

# News from Ladbroke

The Newsletter of the Ladbroke Association

AUTUMN 1981

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 13th Annual General Meeting of the Association was held on Tuesday 23 June at the Knights of St Columba, 11 Lansdowne Road. After the Chairman had given a general review of the Association's activities during the year, there was a discussion of a number of topics, among them the concern of members to establish closer links for mutual benefit with Garden Committees.

The Committee for 1981/1982 is as follows:

Peter Thorold (Chairman), Ian Grant (Vice-Chairman), Hilda Edwards (Hon Treasurer), Muriel Cosh (Hon Secretary), Elizabeth Bingham, Peter Chapman, Leslie DuCane, Timothy Herring, Kathleen Kinmonth, Jeremy Lever, Robert Meadows, Thomas Pakenham, Tessa Rae, Santa Raymond.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

The increase in membership reported in the last issue of "News from Ladbroke" was reflected in the rise of subscription income from £308 to £433, and total income had exceeded expenditure by £101 (1979/1980, £80). Association funds now amounted to £955.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

*The following article is by the Borough's Deputy Mayor, Councillor David Campion, who has been constantly helpful to the Association. The Committee takes the advice he gives most seriously and will be considering what further schemes we can help promote. Anyone else with suggestions should notify them to Peter Thorold, 14 Clarendon Road, W.11.*

The Ladbroke Association has been very successful in encouraging the restoration of both individual and groups of buildings, such as the Elgin and Blenheim Crescent improvements and the scheme for Kensington Park Road (North). Although the responsibility for implementing improvements and/or restoration work to any house is ultimately the task of individual property owners, including the raising of the necessary finance, the initial encouragement to embark on such an undertaking needs a body such as the Ladbroke Association to generate enthusiasm, and potential grant-aiding bodies such as the Borough Council, the GLC and the Department of the Environment to offer at least some financial incentive.

At a time of financial stringency it has not really been surprising that the amount of money available for grants has been cut back: neither the GLC nor the DOE has in fact made much, if any, contribution to their parts of individual grants recently, although the Borough Council, having allocated funds to the schemes in the Ladbroke Conservation Area, has tried in as many cases as possible to honour its share to individual property owners.

In fact, Kensington and Chelsea

Council has only had a budget of approximately £2,000 to put towards grants during 1981/1982, which are administered by the Town Planning Committee. This has however been supplemented by the "Brighten Up the Borough" fund which was set up from profits obtained via the now defunct lottery. These limited funds apply to the Borough as a whole.

It is certainly to be welcomed that the Town Planning Committee's budget for 1982/1983 has been raised to £10,000 with a view to providing additional funding for improvement and restoration work in conservation areas; it is obviously hoped that this increase will not need to be cut back during the next year in any round of savings which may be necessary.

What should the Ladbroke Association be doing now in the present financial climate in looking for ways of enhancing the conservation area? It is of course competing with both individual property owners and other conservation groups in the rest of the Borough for any funds available.

Two points come immediately to mind. Firstly, it is a considerable help to have one or more schemes in the pipe-line ready to receive funding at the beginning of the financial year in April. Secondly, since funds are

limited, it is almost certainly best to go for schemes that produce the maximum environmental impact for the minimum cost; such an approach is likely to be looked at more favourably by the Planning Committee than schemes requiring a large slice of its limited budget.

One possibility, which ought to be seriously considered, is one or more schemes for dealing with front garden walls and gates on a group basis, i.e. a complete terrace rather than individual properties. Certainly, to the pedestrian in the Ladbroke area, the immediate street-scape of garden walls may well be more readily apparent than any improvements made to the buildings themselves, which are further away and often either partially or completely screened by trees in many cases.

Such an approach ought to be attractive in view of the history of planning control which has not really provided the means for controlling front garden walls, particularly in the case of owner-occupied properties, except in cases where Article 4 Directions have been made. Many a terrace has, with very little doubt, been spoiled by one or more owners making gaps in their front garden walls so as to enable cars to be parked in the front gardens.

The question of car parking in front gardens is of course one which can easily lead to heated arguments about the rights of a property owner to do

what he wishes with his own car on his own property. Nevertheless it must surely be right that a conservation society, like the Ladbroke Association, made up of a group of individuals, should be capable of discerning and encouraging an approach to this subject where individual rights may need to be subjugated for the benefit of property owners collectively and the area as one of "outstanding historical interest". There is good reason to suggest that, in fact, both individual and group enhancement schemes increase the values of properties in the long term.

