

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY



4. th ANNUAL REPORT
Year 1956 - 57



KENSINGTON PALACE

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ANNUAL REPORT Year 1956-57

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

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Vice-Presidents:

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H. Gandell, Esq.	R. T. D. Wilmot, Esq.

Hon. Treasurer: E. Norman-Butler

Hon. Secretary: Mrs. G. Christiansen

18. Kensington Square, W.8, Tel.: WEStern 0931

Hon. Auditors: Messrs. Wright, Stevens & Lloyd

FOREWORD

The Kensington Society has done me the honour of electing me its President, an honour all the greater because I am not a resident in the Royal Borough and have to depend on the rumour of my reputation in the long-drawn battle for the preservation of the past. Members who read this interesting Report can rest assured that I will do my best to put up a stiff fight for such beauty as remains after official ignorance and commercial cupidity have drawn the red rake of power through our ancient streets. But success in such a cause must largely depend upon the support and cohesion of those intelligent enough to be on our side. The sort of thing we do, or desire to do, is told in this Report, and I hope it will inspire many readers to join this important and vigorous Society. London, that great city, is too large to defend itself, too large even to feel the wounds that are made in its tough hide; but Kensington is well aware of its own charm and beauty, and its citizens should always be ready to rush to its defence.

VISCOUNT ESHER
President

3rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Kensington Town Hall on December 11th, 1956, with Sir Harold Kenyon, M.B.E., J.P., in the Chair.

The Minutes of the last year's meeting were approved. The regretted resignation of Lord Gorell as President was accepted, accordingly Mr. Penn moved and Miss Langdon seconded a proposal to elect the Rt. Hon. Viscount Esher to the Presidency. This was carried unanimously.

The meeting expressed its appreciation to Lord Gorell for his services during his time of office.

The approval of the Report and Accounts was moved by Dr. H. Stephen Pasmore and seconded by Mr. E. Norman-Butler and approved.

The subscription was increased from 10s. 6d. to £1 1s., owing to the increase in cost of printing etc.

The Society accorded its thanks to the Hon. Auditors, Messrs. Wright, Stevens & Lloyd.

The meeting carried unanimously a vote of thanks to Sir Harold Kenyon for his chairmanship of the meeting.

The meeting was followed by a lecture by Mr. David Green on "Henry Wise of Kensington and the Formal Garden."

We are very pleased to welcome Lord Esher as President of our Society. Lord Esher has been connected with amenity societies for a great number of years. He is the President of the London Society, and Chairman of the Central Council of Civic Societies. His activities for preserving and improving amenities are too numerous to mention. We are much honoured to have him as our President.

THE YEAR'S ACTIVITIES

An important activity arranged by the Society during the winter months was an exhibition illustrating the work of the Historic Buildings Council for England, and the Ministry of Works. This was held for one week at the Odeon Cinema in Kensington High Street, by kind permission of Mr. Wilkins, the manager of the cinema.

The exhibition was opened by the Mayor of Kensington. Amongst those present were the Mayoress, Miss Lucy Fisher, Sir Harold and Lady Kenyon, Lord Euston, and Sir Allan Lascelles, Chairman of the Historic Buildings Council.

Sir Harold Kenyon said he was both pleased and proud that Kensington should be the site of the second of these Exhibitions; the first was held at Kenwood last year.

The Mayor, Councillor F. St. G. Fisher spoke of the need for maintaining country houses which he described as the "national heritage" of the British people. The Mayor paid tribute to the Society and said "The Kensington Society is a body which agitates and gets something done. They are bossy in the nicest sort of way and they have achieved a lot of good in the Borough."

A talk was given after the opening by Dr. Craig, head of the department of the Office of Works, which deals with ancient buildings. He spoke of the history and development of historic houses within 20 miles of London. The talk was illustrated by some very beautiful films.

The pictures in the exhibition illustrated the work of renovation, varying from mansions to country cottages.

The attendance during the week the exhibition was open was most satisfactory.

We would like to record our sincere thanks to Mr. Wilkins, who very kindly lent the rooms at the Odeon Cinema to us.

Other activities included lectures by Sir Hugh Casson, past Vice-Chairman of the Society and a Member of the Council, on "Beauty in Danger"; Mr. L. W. Lane, L.C.C. Trees Preservation Officer on "The truth about Trees"; Mr. George Williams, of the Council of Industrial Design, on "Design of Street Furniture"; Mr. Christopher Hollis, Author and Broadcaster, on "G. K. Chesterton"; Mr. G. Berry, of the Metropolitan Water Board, on "The Evolution of the Water supply to the Royal Borough during the last century"; Miss Helen Lowenthal, Senior Lecturer of the Victoria and Albert Museum, on "English Porcelain"; Mr. W. A. Eden, Senior Officer of the Historic Building Section, on "Holland House"; Professor Sir Albert Richardson, P.P.R.A., on "A New Approach to Civic Design"; Mr. C. H. Gibbs-Smith of the Victoria and Albert Museum, on the "Bayeux Tapestry."

During the summer months visits were made to Nymans Gardens, Handcross, Sussex. The party was met by Mrs. Leonard Messel, the Countess of Rosse and Mr. Oliver Messel. Mrs. Messel very kindly provided tea for members.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Patrick Spens arranged a visit to the Inner Temple, and very kindly gave members tea.

Mrs. G. Christiansen opened her house at 18, Kensington Square and members were given tea in the garden.

A visit was arranged to Clandon Park and Polesden Lacey, both National Trust houses.

