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# The Kensington Society

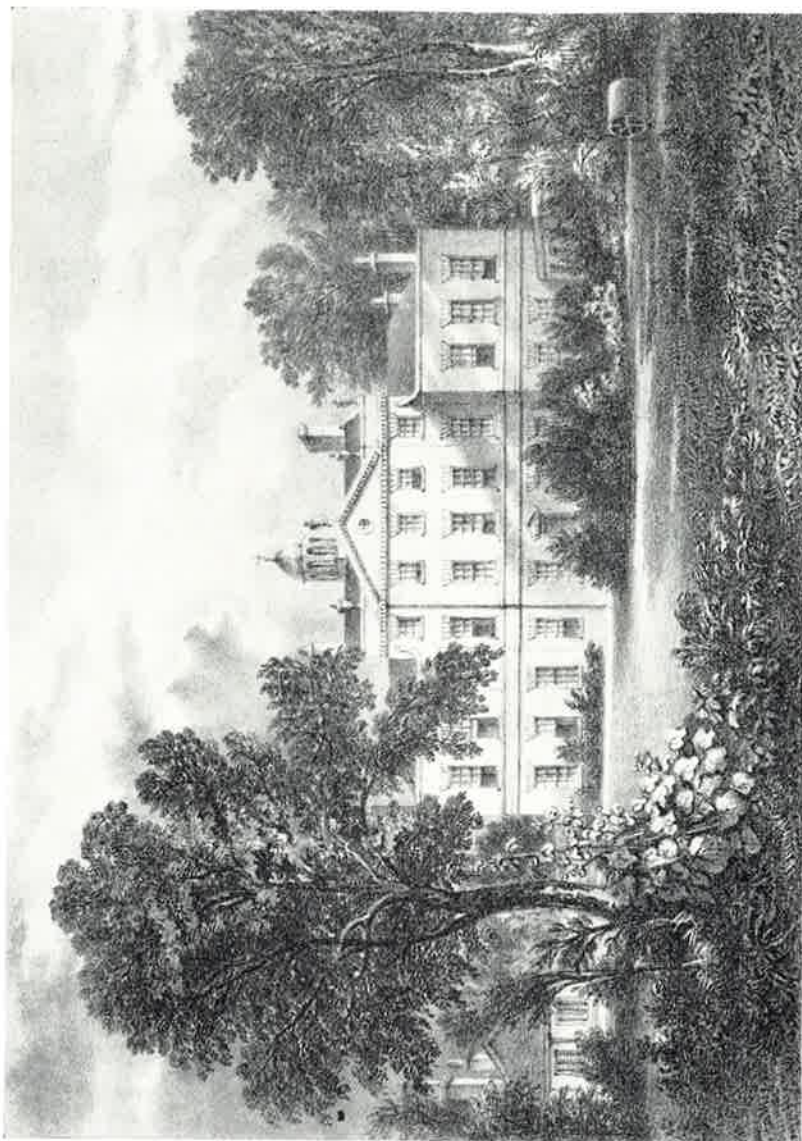


5<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL REPORT  
Year 1957-58

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT

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AUBREY HOUSE

The house is situated in Aubrey Walk, near the grounds of Holland Park. A house existed on the site as far back as 1698. Successively known as "The Wells," The Villa at Notting Hill (1762), Notting Hill House (1795), and "Aubrey House" (1859). Lady Mary Coke lived there from 1767 to 1788. A history of the house, compiled by Miss F. M. Gladstone, was published in 1922.

## THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

### *President:*

THE RT. HON. VISCOUNT ESHER, G.B.E.

### *Vice-Presidents:*

THE RT. REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF KENSINGTON  
SIR HAROLD KENYON, M.B.E., J.P.

