

News from Ladbroke

The Newsletter of the Ladbroke Association

Autumn 1977

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 9th Annual General Meeting of the Association was held at the Knights of St. Columba Club, 11 Lansdowne Road on July 11th 1977. When the formalities of the meeting ended members and their guests enjoyed a wine and cheese party and were once again allowed to use the adjoining gardens, by kind permission of the Gardens Committee.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Apart from the general routine business involved in examining and commenting on Planning Applications, which have taken place throughout the year, the members of the committee have been concerned with various other new matters.

Two questions have arisen concerning cases that are outside the Ladbroke area and although it seems some members of the Association consider that concern should be confined to Ladbroke Conservation Area matters, the Committee felt that each of these questions was a special case and impinged closely on the Ladbroke area. The first matter concerns the, as yet, undefined proposals to demolish numbers 4, 5, 6 and 7 Kensington Palace Gardens and to use these sites, together with those of the already demolished numbers 1, 2 and 3 for the construction of part of the proposed new Soviet Embassy.

The Association feels that this would be undesirable environmentally, especially as it would involve the loss of four important Victorian mansions and the destruction of their gardens through intensified use. The Association has joined in the protests of the Linden Gardens Residents Association and the Pembridge Association. This whole situation (although apparently dormant) is being kept under review.

The second case was that of the Sion Convent, where a refusal by the Kensington and Chelsea Council to allow the conversion of the present buildings to be used as a "Science Centre" went to Public Enquiry.

The Committee felt that such conversion must introduce an "alien use" to the locality, in much the same manner as, in the past, the proposals for the Ballet Rambert and Kensington Temple sites would have done. In view of the proximity of the Convent to the edge of the Ladbroke area, the Association supported the protest of the Pembridge Association at the Public Enquiry. It is much to be regretted that the appeal was subsequently allowed by the Secretary of State.

As regards more immediately local matters, the committee has put in hand the compilation of a photographic dossier of correct mouldings and enrichments for the whole Ladbroke area, aided by the invaluable help of the Greater London Council's photographic department. It is also hoped to assemble a library of moulds for stucco and ironwork, which the Council has undertaken to store. It should be emphasised, however, that these schemes must be long-term projects and it may be some considerable time before the committee's efforts bear fruit.

A sub-committee has been in touch with the Kensington Borough Engineer on the question of substituting more appropriate and traditional street lamps for the present pattern, in some of the less busy streets in the Conservation Area. Another sub-committee is actively working on the promotion of "Town Schemes", which may involve the restoration and uniform painting of one specific terrace of houses.

The matter of new railings round St. John's Church to replace the existing wire fencing, has again been raised with the Association by some of the parishioners but it is understood that the Parish Church Council considers it has too many financial responsibilities at present to consider any further commitments. It goes without saying that the Association is not able to undertake the sponsoring of or proposals for any scheme without the full cooperation of the Parish Church Council, and that any financing would be beyond the Association's resources. However, a small sub-committee has been appointed, in order that the Association may keep in touch with the Parish Council.

HON. TREASURER'S REPORT

The accounts for the year ending 31st March, 1977 were presented to the Annual General Meeting. The Hon. Treasurer's report stated that the balance at 31st March, 1977 was £747 as against £576 at 31st March, 1976. Expenditure for the year amounted to £478 compared with £380 in 1976.

The fact that outgoings were covered by income was due to a number of members contributing more than the minimum £1 annual subscription and also because some 70 members have seven year covenants thus enabling the Association to recover some 54p for each covenanted subscription.

Thanks were expressed to Mr. E.V. Notcutt the Hon. Auditor and the accounts were duly accepted by the meeting.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

Mr. Ian Grant, Acting Chairman since the death of Professor Carus-Wilson in February, 1977 was unanimously elected Chairman of the Association. Miss Muriel Cosh and Mrs. Hilda Edwards were elected Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer respectively.

Five members were due to retire from the Committee. Two did not wish to stand for re-election and there was a vacancy following Mr. Grant's election as Chairman. Mrs. Kinmonth and Madame Pilsudski were re-elected to the Committee and Mr. Peter Chapman, Mr. Thomas Pakenham and Mr. Richmond Postgate were the new members elected.

PLANNING

81 BLENHEIM CRESCENT

Much concern is being felt regarding the demolition of this house and the resultant shoring up of the adjacent property. The Committee understands that the demolition became necessary during the course of approved building works to convert the property into individual dwelling units on behalf of the Notting Hill Housing Trust.

At planning application stage the Association strongly opposed the proposed conversion, particularly the removal of staircase and party wall. It is hoped that all parties will show more respect toward what exists as a result of this incident.

The recently approved scheme has now been withdrawn and a previous, much simpler, approved scheme will replace it so that the new building will be exactly as that which was demolished, only brighter, and with clearer detailing.

96 LANSLOWNE ROAD

The Association has written to the Borough making the strongest objections to a proposal to remove the gable and balustrade at this address.

4 KENSINGTON PARK GARDENS

Further proposals have recently been submitted to the Council for the roof addition to this house, which has already received planning permission together with various other works.

The Association's architectural advisers did not consider that the proposals were sufficiently traditional in detail, since the new roof storey would be clearly visible from the ground at several points. They also regret that the new lift tower has effectively spoiled the only remaining unaltered side-elevation of this unusual type of house. It is also of some concern that the owner's intentions do not

appear to include restoration of the missing decorative features.