Mr. Cecil Farthing of the National Buildings Record gave a talk on the work of the National Buildings Record and showed members over the headquarters in Chester Terrace.

A visit to St. Paul's School by permission of the High Master, Mr. A. N. Gilkes, who very kindly arranged tea for members. Mr. A. N. G. Richards gave a talk on the History of St. Paul's School.

Mr. Lanning Roper, an horticultural expert and writer on gardening gave a lecture on "British Gardens Today."

Mr. Alec Clifton Taylor, the well known Lecturer gave a lecture on "The Ravenna Mosaics."

A visit to the Royal School of Needlework, a repeat of a visit made last year, which proved so popular.

We should like to take this opportunity to thank our lecturers, our hosts and our hostesses for making our visits and lectures during the year, so successful.

Photographic Record Group. The Group has little to record, the members for various reasons have not been able to do very much. However, Miss R. Ensing has made a photographic record of the road-widening schemes at Kensington High Street and Notting Hill Gate; and of the work being done on the sites of the new Public Library in Hornton Street and the Youth Hostel at Holland Park.

The Annual Subscription to the Kensington Society covers membership of the Photographic Group and new members will be gladly welcomed.

(Sgd.) C. G. Boxall.

Tree Group. During the past year the composition of the Group has remained as set out in the last Annual Report and there has been a good deal of activity, as there is much interest in the Borough in the question of Tree Preservation and planting.

In the last Report it was mentioned that the Society was proposing to donate nine trees to be planted in North Kensington and in South End Village. This has now been done and during the year the Society has taken an interest in an avenue of mulberry trees in the St. Mary Abbot's Hospital grounds and is replacing a missing one.

A report as to a threat to trees in the Abbotsbury Road area was carefully investigated and, happily, found to be incorrect. A more serious threat of severe lopping to the trees in Cornwall Gardens has been obviated. In this case an interested person obtained some 300 signatures against the proposals in a matter of days and the result was very satisfactory.

Members will doubtless appreciate that a great deal of work is involved in checking information and in contacting the right people at short notice but we are glad to be able to assist in this 'amenity' task, and hope that information, as detailed as possible, will be sent, as early as possible.

(Sgd.) W. W. Begley.

Street Lighting. Improvement Scheme. The present lighting scheme of the Borough has been in existence for many years, and it is felt by the Borough Council that a comprehensive scheme to bring the standard of street illumination up to a reasonable standard should now take place.

A code of practice for the guidance of local authorities is issued by the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation which provides for two standards of illumination. Group A for traffic routes and Group B for secondary roads and residential streets. The scheme will be carried out in two stages.

Stage I, will include the improvement of the lighting to Group B standard in those roads at present mainly lit by gas. Concrete posts 16 ft. in height with fluorescent fittings will be used. In certain mews ways the lamps will be supported on brackets attached to the walls.

The Group A lighting in Kensington High Street will be dealt with by erecting concrete columns 25 ft. high with fluorescent lanterns. This scheme was recommended by the Borough Council on May 7th and the Society was very gratified to receive an invitation, with the Royal Fine Art Commission, to submit their views on the matter.

Members of The Kensington Society Committee met and discussed the proposals with members of the Royal Fine Art Commission. Later a deputation from the Kensington Society Committee met the Works Committee of the Council under the Chairmanship of Councillor F. W. Marshall to put forward their views. It was understood that the Borough Council proposed:—

1. The substitution of electric lighting for gas in North Kensington: this was planned for 1957-58.
2. The installation of fluorescent lighting in the main streets: this was also scheduled for 1957-58.
3. The type of lamp standard to be used in the main streets would be similar to that erected at the entrance of Holland Park.
4. The use of fluorescent lighting in certain side streets. In side streets so lighted, the lamp standards would resemble that erected in the Little Boltons.

5. In certain side streets and squares of architectural merit (a list had been drawn up) the Borough Council were prepared to use existing lamp standards and Tungsten lighting, and in certain cases to use the old lantern type of standard when removed from other sites.
6. Sodium lighting might be used for lighting Warwick Road and Finborough Road.

The Society agreed that fluorescent lighting in the main would be acceptable. They approved the lamp standard erected outside Holland Park as the best of its type. They were prepared to accept fluorescent lighting in certain side streets, provided the list of side streets to receive special treatment was extended. They did not however, approve the type of lamp standard which had been erected in the Little Boltons. It was thought another design should be chosen. The Society did not approve the use of sodium lighting anywhere in the Borough. The Society has recently drawn up a list of streets other than those already drawn up by the Royal Fine Art Commission and the Borough Council. These have been forwarded to the Borough Council, with the following proposals:—

That not only certain streets of architectural merit should be considered for retention of the old lamp standards but rather that areas should be considered. An example given was that although it is true that Launceston Place is more distinguished architecturally than say, Eldon Road, the character of the whole of this area bounded by Kensington Square, Kensington Road, Palace Gate and Kynance Mews is so homogeneous and closely knit that it might be considered to override the particular merit of individual streets, and thus to demand a complete uniform lighting treatment. The retention of the existing bracket or post lantern in all mews and all "pedestrian only" passages was urged. All non-heavy traffic roads in which the houses, for the most part, do not exceed three stories in height should preferably be by post and lantern types, either as existing or similar in design and style to those now being most successfully used in Paddington.

We should like to record our thanks to the Kensington Borough Council for inviting the Society to submit its views.

A New College in Kensington Gore. It is proposed to erect a new 14-story high building in Kensington Gore, between the Albert Hall and Queen's Gate. The site is actually in the Westminster area. Representation has been made that this block should not exceed the height of existing buildings.