### *Council:*

Miss Jean Alexander	The Hon. Mr. Justice Karminski
Miss Rachel Alexander	Oliver Messel, Esq.
Hardy Amies, Esq.	Lady Norman, J.P.
The Hon. Mr. Justice Barry	Duncan Oppenheim, Esq.
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The Marquess of Cholmondeley, G.C.V.O.	H. Clifford Smith, Esq., F.S.A.
Ashley Dukes, Esq., F.R.S.L.	The Rt. Hon. Sir Patrick Spens, K.B.E., Q.C., M.P.
S. J. L. Egerton, Esq.	Prof. Arnold Toynbee, D.Litt., D.C.L., F.B.A.
William F. Grimes, Esq., V.P.S.A.	Orlo Williams, Esq., C.B., M.C., D.C.L.
The Lord Harlech, K.G., G.C.M.G.	

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

#### *Chairman:*

H. Stephen Pasmore, Esq., M.B., B.S. (Lond.)

#### *Vice-Chairman:*

C. H. Gibbs-Smith, Esq., F.R.S.A., F.M.A.

Geoffrey Agnew, Esq.	Keon Hughes, Esq.
C. G. Boxall, Esq.	John Paul, Esq.
F. Carter, Esq.	Hugh Shillito, Esq.
W. G. Corfield, Esq.	Miss P. M. Ward
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

I have been looking over the general activities of the Kensington Society during the past year, and derive from it a consoling impression of valuable and important achievement. I know that, trusting to the usual competence of its Secretary, it is easy enough for the President of the Kensington Society to be complacent, but everybody knows how difficult it is to fight and to defeat the innumerable enemies of amenity, or indeed to accomplish anything in this greedy and hostile world. But I find in this Report a satisfactory atmosphere of success over a wide field of endeavour which must confirm the reader's belief in the value of these civic societies. No doubt persistent vigilance is the secret of this success. Avert your eyes for a moment and someone will cut down a tree that has taken a century to grow, pull down a house that creates the character of a street, put up a light standard of monumental vulgarity, or use the convenient phrases of "planning" to exploit and spoil some area of ancient beauty. To nip all this vandalism in the bud, to stop it with our resounding negative, every citizen who is civilized should join the Kensington Society.

(Sgd.) Esher,  
*President.*



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**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at Kensington Town Hall on 9th December, 1957, with Sir Harold Kenyon, Vice-President, in the Chair.

The Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting, previously approved by the Executive Committee, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman.

The adoption of the Report and Accounts for 1957 was moved by Dr. Stephen Pasmore, as Chairman of the Executive Committee, and seconded by Mr. Norman-Butler as Treasurer. In his introductory remarks, Dr. Pasmore welcomed the accession of Sir Patrick Spens, M.P. and Mr. W. W. Begley to the Council of the Society, and Mr. John Paul to the Executive Committee. Dr. Pasmore spoke with regret of the death of Miss Rachel Ferguson, who had been a member of the Council since the foundation of the Society.

Mr. Norman-Butler mentioned the increase in the income from subscriptions as a result of the higher subscription so that the year had ended with an excess of income over expenditure of £50.

Mr. Gurney moved, and Mr. Alec Clifton Taylor seconded, the confirmation of the re-election of the Officers of the Society and of the Executive Committee.

The re-election of Messrs. Wright, Stevens & Lloyd as Hon. Auditors was moved by Mr. Henny, seconded by Miss Ward, and carried unanimously.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Secretary, whose untiring efforts contributed so much to the success of the Society, and to the Hon. Auditors, Messrs. Wright, Stevens & Lloyd.

The meeting was followed by a lecture by Mr. Rupert Gunnis entitled "Outdoor Sculpture."

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### THE GENERAL ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIETY

#### *Notting Hill Gate Development Scheme.*

An important activity of the year was convening a Public Meeting at Kensington Town Hall on 1st April, to give local people a chance to discuss the Notting Hill Gate scheme with planning and architectural experts and to express their opinions about it.

The Chairman was Sir Hugh Casson, R.D.I., F.R.I.B.A., and the speakers were the Chief Town Planning Officers of the London County Council, Mr. Kenneth Browne of the *Architectural Review*, Mr. Enthoven, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A., an architect resident of Notting Hill Gate, and Mr. Ian Nairn of the Counter Attack Bureau.

Over 500 residents of Kensington were present at the meeting.

A full report of the meeting appears on page 20.

