Conservation Area Gardens Committees will wish to supply, each year, information of common interest and concern along the lines of the recent survey initiated by the Arundel and Ladbroke Gardens Management Committee.

4. KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA CORPORATION BILL 1976-1977

Many people will already know of this Bill which the Council is promoting. It has had two readings in the Commons and comes before the House of Lords Committee in May before going to its third reading. The general aims of the Bill are to close loop-holes in existing legislation.

The Committee of the Ladbroke Association has considered this Bill and given its support to particular sections. It is also preparing evidence for the House of Lords Committee. The sections the Association Committee felt able to support deal with the following matters, all of which are important to this Conservation Area.

Sections 3, 4 and 5. These give the Council power to require an owner to restore a building whose neglected appearance is detrimental to the amenities of the neighbourhood. If the owner defaults, the Council could do the work and claim the cost.

Section 6. This gives the Council closer planning control over change of use from one kind of shop to another. The aim is to prevent local food and other amenity shops from being squeezed out of the district. This Section also seeks power to prevent "Speculative demolition".

Section 12. This is concerned with the dumping of refuse outside commercial premises. It gives the Council power to prevent and control this.

Section 17. This gives the licensing justices the power to refuse an application for a liquor licence for a restaurant or guest house if it can be shown that the granting of it would lead to disturbance in a residential neighbourhood.

Copies of this Bill or a summary of it can be obtained from the Borough Solicitor at the Town Hall. Members of the Association are urged to look into this matter and to support the Bill.

5. MEMBERS' MEETING

A large and appreciative audience of members and guests came to Mr. Ian Grant's talk on March 14th. Under the title "A full frontal look at Notting Hill Stucco", Mr. Grant showed how far the Conservation Area still falls short of the ideal. An excellent selection of colour slides indicated buildings mutilated by missing architectural features or ruined by inappropriate additions and infilling. There was no lack of horrible examples, albeit shown both tactfully and amusingly. It is hoped that the lecture and illustrations can be kept for future reference.

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