Imperial Institute. The Society supported a proposal for the building to be flood lighted. We very much regret that the proposal was turned down.

Town Hall. The Society suggested to the Kensington Borough Council that the design for the new Town Hall should form the subject of a competition. The Borough Council's reply pointed out that there was a grave danger of the winning scheme being submitted by a young inexperienced architect, who, though full of bright ideas may be quite incapable of supervising such a large work, thus necessitating the employment of a number of consultants to advise him on technical aspects of the building. The Society has made a further suggestion to the Council that the design for the new Town Hall should form the subject of a competition to a limited number of competent architects—possibly by a panel drawn up by the Royal Institute of British Architects.

We understand the Town Hall is unlikely to be built for a number of years.

Lex Garage Site. As we go to press we understand planning permission is being sought by the Lex Garage proprietors to build a block of luxury flats on the site now occupied by the garage.

The block would be nine stories high and approximately 92 ft. in height. We have been asked by the residents of that area to support their protest. It is felt by the Society that as this site dominates the Campden Hill view it would be undesirable to have such a high block. We have informed the L.C.C. of the Society's views, at the same time reminding them of the admirable restraint they themselves had shown in the height of the buildings in Tor Gardens.

The Development Scheme for Notting Hill Gate. The following is contained in a press notice released by the L.C.C. as we go to press.

Sites ready for redevelopment.

Acquisition and clearance of sites for road-widening purposes means that valuable and important sites fronting on to the widened roads will be available for early redevelopment. The Town Planning Committee state:—"It has been our aim to secure a comprehensive scheme of redevelopment with shops, offices and residential accommodation at this important intersection. This will restore the business centre which has for long served a wide area around."

A total of about 4½ acres of land will eventually be available.

The principal sites are:—

A—(over two acres) on the north side of Notting Hill Gate between Ladbroke Terrace and Pembridge Road;

B—(about one-tenth of an acre) the site of the existing Central London underground station on the corner of Pembridge Gardens (west side) and Notting Hill Gate;

C—(over one acre) on the south side of Notting Hill Gate and the west side of Kensington Church Street between Farmer Street and Kensington place;

D—(about half an acre) the south side of Notting Hill Gate between Palace Gardens Terrace and the east side of Kensington Church Street;

E—(about one-tenth of an acre) the west side of Kensington Church Street between Kensington Place and Edge Street;

F—(about one-tenth of an acre) on the south side of Notting Hill Gate between Palace Gardens Terrace and Palace Gardens Mews.

The redevelopment scheme.

The scheme, submitted by the developers' architects (Messrs. Cotton, Balland & Blow) provides for 166 dwellings, about 148,000 sq. ft. of shopping space and 120,000 sq. ft. of office space. The developers preliminary estimate of the cost is £2½ million.

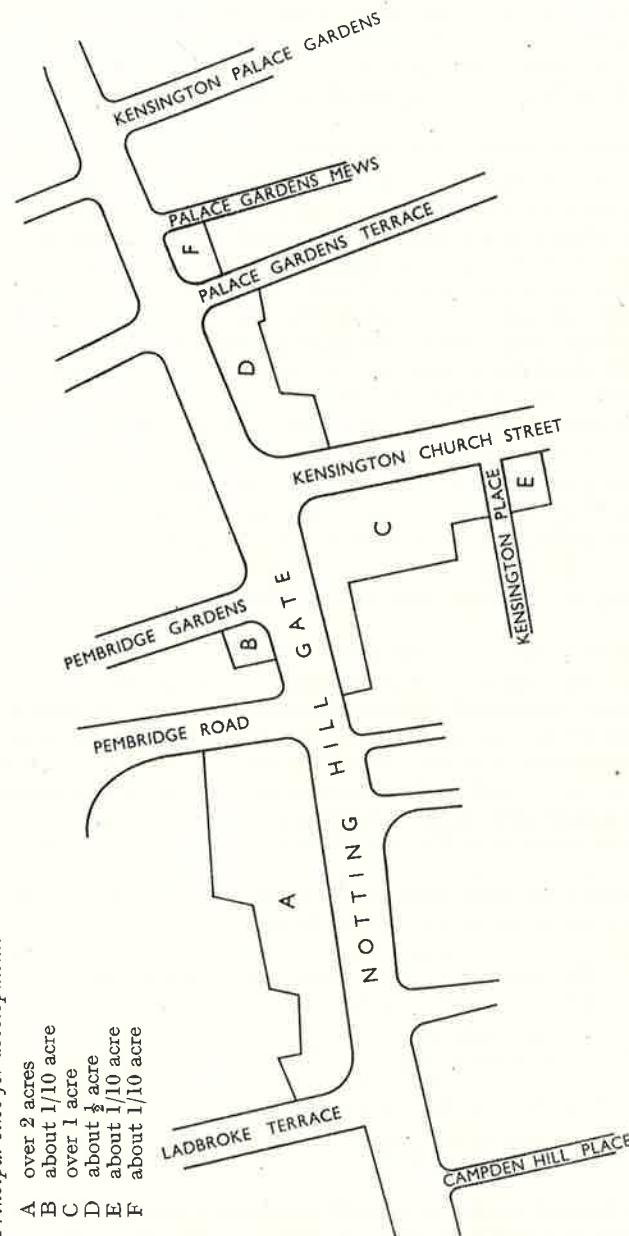
The largest site (A) will contain 145 dwellings in flats and maisonettes over shops, with a small amount of office accommodation at the eastern end. The residential accommodation will be in a six-storey block fronting Ladbroke Terrace, in a three-storey and a six-storey block, both over shops, fronting the widened Notting Hill Gate, and in an 18-storey block 176 ft. high also over shops but at right-angles to Notting Hill Gate, roughly opposite the Gaumont Cinema. The forecourts vary in width in front of each block to provide for space for tree planting in the centre and for a shopping concourse between the 18-storey block and Pembridge Road.