## PLANNING

### Campden Hill Road/Notting Hill Gate junction

The GLC proposes to carry out a traffic experiment at this busy junction in order to reduce the number of accidents. Traffic from Campden Hill Road will not be allowed to turn right into Notting Hill Gate for a trial period and the effect on accidents will be observed. One of the side effects of this right turn ban may be to increase traffic in the adjacent side streets. For example, traffic from Campden Hill Road wishing to go up Kensington Park Road or Pembridge Road may well use Ladbroke Terrace and Ladbroke Road. The Association was asked to comment on this proposal, and concern was expressed at the possible increase in traffic in the side streets of the adjacent Conservation Areas. It was urged that, during the experimental period, the effect on traffic flows should be carefully monitored, and that if there is an increase in traffic in the adjacent Conservation Areas, the experiment should be reconsidered and an alternative solution to the problem sought.

### 1 - 7 Ladbroke Road - Bulmer Mews

Proposals are still being made to develop the back land, at present occupied by a garden centre. The latest proposal is for a terrace of five "Neo-Georgian" houses opening on to an extended Bulmer Mews. These houses would be almost invisible from the adjacent streets, and this proposal is the most acceptable so far. But it remains questionable on the grounds of over-development.

### Kensington Temple

The current activity at this important landmark building may be causing local concern. The accommodation in the building is being radically reorganised and modernised to meet the demands of its thriving activities. The changes being made are mainly inside the building, but there are two external changes. First, there is to be a new staircase built on the Ladbroke

Road side of the building to serve the upper levels. The enclosing wall of this staircase will be faced with stone to match that of the existing building. At the front of the building the existing entrances will not in future open directly on to flights of steps down to ground level, but they will open on to a podium or raised platform which projects from the front of the building. The main approach will be from Kensington Park Road up a flight of steps on to the new podium. There will be a secondary approach from Ladbroke Road with special facilities for invalid wheelchairs. The space under the podium will be an extension to the crypt.

In commenting on these proposals the Committee of the Association stressed the importance of this corner site, the need for care and sensitivity in the detailed design of the new works and the re-instatement of the garden area in front of the building. One benefit accruing from this work will be the elimination of the rather untidy gravelled area in front of the building which was used for casual car-parking.

### 36 Ladbroke Grove

This house forms part of the important terrace at the top of the hill in Ladbroke Grove. It has been empty for many years and was in a derelict condition. Over the years, numerous attempts have been made to get the owner or the Council to take action. Eventually the Council sought powers of Compulsory Purchase and this precipitated the sale of the house. Proposals for converting it into flats included the addition of a storey in a mansard roof to form an upper maisonette. In commenting on these proposals, the Committee felt that, as adjacent houses already had mansard roofs, the additional storey was acceptable provided that it corresponded in detail design with that of the adjacent houses. The Committee also called for a full re-instatement of all the architectural details of the house and also the ornamental balustrade to the front garden.

The end house of this terrace which forms the corner of Kensington Park Gardens was recently restored by the new owners. They are now arranging for the trees and shrubs on the corner to be pruned and for their part of the garden balustrade wall to be restored. So we can look forward to the removal of a long-standing and prominent eye-sore when all work to the two properties is completed.

### 2 Lansdowne Crescent

Many people have expressed regret that planning approval was given for an additional storey to be built on this house, fearing that this increase in the bulk of the building will damage its visual relationship with the adjoining old rectory and with St

John's Church. The work is now going ahead and it is important to ensure that the detailed design is sympathetic to the qualities of the adjacent buildings.

### 1 Arundel Gardens

This house is actually on Kensington Park Road, terminating the terrace on the south side of Arundel Gardens. Like the other houses in the terrace, it has a small garden which adjoins the communal garden, but it also has a frontage to Kensington Park Road. At present this garden is used largely as a car-park.

Planning approval was sought for a six-storey block of flats which formed an extension to the house and was built over the greater part of the garden. The Committee considered this proposal wrong in principle. In addition to which, the detailed design was very crude. The Council took the same view and planning approval was refused on several grounds including obtrusiveness, over-development, and detraction from environmental quality and residential amenity.