The *Architects Journal* on April 17th printed the following report of the meeting.

#### *Notting Hill Run Down.*

If you read Geoffrey Gorer's *Sunday Times* statistical article on "Television in Our Lives" (one out of every two people in my house started to read it, which was one more than those who managed to finish it), you will be delighted to know that 700 people turned out on a recent cold night to talk about the town-shaping of their district. At a time when six houses out of every ten have television (according to Mr. Gorer), it is nice to know that people still care about other things.

The 700 I am talking about went to Kensington Town Hall to discuss the Notting Hill Gate scheme. Was this because of bad television, the good publicity by Mrs. Christiansen, of the Kensington Society, or that dear old-fashioned thing, a community spirit? Whatever got these people away from the electronic theatre, they certainly had a rewarding time. Sir Hugh Casson took the chair, an L.C.C. spokesman explained the proposals, Ian Nairn criticised them, R. E. Enthoven described the character of the district he had known for so long, and Kenneth Browne gave an eye-level townscape investigation. (Remember his sketches in the *Architects Journal* for December 26th?)

Although several top planners from the L.C.C. were present—including the Chairman of the Town Planning Committee—the meeting kept its doubts. Critics of the scheme objected to the absence of a shopping *precinct*, the encouragement of big store development instead of a cheap *local* shopping area, the vagueness about elevational appearance, and the failure to deal with the absurd dog-leg traffic junction. It was also said that an architectural competition should have been held for the development, and that the public should have been given a chance to say what it thought about the proposals.

It was clear from this meeting that if public opinion *had* been consulted it would have been worth having.

The resolutions passed at the meeting were forwarded to the Architects' Department of the L.C.C. On May 2nd the Society received a copy of the detailed plans for Notting Hill Gate from the L.C.C. requesting the views of the Society, to be submitted not later than May 8th. A meeting of the Executive Committee was called and the plans were studied. Subsequently the following letter was sent to the L.C.C.:—

6th May, 1958.

Dear Sir,

We are grateful to you for giving us an opportunity of expressing our views on Messrs. Cotton, Ballard & Blow's plans for the Redevelopment of Notting Hill Gate.

The plans have been studied by the Executive Committee and we are profoundly disappointed with them. It seems to us that very little attention has been paid to the desirability of retaining an intimate atmosphere, the plans show an ugly skyline of building more suitable for an industrial or city area than a residential quarter of Kensington.

We noted at the recent Public Meeting that your Council considered Notting Hill has been a main shopping centre, this was not the case, the area contained only small shops serving local residents. We feel, if these small shops are replaced by large stores, the traffic problem will be greatly increased.

Detail observations on the plans are as follows:

A—area. We consider this is the ugliest part of the proposed development, especially the Point Block, which seems to us to have no artistic merit. Moreover, there is no apparent relationship between this block and the masses of the other buildings in this section.

C—area. We are opposed to such a large office building being erected at the top of Church Street; such an office block is not only unsuitable for this residential and local shopping area, but will entirely alter its character. We feel that this site should have been allocated for residential accommodation.

A further letter was sent to the L.C.C. asking for permission to make the detailed plans available for inspection by the public. Permission was given and through the courtesy of Mr. H. G. Massey, Chief Librarian, they were on view at the North Kensington Public Library from June 12th to July 1st.

### STREET LIGHTING

It will be remembered from last year's Annual Report that the Society was greatly interested in the future lighting scheme for Kensington. Last year the Society met members of the Royal Fine Art Commission and discussed the Borough Council's proposals for relighting the Borough.

The Society later met members of the Borough Council, and submitted its views, accepting the dark grey concrete standard and fluorescent lighting, as was proposed for the Group A roads, i.e., traffic routes; it did not, however, accept the Estate Miner Utilities

standard, which the Council proposed using for Group B roads, i.e., secondary roads and residential streets.

The Society hoped the Council would reconsider the use of this standard. It was also suggested that it might be worth while investigating the possibility of other types of lighting, e.g., colour corrected mercury or tungsten for use with steel or aluminium standards.