Site C will contain the bulk of the office development proposed and comprises a four-storey block fronting Notting Hill Gate containing offices and shops, and a range of shops—some two-storey and some one-storey—facing Kensington Church Street. A five-storey block comprising 20 flats over shops is provided at the south end of the Kensington Church Street range, and a 12-storey 138-ft. high block containing offices over shops, parallel with Notting Hill Gate but set back, links the Kensington Church Street frontage with the Notting Hill Gate frontage.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL—NOTTING HILL GATE IMPROVEMENT

Principal sites for development:

- A over 2 acres
- B about 1/10 acre
- C over 1 acre
- D about ½ acre
- E about 1/10 acre
- F about 1/10 acre



Road widenings: Notting Hill Gate—to 85 ft. from Campden Hill Place to Kensington Palace Gardens.
Kensington Church Street (northern end)—to 65 ft.
Pembridge Road (southern end)—to 70 ft.

Site D contains offices over shops in a four-storey block continuing in height the block fronting Notting Hill Gate on site C. It has three-storey wings returning into Kensington Church Street and Palace Gardens Terrace.

All three sites have access for servicing from the rear and parking facilities are available for each.

Outline planning permission granted.

The Town Planning Committee report:—"The proposals are generally acceptable from the points of view of the Development Plan and planning standards and policy. Both the 176-ft. high block of flats on site A and the 138-ft. high block of offices on site C conform with the standards and conditions which we have prescribed for the consideration of high buildings; they define the central portion of this important local shopping centre at the junction of two major routes, which is an appropriate site, therefore, for high development. Adjoining owners have been consulted and have no objection.

Outline planning permission has been granted for the development of the sites, subject, *inter alia*, to the developers' obtaining approval from the Council of the layout and detailed plans before any development is undertaken.

It is hoped that the new buildings will be started in the spring of 1958 and completed in 1960.

Sites B, E and F for later development.

These sites are not included in the above development. Site B is capable of separate development but is not immediately available for redevelopment and will therefore be the subject of separate negotiations. Site E is being let for the erection of temporary buildings for occupation by two banks which are being displaced by the scheme and which will ultimately be re-accommodated in the new development. Site F, in which the Council had only a leasehold interest, will be retained by the Crown Commissioners for redevelopment after clearance of the existing buildings by the Council.

Plaques. The following names have been accepted by the L.C.C. for commemorative plaques:—

Lord Allenby.
Andrew Lang.

A further list has been submitted:—

Lady Mary Coke.
Sir Stephen Leslie.

The Society would be pleased to receive from members further names of notable residents worthy of commemoration.

Resignation of Mr. W. W. Begley. Mr. W. W. Begley, F.R.Hist.S., L.R.I.B.A., a founder member of the Society has resigned from the Executive Committee, owing to added commitments in his already busy life. We accept his resignation with very much regret. Mr. Begley has been a very active member of the Committee and has been Secretary of the Tree Group.

Mr. Begley has been appointed to the Council of the Society in recognition of the tremendous part he has played in the foundation of the Society and during the past 4 years.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Patrick Spens, K.B.E., Q.C., M.P. Sir Patrick Spens has been appointed to the Council, in recognition of his assistance on a number of occasions.

Mr. John Paul. We welcome Mr. John Paul to the Executive Committee to fill the vacancy left by Mr. Begley's resignation. Mr. Paul was nominated last year and has been awaiting a vacancy.

Christmas Cards. There are two new cards this year.

1. Kensington Palace, as reproduced on page 4. Price 8d. each, or 1s. 3d. hand coloured.
2. A reproduction of Raphael's Madonna and Child. Price 8d. each.

Trees to mark Centenary. It is a hundred years since the roadway of Upper Addison Gardens was made up as a street, and a number of residents including Sir Arnold Overton and Mrs. Tremayne decided that the centenary should be marked by planting trees along the road to form an avenue. Over £50 was subscribed by the residents. White double cherries alternating with maple trees are to be planted.

Could residents in other streets please copy this idea?

The Society is affiliated to The London Society and the Metropolitan Parks and Gardens Association.

It would be appreciated if letters requiring an answer were accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope.

Extract from *The Architectural Review*, December 1956. A Special Number of *The Architectural Review* called COUNTER-ATTACK. Page 407 reads—

A vote of thanks to preservation societies and private individuals.

"We also want to thank: The Kensington Society who as a result of persistent agitation in the past are now consulted

before street furniture is altered in Kensington and whose wishes are usually respected."

Civic Trust. The formation of the Civic Trust was announced in July 1957 by its President, Mr. Duncan Sandys. The object of the Civic Trust is to promote high standards of architecture and civic planning in Great Britain and to encourage a wider interest in the general appearance of towns and villages, including the avoidance of unsightly development. The methods by which it is proposed to further this object include those outlined below:—

- (a) A service of information and professional advice will be made available to industry, commerce and local authorities.
- (b) Exhibitions of contemporary architecture and planning in Britain and foreign countries will be organised.
- (c) A national forum will be created for the discussion of current developments in architecture and civic design. For this purpose conferences of leading personalities from the professions concerned, industry, commerce, local authorities, Government departments and amenity societies will, from time to time, be convened.
- (d) Local conferences will also be arranged in selected towns to discuss the planning problems and potentialities of the locality.
- (e) Architectural and town planning competitions will be sponsored on issues of public importance.
- (f) Expert studies will be initiated and reports thereon issued.
- (g) Public interest will be stimulated through press, radio and television.