However, the owners of the property lodged an appeal against this decision. The appeal was not heard in public, but the DOE inspector called for papers to be submitted. The Association, on behalf of its three hundred members, submitted a letter entirely supporting the Council's reasons for refusal. In addition a number of members and local residents submitted letters supporting the Council.

We have now heard that the appeal has been dismissed. This is a very important case. If approval or even qualified approval had been given, a dangerous precedent would have been set for other developments in the area. The Council is to be congratulated on the outcome of case.

## BARBICAN ARTS CENTRE

The Barbican Centre for Arts and Conferences is due to open in March and will contain a 2000-seat concert hall, a theatre, three cinemas, a library, a gallery for exhibitions, restaurants and conference rooms. It is an enormous project. One of our members, Mr David Mizen, a Common Councilman of the City, has kindly offered to arrange a guided tour of the centre for the Association before the official opening. There will be no charge.

Would those interested please notify the Hon. Secretary Miss Muriel Cosh, 20 Kensington Park Gardens, W.11 so that the date and time can be arranged.

# THE PARISHES OF ST. JOHN AND ST. PETER

A matter of considerable importance to the Ladbroke Area has recently been made public, and this is the proposed eventual amalgamation of the parishes of St. John and St. Peter. On the 15th September the Bishop of Kensington addressed a meeting of parishioners of St. Peter's to explain how the situation stands at present, having already done the same to a meeting at St. John's.

It appears that central city parishes all over the country are "over-manned" in terms of the proportion of clergy to parishioners, due to the changing patterns of worship and of population movement, and the Church must, understandably, endeavour to rationalise such anomalies. In his talk to the St. Peter's parishioners, the Bishop explained that he proposes to appoint a joint incumbent for the two parishes who has "no involvement in their previous history", and in due course he will expect the two congregations to merge. It need hardly be said that several important questions are raised by this issue which will all need to be answered before the matter is satisfactorily resolved.

For the congregations it would seem that agreement involving certain changes in the pattern of worship will need eventually to be reached, since this differs somewhat in the two churches; the matter of the future redundancy of one of the two buildings will also have to be faced and decided, and this is certainly the problem with the greatest impact on the environment of the Ladbroke Area.

It would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to arrive at an objective judgement about which of the two churches is the more architecturally important to the district. St. John's,

the older of the two, announces its presence by its great soaring spire, brilliantly and breathtakingly sited right on the crown of the hill which marks the centre of the Ladbroke Estate. It rises high above all the surrounding houses and trees, affirming in the language of Gothic architecture the supremacy of spiritual and intellectual values over the material world. St. Peter's, built some ten years after St. John's, and without the advantage of spectacular siting, may be said to be rather more subtle in the effect that it exercises over its surroundings. Although it too stands at the end of the vista of one of the area's most architecturally important streets, it is the unexpected glimpse of the pretty tower and its clock over the rooftops and at odd angles that underlines this building's contribution to the metropolitan scene.

Internally, St. Peter's is incomparably the better building. The rather austere lobby admits the visitor firstly into a low space under the western gallery, but beyond this rises the huge colonnade of the great classical nave, closed at its eastern end by the mosaic-clad apse that Charles Barry junior added to the building in 1879. The classical style (and this is said to be the last classical church built for the Church of England during the nineteenth century) is beautifully developed at St. Peter's, with all the

rich self-confidence that the Victorians possessed in such abundance; the result is an architectural monument of great importance.

Furthermore, a choice between the two buildings is hardly possible on the grounds of the superiority of one structure over the other. Every sixty years or so every building seems to require extensive repair and attention, and each of these two is at about the end of its second cycle. The Bishop has in fact called for the production of a structural survey of each building in due course, but it is doubtful whether either will be found to be in much better condition than the other, though St. Peter's is unfortunately the one that requires the more immediate attention at the present time.

Whichever of the two churches is eventually declared redundant, the demolition of either would be an environmental disaster for the area, and every possible effort must be made to find an alternative use which will ensure preservation. Many happy examples exist of the imaginative adaptation of churches to purposes other than worship, and these two buildings demand the most skilful and sympathetic handling if they are to continue to fulfill their essential roles in the townscape.

