

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Formal Notice is enclosed of the Annual General Meeting of the Association, to be held at 8.30 pm on Tuesday 14 July 1970 at the Knights of St Columba Club, 11 Lansdowne Road, W.11.

As agreed at the Inaugural Meeting last year, the entire Executive Committee will on this occasion retire. Members of the Association are invited to send in their nominations for the election of the Officers and Committee for next year. Nominations must be in writing, and supported by a seconder. The consent of the proposed nominee must first have been obtained. Officers and members of the present Committee are eligible for re-election to the Committee, which is not to exceed ten in addition to the Officers. In the event of nominations exceeding this maximum a ballot will be held.

Please send in nominations to The Secretary, 25 Ladbroke Grove, W.11, so as to arrive not later than Saturday 11 July.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: The Executive Committee appointed at or subsequent to the Inaugural Meeting is as follows:

Chairman: Mr Angus Stirling, 25 Ladbroke Grove, W.11.

Secretary: Mrs Angus Stirling, 25 Ladbroke Grove, W.11.

Treasurer: Mr Quintin Bridge, 19 Lansdowne Road, W.11.

Mr Peter de Brant, 5 Lansdowne Walk, W.11.

Professor E. Carus-Wilson, 14 Lansdowne Road, W.11.

Mr Ian Grant, 41 Ladbroke Square, W.11.

Mrs John Kinmonth, 70 Ladbroke Road, W.11.

Mr Oliver Lodge, 9 Lansdowne Crescent, W.11.

Mr Robert Meadows, 19 Stanley Crescent, W.11.

Mr E.V. Notcutt, 36 Clarendon Road, W.11.

Professor Hugh Thomas, 29 Ladbroke Grove, W.11.

The following are among the topics which have received the Committee's attention:

CONSTITUTION: The Association's constitution has been approved and we are registered as a Charity by the Charity Commissioners.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS: We have established regular communication with the Planning Department of the Borough Council and, when appropriate, the GLC. The Committee received advance notice of all outstanding planning applications; in a number of cases we have

expressed our opinion and recommendations to the Council where we felt particular developments would have an adverse effect on the neighbourhood. Whilst the majority of these have so far been minor developments in themselves, they have often embodied some more far-reaching principle, and it has been to this larger issue that we have tried to draw the Council's attention in each case.

A particularly disturbing example is the increasing extent to which 'infilling' is taking place between pairs of early Victorian houses in several parts of the Ladbroke Estate. A member of the Association has been active in trying to marshal resistance to this type of encroachment in Clarendon Road, and we have also taken the matter up with the Council.

Development of this kind tends to destroy the architectural rhythm of solid and void which is part of the essential character of much of the original town planning of this district, and which gives distinction to streets such as Clarendon Road. It is unsatisfactory that no provision exists to protect groups or series of buildings of this kind (as distinct from a single structure); we shall continue to press the Ministry of Housing and Local Government to extend the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest to cover such circumstances.

We were also concerned with the permission granted to build a garage at a corner site adjoining a communal garden in Lansdowne Road. Modifications were made to the structure and materials following initial objections; but there remains the questionable precedent this could set for other similar constructions which, even though built on private land, could seriously obstruct those unexpected and delightful views into the squares which form one of the neighbourhood's most attractive features, and one which is enjoyed by visitors as well as residents.

The Association has made recommendations regarding development plans also in: Lansdowne Walk, Horbury Crescent, Ladbroke Road, Ladbroke Grove, Holland Park Avenue, and Kensington Park Road.

NORLAND SOCIETY: We have felt it right to support our neighbours, the Norland Conservation Society, in one or two important cases where they have objected to poor development plans. An outstanding example is the housing project for Princes Place, W.11, the plans for which are now being reconsidered.

ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY: A complete survey of the buildings in the Ladbroke Conservation Area is being carried out and is about three-quarters completed. It is of necessity simple and consists of a large-scale map on which the buildings are shown in several

categories by colour. The object is to establish a record of the present architectural state of the area - those buildings that are substantially in their original form, those with later additions, and so on. The Survey will be extremely useful in providing accurate information for any future discussions about the area and we are most grateful to a Member of our Committee, Mr Ian Grant, for personally undertaking this exacting task. The survey was included in an exhibition of other relevant material at the Symposium on Conservation arranged at Hurlingham by the West London Architectural Society earlier this year.

RESTORATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF BUILDINGS: Demolition and poor re-development are not the only threats to the conservation of buildings. Mutilation can be disastrous to any coherent scheme. Each year sees the removal of more cornices, mouldings, decorations and stucco-work, and often the appearance of an otherwise fine terrace or group can be ruined by such destruction and neglect. Apathy and ignorance are probably mainly responsible for this gradual erosion, which will, if it continues unchecked, reach a point where large areas of original architecture will be damaged beyond repair. Members of the Association can do much towards reversing the trend and the following points should be borne in mind:

1. Grants of money for the 'restoration of architectural features' may now be made available by the Council under the Local Authorities (Historic Buildings) Act, 1962 (Section I).
2. If you are in doubt about the original form of architectural detail of your house, the Association will be glad to offer all possible help. It is often inadvisable to leave it to the builder, since this may well result in the mouldings and detail being wrongly formed and emasculated.