An inaugural Conference of the Trust was held at Lambeth Palace on July 20th, 1957. The Secretary of the Kensington Society was one of the Speakers; and said the need for a Preservation Society in Kensington was made clear in the early days of its foundation when Holland House was threatened with complete demolition. She pointed out that a local society to be effective must command wide public support, and went on to say that it has a great opportunity to show the way, by acting as leaders of public opinion and working to create standards whereby more and more people can fully appreciate the quality of good architecture and planning, and so judge for themselves, errors of taste and good sense, before they become established and generally accepted.

FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS

December 9th. 6 p.m.

At the Town Hall, Kensington High Street, W.8. Annual General Meeting, followed by a lecture at 6.30 p.m. by Mr. Rupert Gunnis entitled "British Outdoor Sculpture."

Chairman: Sir Harold Kenyon.

January 27th, 1958. 8.30 p.m.

At the Town Hall, Kensington High Street, W.8. Recital for Viola d'Amore, Square Piano and Flute, arranged by S. Montague Cleeve.

February 26th. 6 p.m.

A visit to B. T. Batsford Ltd., 4, Fitzhardings Street, W.1. Mr. B. C. Batsford will give a talk on Book Production. Admission by ticket only—obtainable from the Hon. Secretary—numbers limited to 50.

March 6th. 8.30 p.m.

At Queen Elizabeth College, Campden Hill Road, W.8. A lecture by Mr. H. Gandell entitled "Royal Heraldry."

Chairman: Miss Sargeaunt.

March 19th. 3-4.30 p.m.

A visit to the Byam Shaw School of Drawing and Painting, 70, Campden Street, W.8. Admission by ticket only, obtainable from the Hon. Secretary—members limited to 25.

April 9th. 8.30 p.m.

At Queen Elizabeth College, Campden Hill Road, W.8. A lecture by Andor Gomme entitled "Beauty Still in Danger."

Chairman: Sir Hugh Casson.

May 12th. 8.30 p.m.

At the Town Hall, Kensington High Street, W.8. A lecture by Professor W. F. Grimes entitled "Excavations in Roman London."

Chairman: Lawrence Tanner, C.V.O., F.S.A.

June 3rd. 8.30 p.m.

At the Town Hall, Kensington High Street, W.8. A lecture by Mr. John Betjeman entitled "Victorian Architecture."

Chairman: The Earl of Rosse.

Kindly note that the date of this lecture has been changed.

A NEW APPROACH TO CIVIC ART

PROFESSOR SIR ALBERT RICHARDSON

A lecture given by Professor Sir Albert Richardson, P.P.R.A. on April 30th, 1957.

The lecture was illustrated by Sir Albert's lightning drawings.

The Rt. Hon. Viscount Esher was in the Chair. He said, "On this my first task as the President of your Society, it is my pleasant task to introduce Sir Albert Richardson this afternoon. I am always introducing speakers and from long experience I have found that either nobody knows them or wants to know them, or else everybody knows them and no explanation from me is required. Sir Albert obviously belongs to the latter class. He is always in the van of progress carrying the flag that leads us back to the great days of artistic achievement. I remember when I was young, people used to say that Mr. Gladstone was an old man in a hurry. Sir Albert is an old man in a hurricane, always eagerly fighting for the great causes in which we all believe. No doubt in the end he will be strung up on one of those new lamp posts in his own town of Ampthill. But until his active and useful life reaches that fitting close, he will continue, as he will tonight to enchant us with his vigour and charm."

What is most essential is a restudy of the basic principles and qualities of civic art. The most desirable attribute is that of humane proportion; the next is of modelling, while the third concerns neighbourly views. Added to all three there is the characteristic of dramatic effect. The exemplars of civic art are far too numerous to be indexed and quoted in an address. It is significant that no history of civic art has ever been published. On the other hand there are many guides, but the greatest inspiration of all is travel and sight-seeing with a sketch book in hand. That is how the old masters educated themselves and they achieved what no academy or institute has since accomplished. Another aspect of civic art concerns knowledge of the *genius loci*. The reason for success in former times was the consideration given to blending the old with the new. No one desires a city planned and elevated to a general pattern. How very tiresome it would be if London were to become a weak caricature of New York. We have a great deal to digest and a good many experiments to make in our quest for the ideal in civic art. Of one thing we may be certain—absolute finish will never be attained. It would be very tiresome if it were.

The theory of civic architecture belongs to the first ideas of community living. It was, however, left to the Greeks to perfect the conception of the city as a work of art.

Today the value of comprehensive and graceful development is not wholly accepted, for the purpose seems to be strictly utilitarian. When we realise that more than half the population of these islands live in cities and towns it becomes essential to consider the advantages of scenic amenities.

In classical times this need was fully understood with much benefit to the arts and a heritage to posterity. When the grandeur of old Rome passed into comparative oblivion everything was changed. The earlier successes were not understood; the fervour of a changing system of lithic construction made fresh laws imperative. The Gothic Cathedral took its stand quite serenely in a huddle of small roofs. In place of a formality in part casual there grew up a manner both picturesque and imaginative. The Gothic Cathedral closely surrounded by steeply pitched roofs forced the few public buildings of the day into telling but subordinate positions. From the 12th to the 15th century the soul of a city was symbolised by the siting of the cathedral church, the town hall, the law courts and the markets. The street embellishments were few but they were delightfully significant.