The Ladbroke Association and its members must feel a deep concern about this important matter, and must use every effort to ensure that the eventual outcome embodies a satisfactory solution in both ecclesiastical and environmental terms.

## CONSERVATION POLICY AND ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS

In September the Borough's Planning Committee agreed the draft of the Conservation Area Policy Statement for the Norland Estate, our neighbours to the west. This statement is the latest in the series which started in 1976 with the Ladbroke Estate. Norland's will soon be followed by a similar document for the Pembridge area on our eastern boundary.

The Ladbroke policy statement must be known to many of you especially if you have made alterations to your house or if your solicitor made a "search" prior to your buying accommodation in this area. It is the Council's policy to make the Conservation Area Policy statement known to those making the search or those obtaining planning application forms. In any case a copy can be obtained from the Planning Department at the Town Hall. (The same Department, incidentally, has lists of firms who make iron railings, stucco mouldings and replacement windows).

Another document which came before the Planning Committee is the

"Urban Conservation and Historic Buildings: Lists and Maps of Protected Areas and Buildings" 1st edition April 1981 (also obtainable from the Planning Department, price £1).

This publication simply details:

- (1) all properties in the Borough's Conservation Areas (Ladbroke is Area 3);
- (2) every listed building in these areas (there are about 45 Grade II in this area);
- (3) Ancient Monuments;
- (4) properties which are subject to "Article 4 Directions";
- (5) all buildings of "historic interest" and those buildings with "historical connections";

- (6) all Residents Associations, Tenants Associations, Garden Committees (there are 14 in Ladbroke area), Amenity Societies and Local Planning Forums.

Of all these lists possibly the most important is the identification of properties where Article 4 Directions have been made. This is being emphasised because it is an updating of the Statement made in the Ladbroke Conservation Area Policy document (Section 6, items 6.3 and 6.4).

These directions apply to particular properties which have the effect that certain types of work which would normally be "permitted development" now require planning permission. No building in a Conservation Area may be altered or extended in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest without Listed Building Consent having first been obtained.

The exceptions to this include buildings of less than 115 cubic metres and other permitted development under Class I schedule 1 of the 1973 Town & Country Planning General Development Order. This applies to a "dwelling-house" i.e. a single family dwelling. Class II of the same order relates to minor works, for example, construction of gates,

fences, walls or other means of enclosure. Therefore, where Article 4 Directions have been made on named properties, it is obligatory to obtain planning permission for works which would normally have been allowed under "permitted development". Members of the Association may be interested in a complete list of affected properties in the Area, and this is set out below.

The difficulty of putting planning legislation into laymen's language has been recognised by the Council since their companion to the booklet described above will be a guide to the legislation and hopefully will be available within the next few months.

The properties subject to Article 4 Directions are:

<u>Street</u>	<u>Properties</u>	<u>Classes</u>
Clarendon Road	52	I(1-4), II(1)
Elgin Crescent	120	I(4), II(2)
Holland Park Avenue	2, 4, 6, 24-32 even	II(1)
Horbury Mews	11, 12	I(1)
Kensington Park Gardens	Entrance to Ladbroke Sq Gardens between Nos 9 and 10	II(1)
Kensington Park Road	126-136, 142, 144, 148, 152-158, 164-174, 178-182 even	I(1, 2, 4)
Ladbroke Road	126-184 even	II(1, 3)
Lansdowne Road	Kensington Temple	II(1)
	Lansdowne House	II(1)
	2-12 even	II(1)
	2, 4, 6, 10, 12	I(1), (2), (4)
	53	I(1, 2)
St John's Gardens	St John's Church	II(1)
Stanley Crescent	10, 11	II(1)
Stanley Gardens	1, 3-29 cons	II(1)
	8, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20	I(1-4)

## AUTUMN MEETING

Sir Hugh Casson, KCVO, President of the Royal Academy, was the speaker at the Association's Autumn Meeting held at the Knights of St. Columba on Tuesday 6 October. Sir Hugh (a member of the Association), taking the theme "Future of the Past", analysed the problems connected with conservation ("Preservation should be positive, not embalming") with a wit and vitality which delighted his packed audience.

The Ladbroke Association,  
41 Ladbroke Square,  
London W11.