WALMER ROAD

It is understood that the Council, as a result of pressure from a group of local residents, has agreed to re-open the closed southern end of Walmer Road. This was closed some years ago and effectively reduced a most dangerous traffic hazard.

The Association considers that the re-opening of this road is a retrogressive step and it has therefore supported the protest made by the Norland Society.

SILVER JUBILEE TREES

In celebration of the Queen's Silver Jubilee the Ladbroke Association wishes to present a tree to each Communal Garden in the Ladbroke Conservation Area.

The Association considers that the choice of a tree most suited to each Garden be left to the Garden Committee concerned, but has undertaken to meet the cost of up to £10 per tree and to supply a suitably inscribed plaque. The Association's offer extends to the 31st December, 1977.

PEMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

The Pembridge Association was formed in October, 1972 to cover the Pembridge Conservation Area which is bordered by Ladbroke on the West, Chepstow Villas and the Borough boundary on the North and East and Pembridge Square to the South. Steps were taken to extend the area to include Portobello Road, Denbigh Terrace, Linden Gardens and Clanricarde Gardens. Both Linden and Clanricarde Gardens have their own Associations which keep in touch with Pembridge, especially over the proposals for the Russian Embassy. Four Action Groups were set up to take stock of the area and to make recommendations.

The Association's first Chairman, Mr. Alan Greengross was succeeded three years ago by the Rev. Douglas Richardson. The present Hon. Secretary is Mr. John Hayward.

The original idea of Open Forums for members was found difficult to sustain and gave way to an Executive Committee made up of street representatives. Association members may attend any meeting of the Executive Committee at which matters of interest to them are to be discussed. Members are kept in touch with news and developments through the bi-annual Newsletter.

Introduction of parking controls and the excellent work of the Ladbroke Association concerning the reduction of traffic flow have done much to resolve the initial traffic problems. With the exception of continued congestion in Pembridge Road, which is a bus route and a Metropolitan road, the subject has not dominated the agenda for some years.

Pembridge Association was brought into contact with neighbouring associations through the proposals to demolish the Gaumont Theatre at Notting Hill Gate early in 1973, and subsequently through the Mercury Theatre proposals, the launching of the Kensington Borough Development Plan in the Spring of 1975, and the Colville/Tavistock Forums.

The Development Plan Context Papers issued by the Borough were considered in great detail by the Executive Committee and hence it was felt unnecessary to cover the same ground by attendance at the Local Planning Forums of this year. The Association maintained a watching brief through individual members and also kept in touch with all proposals affecting the Portobello Road Market.

A strict check is kept on planning application in the area, but in spite of the help of the Kensington Borough Planning Authorities it has not been possible to prevent the loss of amenity shops to the antique trade, notably in Ledbury Road and to some extent in Pembridge Road. Portobello Road was lost years ago.

There are some premises for which planning applications have been refused but they continue to cause anxiety because of their persistence. Hotel and office encroachment threatens Pembridge

Square and surrounding roads and the future use of Sion Convent in Chepstow Villas will affect the character of the whole area. An appeal against the Council's refusal of an application for change of use to a Science Centre (this would entail office instead of school use) went to a Public Enquiry in April. The Secretary of State for the Environment upheld the appeal. However, the Convent's School continues for the present.

The Queen's Silver Jubilee was celebrated with a most successful party in Pembridge Square Gardens.

This year the annual lecture was given by Dr. Stephen Passmore on "Life on 18th century Campden Hill". The Association's Annual General Meeting will be held in St. Peter's Church Hall on Tuesday 6th December, followed by a wine and cheese party.

The Ladbroke Association wishes to thank Mr. Douglas Richardson for this, the first of a series of short articles on the work of the conservation associations in the areas bordering Ladbroke.

Ed.

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH APPEAL

It is hoped that there will be a very generous response to the Appeal being launched by the Parish Church of St. John's. Funds are urgently needed to finance the rebuilding of recently fallen masonry in the North transept and to replace the temporary wire fencing by attractive Victorian type railings round three sides of the Church. The Church with its many commitments cannot raise the necessary £7000 on its own but this could be achieved with the co-operation of all residents in the Ladbroke Conservation Area.

Donations should be addressed to Mrs. Hilda Edwards, the Appeal Hon. Treasurer, 18 Clarendon Road, London W11.

USEFUL ADDRESSES

Below are names and addresses of Kensington and Chelsea Borough officials; these may provide a useful list for Association members'.

The Town Hall
Hornton Street, Kensington, London W8 7NX
(937 5464)

(unless otherwise indicated, offices are in the Town Hall)

Borough Engineer and Surveyor	Mr. P.R. Hennings
Borough Environmental Health Officer	" D.C. Draper
Chief Information Officer	" J.T. Smith
Director of Architecture and Planning	" R.R. Martin
Borough Planning Control Officer	" E.A. Sanders
Arbiculturist (within Engineer's Department)	" P. Annett

Public Cleansing and Works Services
New Central Depot, Warwick Road, London W14 8PT
(373 6099)

Director of Public Cleansing and Works Services

The Ladbroke Association,
41 Ladbroke Square,
London W.11.