It was not until the later years of the Italian Renaissance that a conscious pride in civic dramatisation became part of social culture. For a time Rome vied with Florence in the planning of public buildings and monuments to the best advantage.

From now on the beauty of the internal arrangement of cities became part of corporate achievement. There ensued a desire to make cities impressive by creating numerous centres which would not only facilitate the movement of traffic but would be advantageous for a concourse of citizens. As time advanced so the desire for fresh schemes of pictorial and dramatic interest fired the imagination of architects and sculptors as well as the minds of civic authorities. Bernini's great Piazzas fronting St. Peter's at Rome is the most notable example of civic display on the grand scale. And so the Italian examples began to increase until every city and town in the Italian Peninsula could boast of some dignified public place. The works attributed to Filippo Juvara at Turin offer many ideas for adaptation to contemporary problems.

Turning to France, we find that apart from the design by Boccadoro in the 16th century for the Hotel de Ville little was done until the Place des Voges was built by the celebrated architect Chastillon in 1603. There can be little doubt that this formal arrangement inspired Inigo Jones when he planned the Piazza at Covent Garden in 1630. The next moves came with the grand manner of Louis XIV's reign when the works on the Palace of Versailles and the layout of the Gardens inspired the whole coterie of European architects to follow suit. Sir Christopher Wren's plan for rebuilding the City of London after the Great Fire would have imparted grandeur to the internal character of the ancient City if wise counsel had prevailed. As it turned out the accidents of

mediaeval growth were perpetuated with the result that subsequent embellishments have been half-hearted.

Throughout the 18th century formal civic planning in England was limited to certain developments at Bath and the expansion of certain estates in the west end of London. In fact the compromise between the mediaeval and the matured Renaissance was continued until the close of the century.

For a brief space we must turn to France and other European countries, ranging from the extreme south to the distant north, to trace the full insistence of the example of Versailles. In almost every considerable city from Cadiz to St. Petersburg the impress of the grand manner is pronounced. While the architects of the Continent pursued academic layouts those in England were compelled to effect a compromise with existing conditions. Curiously enough it was the splendour of design evidenced in the elevations of English country houses built between 1740 and 1770 that caused the notable classical revival in France which is known as the Style Louis Seize.

English architects had formed their beliefs on classic antiquity; France now followed. The order of the day was grandeur; a new ideology expressed in architecture of all gradings. The French had the advantage of a school of engravers who could prepare plates for guidance and it was not long before the architects and masons of France became obsessed with similar ideas. The French had the advantage of an unbroken sequence of mature renaissance architecture and this enabled them to adapt new ideas with facility.

As already mentioned, Paris had adopted town planning in the early 17th century when the Edict of December 1607 introduced the major street system. In 1665 plans were made for all roads controlled by the State; finally there were the laws and regulations issued during the Empire. We can see these laws coming to fruition when Paris was remodelled under Napoleon III. What might be termed the Haussmann period directed the character and development of Paris as it is today. The alignment of streets was carefully considered, especially the cross sections and profiles of buildings, *for it was recognised that silhouettes and skylines were of the utmost importance.* Experience had proved to the authorities of Paris that the unity and relationship of buildings of various types was something worth attaining. It was seen that a city is constantly growing and that changes are inevitable even if they are at times imperceptible.

In Great Britain at the beginning of the 19th century the example of Paris was taken to heart. This period, 1820-1830, was the great era of civic improvement. The new town at Edinburgh is one example of ordered and controlled street design. The broad streets of Dublin, the improvements at Glasgow, Newcastle, Cheltenham, Brighton, Leamington and Plymouth indicate the trend of affairs at a time when steam locomotion was in every mind.

The period that followed the Victory of Waterloo heralded the new age of invention. A new society, vast in numbers and freshly graded first, second and third class, now took charge of the heritage of taste contributed by their forbears. Spurred by what had been accomplished by architects in Paris, encouraged by archaeological research in Greece and Asia Minor, the newer generation of designers engaged to improve the Metropolis. The results are well known, for example Regents Park, Old Regent Street, Carlton House Terrace, the entrance to the West Strand and other lesser contributions. A great scheme for a riverside quay on the north bank of the Thames from Westminster to Blackfriars was prepared by Colonel Trench and published in 1825. Had this idea been carried out the Victoria Embankment would have been anticipated by 50 years. The scheme was an exceptionally fine one. There were introductory features at the bridge heads and beyond Blackfriars there was a special avenue leading from the riverside quay to the south transept of St. Paul's.

It was grasped at once by the designers and the public that conventional scenery designed in a formal manner not only expressed the developing culture of the people but was necessary to frame the movements of the vast crowds moving through the streets of London and crossing the river by five important bridges.

The triumph of scenic architecture had already been demonstrated by John Nash; the stateliness of certain buildings devoted to public use had been determined by the skill of Sir John Soane and Sir Robert Smirke. At this juncture C. R. Cockerell was just entering the lists. Decimus Burton had yet to make his name, while Charles Barry was setting out to win his spurs as a devotee to the Italian renaissance. The public architecture of this period was strong, graceful and refined in detail. Shining like a brilliant star, Professor C. R. Cockerell was dealing with the Sun Office. Later on Professor Cockerell would be engaged on his design for the Royal Exchange. Civic architecture was now regarded to be an affair of arcades, colonnades, peristyles, façades three or four stories high and other incidental features.