Whenever possible please help to create a general awareness of this situation. No amount of public money or institutional advice will overcome apathy and it is only when householders are conscious of a duty to take proper care of the buildings they own that we shall see a real improvement.

TRAFFIC: We are convinced that the most urgent environmental problem for our area is the ever-increasing volume of heavy traffic passing through streets that were never intended for it. We believe that the Association as a whole could and should be in a position to exert an influence on the authorities to take effective steps to improve the traffic situation.

The Committee accordingly asked a traffic expert and engineer, Mr Peter Hills, to give us the benefit of his advice on the best course to adopt. Mr Hills is a lecturer at Imperial College and was a member of Professor Buchanan's team for the preparation of 'Traffic in Towns'; he was also instrumental in the establishment of the Barnsbury Environmental Scheme. Briefly, the conclusions drawn from our meeting with Mr Hills were as follows:

1. We should initially aim to collect as much information as possible about the traffic conditions in our area, in order to be able to test and judge in an informed and useful manner any schemes put forward by the GLC or the Borough Council.
2. We should press the authorities to put forward their own measures, and be ready to examine these in the light of our own study and also the experience and workings of other experimental solutions, such as the Barnsbury and Pimlico schemes.

In the late summer the GLC are proposing to open the West Cross Route, and we have for long been assured that this will significantly reduce the volume of industrial traffic which now uses, for example, Clarendon Road and Lansdowne Road as through routes. This may or may not be so. But it seems certain that any improvement will again be eroded over the years because of the continuing rise in vehicle numbers, unless effective steps are also taken to prevent heavy through-traffic using residential streets.

We believe that such new proposals ought, if they are to have the maximum advantage, to be brought in simultaneously with the opening of the West Cross Motorway. We have already represented this argument to the Council and we shall be holding further discussions with the appropriate departments in the near future.

In order, however, to reinforce our position, we hope to carry out a survey of the traffic flow in the Ladbroke area. We shall be in a better position having done this to decide whether to formulate a traffic scheme for the area ourselves, and submit it to the authorities, or whether we are more likely to achieve what we want by keeping a constant pressure on the authorities to put forward a coherent plan, as they eventually did in Barnsbury.

SQUARE GARDENS COMMITTEE: We intend to set up a more effective organisation for co-ordinating the interests of the various Garden Committees, so that they can be fully represented within the Association. Mr E.V. Notcutt, of 36 Clarendon Road, W.11, has kindly undertaken to look after this aspect of our work and he would be grateful to hear from all the Chairmen of the various Garden Committees as we do not at present know who they all are.

TREES: The Borough Council proposed last year to cut down over 50 per cent of the avenue of plane trees at the southern end of Ladbroke Grove. Immediate action by members of the Association averted this drastic threat. Discussions were then held with the Council and with independent firms of tree surgeons. It was established that most of the trees were healthy and could be expected to flourish for many years. The avenue is an outstandingly fine one and we felt it much better to replace trees which are dying back individually as and when the need arises, rather than adopt the Council's suggested policy of large-scale felling and replanting since this would unbalance the proportion and grandeur of the avenue for a long while. Our view was accepted by the Council; the few dead or deceased trees have been removed and new ones planted and the remaining trees have been pruned this spring.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WALKS: Kensington and Chelsea Arts Council is continuing a series of architectural/historical walks in the Royal Borough. Some members may have taken part in one led by Mr Ian Grant recently, which covered the Norland and Ladbroke Estates. This was an extremely rewarding walk, and it is hoped it may be repeated for the benefit of Members of the Association.

PHOTOGRAPHY: We are keen to establish a complete photographic survey of the Ladbroke Conservation Area. We would be grateful if anyone interested and specialising in photography who would like to take part in this plan would contact a Member of the Committee.

ASSOCIATION SECRETARY: Our greatest need is to find someone who would be able and willing to act as Hon Secretary of the Association on a voluntary basis. Our present secretary undertook this work for the first year only and our future depends to a great extent on finding a good replacement as soon as possible. The secretary has to be responsible for the correspondence with the local authority, the GLC, with members and other affiliated societies, and for keeping the minutes, preparation of reports and agendas and the keeping of records. Access to typing and preferably photo-copying facilities is essential, as is an understanding of and sympathy with the aims of the Association.

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We hope very much that among our members there are some who may be willing to offer themselves for this most essential role. I would be grateful to hear from anyone interested, if possible before the Annual General Meeting.

ANGUS STIRLING
CHAIRMAN