The Council said they intended to consider the retention of the old lamp standards in certain streets and squares of architectural merit. They forwarded a list to the Society of areas which they felt came into this category; at the same time they invited the Society to make an additional list of streets to receive the same treatment. A similar invitation had been made to the Royal Fine Art Commission.

The Kensington Society drew up a list of streets, other than those already drawn up by the Borough Council and the Royal Fine Art Commission. These were sent to the Borough Council with the following proposal: That not only certain side streets of architectural merit should be considered for special treatment, but rather that certain 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 and post lantern in all mews and "Pedestrian only" passages was urged.

It now seems certain that in view of the expense involved there will need to be some reconstruction of the list of areas suggested for special lighting.

The following report was received from the Kensington Borough Council by the Society in April, 1958.

#### *Street Lighting—(i) Improvement Scheme—Stage I—Areas of Architectural Merit or Special Amenity.*

On March 11th, 1958 (Minutes, page 77), we reported that we had decided to proceed with Stage I of the street lighting improvement scheme which includes using concrete columns and fluorescent lighting in modern lanterns for improving (i) the illumination of Kensington High Street, (ii) the improvement and conversion to electric lighting to Groups A and B standards of those roads in the borough mainly lit by gas, and (iii) the conversion of isolated gas lamps to electric lighting and other minor improvements.

Some time ago the Royal Fine Art Commission, the Kensington Society and other interested parties, suggested certain streets where



it was thought that owing to architectural merit or special amenity the existing columns and lanterns might be retained and converted as far as possible to modern standards of lighting.

Of the streets suggested for special consideration the following are included in Stage I and are streets which should be lighted to Group B standard:—

Lansdowne Road, Lansdowne Crescent, Lansdowne Walk, St. James' Gardens, St. John's Gardens, Holland Walk, Alexander Square, Brompton Churchyard, Earls Terrace.

The nine streets mentioned above are mainly lit by gas with K.P. lanterns mounted on K.P. type or other old type columns.

In Group B lighting the Code of Practice prepared by the Ministry of Transport and the Practice Notes for Street Lighting in London drawn up by the Association of Metropolitan Borough Engineers require lamps to be mounted at a height of fifteen feet, whereas K.P. and other old type lanterns can only be fixed at a height of twelve feet six inches on the existing columns. This low mounting height and type of lantern prevents efficient distribution of light rays and a great deal of light is lost from the road with consequent bad visibility.

The Code/Practice Notes also provide for columns to be spaced at intervals of one hundred and ten feet and if old type columns were erected at this spacing the lumen output would be greater than that recommended by this standard, but this does not give a clear indication of the degree of visibility that would be obtained except to show that the lighting of the road would be patchy and dismal, which could be dangerous to traffic.

An attempt has been made to find a spacing for K.P. lanterns and columns which will produce a road surface illumination approximating to the Code/Practice Notes standard, and by trial and error a spacing of about eighty feet between columns was found. By reducing the spacing from one hundred and ten feet (Practice Notes) to eighty feet, the light source emits 3,125 lumens per hundred feet linear of road as compared with 1,910 lumens needed under the Code/Practice Notes, thus representing a wastage of light of 64 per cent.

Comparative detailed estimates for providing fluorescent electric lighting in the nine streets in question have been prepared under the following headings:—

- (i) Complying with the Practice Notes using concrete columns and two 40-watt fluorescent lamps with modern G.E.C. lanterns.
- (ii) Not complying with the Practice Notes but using the existing columns at eighty-foot intervals and installing one 80-watt fluorescent ring lamp in each of the present lanterns.

- (iii) Not complying with the Practice Notes but using the existing columns re-sited to a spacing of one hundred and ten feet as recommended in the Practice Notes and installing one 80-watt fluorescent ring lamp in each of the present lanterns.
- (iv) Not complying with the Practice Notes but using the existing columns in their present positions and installing one 80-watt fluorescent ring lamp in each of the present lanterns.