Even the Gothic Revivalists followed the same general principles for civic buildings, that is to say they had profound regard for scale and pictorial compositions. Thus from the time of the Regency until 1870 attention was given to architecture as an expression of the improving culture of the people. It is a fact that only students of social life in England during the 19th century are competent to judge of the state of the arts at that time.

Take for example the spectacle of Regent Street in the late 80's with its splendid shops and procession of carriages, omnibuses and other vehicles. The stuccoed façades by daylight and gaslight formed a scenic background to the movements of the thronging crowds. It was indeed a tranquil scene and one that impressed foreign visitors. The implications of civic art are very broad but

the most important factor is the care given to the design of public buildings. Here should be the finest form of community reward. The public buildings demonstrate the civic organisation of a city. The Greeks knew this and so did the Venetians. The French have raised civic design to a very high level, for across the Channel our versatile neighbours pay respect to the work of former generations besides adding features worthy of the sequential growth.

It is a matter of deep regret that architects and town administrators pay no regard whatsoever to the general scheme of public buildings. Writers on the subject who manufacture news and views for the popular press go out of their way to denounce designs for buildings which they consider are out of the fashion from abroad. The fact that public buildings call for special handling, not only in themselves but in the relationship they should have one with the other, besides general siting, is almost invariably overlooked, or what is worse, grossly misrepresented.

The true axiom should be that public buildings to be rightly placed must fit in exactly with the general formation of the city but they should dominate by virtue of their purpose. In other words monumental architecture should be designed and built not only to satisfy administrative conditions but to be admired by the general public.

The tendency today is to force the commercial issue regardless of everything else. This is why the great works of architecture are in danger of being overshadowed by masses of office buildings and stores built by speculators on sites totally unsuited for such developments. Architectural critics and writers, who make their living by playing up commerce as the one pursuit a nation should follow, mislead thousands of young students by promise of a new style. In any study of civic art the grouping of public buildings is of the first importance.

In Paris the Place de la Concorde presents the finest frontispiece any city could have. In a lesser way the two pavilions at the south end of Princes Street, Edinburgh, fulfil a similar purpose. In London the noble river frontage of Somerset House and the elevation facing west by Pennethorne can be quoted as an example of comprehensive design. In Brussels the great Palais de Justice controls the silhouette of the city; in Rome St. Peter's, and in our own capital we have the splendid dome and campanili of St. Paul's Cathedral. While I am on this subject I must mention the magnificent Square at Lisbon, a splendid frontal approach from the broad waters of the River Tagus to the city. In all groupings of civic buildings the importance of the vista must be taken into account.

In London it is strange that Trafalgar Square should be the only public place of any dimensions and in this case the layout has been spoiled by new buildings and alterations to old ones. One could scarcely say that the façade of the National Gallery is dramatic.

If I were asked to name the most striking example of civic design in England I would say without hesitation the layout of Wren's buildings at Greenwich. This group of monumental buildings is incomparable in Europe, both for the dignity of the works, their composition and siting. As an example of convincing picturesque grouping the Palace of Westminster, the adjacent Abbey and Parliament Square can be named.

The greatest achievement an architect can hope for is to be entrusted with the design of civic amenities. It is a task of great dignity to be entrusted with the creation of a setting which will satisfy posterity that beauty should always accompany everyday life. We judge the culture of other times by works of art and it is by similar works that our generation will be judged. For posterity will be just as interested in our buildings and our thoughts as we are in the works of other times. It would not be very satisfactory if we bequeathed to posterity a collection of cubistic containers labelled preposterously 'Civic Art.' We should not forget that civic art includes other things besides buildings; there is the equally fine art of sculpture to be taken seriously. When we recall the possibilities of sculpture and ornament enriching public buildings we are made aware of the necessity for fountains, statuary and other embellishments at certain points in the formation of a city. Bouchardon's fountains in Paris, Rude's symbolic figures on the Arc de Triomphe, Dubois' work at Nantes, and also his Jeanne d'Arc and Louis d'Orleans, lead on to the works of Chapu, Barrias, Aube and Rodin. Finally we have the realism of St. Gaudens. It is, however, to the great sculptors of the Baroque that we turn for those imaginative compositions in stone and bronze which offer attractions to the human mind irrespective of nationality.

While compiling this lecture memories of many splendid cities came to my mind. I recalled visits to Rome, to Florence, Turin and Genoa. I see myself once again young and enthusiastic sitting down to sketch the civic masterpieces of Brussels, Antwerp, Gottenburg and Stockholm. I recall my first visit to Paris 53 years ago and the way I attempted to put all the city on paper. Since then I have made many pencil drawings and watercolours of cities. Only two months since I sketched the heart of Glasgow from the roof of St. Enoch's Hotel and later travelled on to Edinburgh to record St. George's Square with the domed church by Robert Adam.

All my life I have been attracted by the soul of cities. For instance, the centre of Liverpool with St. George's Hall assuming dramatic intensity by night and morning, Manchester with its black velvet qualities, Bath silvery and retired like some revered dowager of the Old School. Then across the Irish Sea I recall Dublin which reveals the spirit of Ireland, strangely aloof and reproachful. But it is London that controls our ambitions and warms the cockles of our hearts. Go where we may, live where we list, it is London that claims us willy-nilly. The Old Queen of the

Seas has gathered so much in her day. She offers visions and illusions that are finer than any penned descriptions or limnings on canvas. For London has poetry in her riverside silhouette. She suffers from tantrums as all elderly ladies do; she is intriguing and obstinate, petulant, unkind and disdainful, yet she is our ruler and we must pay tribute to her fancies.

The time has come when London demands attention, not by new costumes, not by forced additions, but care and maintenance of her qualities which only experienced hands can give.

Is it not remarkable that our ideas on the future of London are so mean? Does it not strike you that some instruction in civic art is more essential now than ever before? Is it not time to throw off art heresy and bigotted tyranny, masquerading under the cloak of Modernism and Economy? Should not our Professors and instructors of youth humble themselves by restudying masterpieces of the work they profess to teach? Is it not reasonable to expect humility and simplicity from all who believe in the future of the fine arts? Frankly when I visit other cities I am inspired by the care given to the beautifying of amenities. We too could do likewise, for our natural assets are many and our opportunities are legion.

Can I do better than end my talk by mentioning Piccadilly, the village that surrounds the Royal Academy and has for its Parish Church St. James's. Perhaps it will be best to quote Locker-Lampson:—

"Piccadilly—shops, palaces, bustle and breeze,
The whirring of wheels and the murmur of trees,
By daylight, or nightlight, or noisy, or stilly,
Whatever my mood is I love Piccadilly.

Life is chequer'd, a patchwork of smiles and of frowns,
We value its ups; let us muse on its downs.
There's a side that is bright, it will then turn the other,
One turn, if a good one, deserves such another.
Then downs are delightful, then ups are not hilly,
Let us turn one more turn ere we quit Piccadilly."

RULES OF THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

1. The name of the Society shall be The Kensington Society.
2. The objects of the Society shall be to preserve and improve the amenities of Kensington by stimulating interest in its history and records, by protecting its buildings of beauty and historic interest, by preserving its open spaces from disfigurement and encroachment, and by encouraging good architecture in its future development.
3. *Members.* Members shall be Life or Ordinary.
4. *Subscriptions.* Life members shall pay a minimum subscription of £10 10s. Ordinary members shall pay a minimum annual subscription of one guinea, payable on 1st October each year.
5. *The Council.* The Council shall consist of not more than thirty members. They shall be elected by the Executive Committee.
6. *The Officers.* The Officers of the Society shall be the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Hon. Secretary and the Hon. Treasurer.
7. *The Executive Committee.* The Executive Committee shall consist of not more than twelve members and the Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer. The Chairman of the Executive Committee shall be elected annually by the members of the Executive Committee at their first meeting after the Annual General Meeting.
8. The Executive Committee shall be the governing body of the Society. It shall have power to (i) Make bye-laws; (ii) Co-opt members and fill vacancies on the Executive Committee that may arise for the current year; (iii) Take any steps they may consider desirable to further the interests and objects of the Society.
A Quorum of the Executive Committee shall consist of not less than five members.
Not less than three Executive Committee Meetings shall be convened in any one year.
9. *Annual General Meeting.* An Annual General Meeting, of which 28 days notice shall be given to members, shall be held when the Executive Committee shall submit a Report and an audited Statement of Accounts to the previous September 30th.
10. *Election of Officers and Members of the Executive Committee.* All members of the Society shall be eligible for election as Officers of the Society or Members of the Executive Committee. Nominations must be sent to the Hon. Secretary,

11. *Alterations of Rules.* No rule shall be altered or revoked except at a General Meeting of the Society. No motion shall be deemed carried unless it has been agreed to by not less than two-thirds of those present and voting.
12. The Society shall not be dissolved unless a majority of two-thirds of the subscribing members signify their approval of such a course by means of a postal ballot taken after receipt by the said members of a statement by the Executive Committee setting forth fairly and impartially a summary of the arguments for and against such course and the views of the Executive Committee thereon.

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INCOME		£ s. d.
1955/56 <i>£</i>		
Balance at 1st October, 1956		
333 brought forward		285 0 2
Subscriptions—		
10 Life Subscriptions	<u> </u>	
260 Annual Subscriptions	392 8 6	
Tax Recovered — Deeds of Covenant	<u> </u>	
	392 8 6	
Other Income—		
Profit on Sale of Christmas Cards	18 7 6	
Interest on Bank Deposit Account	3 14 7	
Interest on Post Office Savings Bank Account	5 9 6	
Donations	11 10 6	
Coch Visits — excess of income over Expenditure	<u> </u> 15 6	
	39 17 7	
Total £630		<u>£717 6 3</u>

EXPENDITURE		£ s. d.
1955/56 <i>£</i>		
London Meetings—		
72 Net Cost of Halls, Chairs, etc.	73 7 9	
14 Advertising	2 0 0	
98 Printing, Typing and Stationery	159 3 3	
71 Postages and Telephone Calls	<u>62 15 11</u>	
3 Subscriptions	<u> </u>	
Bank Charges and Cheque Books	3 0 0	
Cost of Organising Public Meeting for Imperial Institute	<u> </u>	
62 Planting Trees	13 1 9	
11 Legal Fees	<u>7 10 0</u>	
5 Sundry Expenses		
Stock of Christmas Cards donated to the Kensington and Paddington Friendly Service Unit	<u>17 10 0</u>	
		338 8 8
Balance at 30th September, 1957		
Martin's Bank, Limited—		
Current Account	8 10 11	
Deposit Account	145 5 11	
285 Post Office Savings Bank	<u>225 0 9</u>	
		378 17 7
Total £630		<u>£717 6 3</u>

WRIGHT, STEVENS & LLOYD,
Chartered Accountants.

7th October, 1957.

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