An examination of the capital costs, together with an estimated maintenance charge for ten years, gives the following comparison:—

	Complying with Practice Notes	Not Complying with Practice Notes		
	(i) New lanterns and columns	(ii) Columns at 80 feet spacing	(iii) Columns at 110 feet spacing	(iv) Columns in existing positions
Capital cost ..	£ 9,404	£ 10,336	£ 7,752	£ 5,991
Ten years maintenance ..	5,310	10,060	7,560	6,570
Total ..	£14,714	£20,396	£15,312	£12,561

(Loan charges are not included in these figures)

Ten years' maintenance of the present lighting in the nine streets concerned is £14,620 which it will be seen is nearly three times greater than that for lighting with new equipment properly spaced. This maintenance cost will tend to increase owing to deterioration of the lamps and columns which have been in use for many years.

In general, we are of the opinion that improved lighting with modern equipment should be installed in all roads in Stage I of the lighting scheme unless conclusive evidence is forthcoming that the amenities of any particular street will be unduly impaired by the installation of this form of lighting, sufficient to justify the much greater maintenance cost involved if the existing columns and lanterns were retained.

We do not feel that any such case can be made in respect of the following streets:—

Lansdowne Road, Lansdowne Crescent, Lansdowne Walk, St. James' Gardens, St. John's Gardens, Holland Walk.

So far, as regards Alexander Square, Brompton Churchyard and Earls Terrace, we have deferred consideration of the type of lighting to be used until Stage I of the scheme is nearing completion. By that time experience will be gained of improved lighting in neighbouring areas and we will be in a better position to submit definite proposals.

We have, therefore, decided that with the three exceptions quoted above, the lighting in all streets included in Stage I of the street lighting improvement scheme should be improved to Code/Practice Notes standards by using fluorescent lighting and modern equipment properly spaced.

We have notified the Royal Fine Art Commission and the Kensington Society accordingly.

The six streets in which the Council have decided to erect concrete lamp standards were included in the list put forward by the Royal Fine Art Commission and the Kensington Society.

We should like to point out that when the Estate Miner Utility Standard was chosen by the Borough Council, it was on the list approved by the Council of Industrial Design, we understand that it no longer figures on their list. The Society has seen many designs and has been in communication with a number of manufacturers. It is interesting to note that the main objection put forward for the use of the steel standard is on the score of cost.

The manufacturers of the steel column say they find that one of the objections to the use of tubular steel is the maintenance factor, but that few Councils take into consideration the cost of replacing damaged concrete columns. They have made a careful study of this and have found that in quite a number of districts the cost of replacing damaged columns far exceeds the annual painting cost. The manufacturers quoted respective costs for the erection of steel and concrete columns, the total cost for concrete plus erection was £12 7s. 6d. and for steel £11 2s. 6d.

The Society has been informed that fluorescent lighting is becoming obsolescent for street lighting. The Secretary wrote to Mr. Whitworth, of the Council of Industrial Design, for some positive statement about this. Mr. Whitworth's reply was as follows:—

Thank you for your letter of 29th June regarding fluorescent lighting. I have endeavoured to get a positive statement on this question of its obsolescence from various manufacturers and, while the individuals concerned are quite ready to support our view in discussion, they are not prepared to put this in writing owing to the vast commercial considerations involved. Throughout the whole of the public lighting industry, with the possible exception of one firm, no new development work is being undertaken with fluorescent tubes for street lighting. The only research of which we have knowledge is concerned only with reducing the cost of the lantern and not with improving the optical performance.

All the technical experts of the companies believe that the future is in discharge lamps of the colour corrected mercury type. In the foreseeable future they cannot visualise sufficient technical advance in the fluorescent type to warrant its further development.

The Americans have continued with the fluorescent tube in the search for one of very high output and, while this has had a limited success, the results are not encouraging enough to interest British manufacturers.

You will appreciate that our views on these lighting sources are likely to be somewhat in advance of the commercial situation, as manufacturers have lanterns that they still wish to sell. A contributory factor to the continued production of these is that the lamp is not specially manufactured for street lighting and forms part of the everyday production run.

There was a paper read at the Annual Conference of the Association of Public Lighting Engineers at Torquay last September that contained certainly an inference that fluorescent lighting was now outmoded and I have no recollection of this suggestion having been challenged or discussed, although several other points much less controversial than this were argued at some length.

Recent publication of the A.P.L.E.'s own journal have given prominence to colour corrected mercury in particular and certainly very little mention is being made of fluorescent tubing. It is well known that the 2-foot fluorescent tube as used on Group B lighting is particularly inefficient electrically and can only be employed when multiple tubes are assembled in the one fitting.

Perhaps the biggest argument against fluorescent lanterns is their high capital cost, two or three times that of other light sources, and while there is some difference of opinion between various authorities on the actual running costs, broadly speaking they are comparable, the cheapest of the various systems being the currently despised sodium lighting (orange).

The inherent bulk and weight of a fluorescent lantern, together with its cost, will, we are confident, lead to its being dropped from general use within the next few years. As you are well aware, the majority of fittings are completely out of scale with their columns and surroundings, purely because of the length of the tube. Its sole redeeming feature is the colour of the light, which is reasonably good, but the progress that has been made in the colour rendering properties of other light sources made these competitors on this point.

I trust this insight conveys to you the reasoning behind our opinion but you may be sure that personally I am quite prepared to stand by it in the face of any arguments yet heard in favour of fluorescent lighting.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) Peter Whitworth,

Secretary, Street Furniture Panel.



In view of the information received a letter was sent to the Kensington Borough Council asking them to reconsider the subject of street lighting, before saddling our streets with ugly concrete lamp standards and using a form of lighting, which may be outmoded by the time it is completed.

A public meeting has been arranged for October 24th, when it is hoped we shall receive some guidance on this subject. Sir Gordon Russell, the Director of the Council of Industrial Design, is taking the Chair, and the speakers are Mr. Basil Spence, President, Royal Institute of British Architects, Mr. Norman Boydell, Past President of the Association of Public Lighting Engineers, Mr. Richard Stevens, an electrical engineer, Mr. Eric Lyons, F.R.I.B.A., and Mr. W. G. Bor, A.R.I.B.A., A.M.T.P.I.

#### *St. Mary Abbots Terrace Site.*

St. Mary Abbots Terrace consists of early Victorian attached houses, four storey's high, which were built in 1827. Many of the properties have been empty for some time, for as the leases fall in they have not been renewed. The empty houses, riddled with dry rot and exposed to the weather, are practically derelict. The property is on the site bounded by Kensington High Street, Addison Road, Holland Park Road and Melbury Road, and the property involved is owned by Lord Ilchester and is part of the Holland Estate. The development of this site is to be undertaken by private enterprise on a building lease, not by the owner himself.

Early in 1958 the developers submitted plans for the re-development to the London County Council, who in turn asked the Kensington Borough Council for their observations. The Borough Council were of opinion that permission should be given subject to certain very important conditions.

The proposal was for two large blocks of flats at the east and west ends of the Terrace, with shops at the east end, and between the two blocks there would be houses similar to those built in Ilchester Place.

Later in the year the developers submitted a revised plan. At the Executive Committee Meeting of the Kensington Society in May, 1958, the original plan and the revised plan were considered. It was found that the revised plan reversed the first proposal. It would result in the siting of four sets of three-storeyed houses at right-angles to Kensington High Street, from which only their side elevations and back gardens would be visible.

After study of the two plans, the Committee agreed that the first plan was preferable as the terrace houses would balance with Earls Terrace on the opposite side of the High Street. A letter was sent to the Borough Council stating the Society's views.

The Society has been informed that the original scheme has been approved.

#### *Poplars near Kensington Palace Stables.*

Information was received that the Ministry of Works was planning to fell the poplars planted by Princess Louise to hide the back of Kensington Palace Hotel. Correspondence with the Ministry showed that this rumour was unfounded.

#### *Lex Garage Site, Campden Hill.*

Planning permission was sought by the Lex Garage proprietors to build a block of 42 luxury flats on the site now occupied by the garage.

The block would be nine storeys high and approximately 93 feet in height. We were asked by the residents of that area to support their protest. It was thought by the Society that, as this site dominates the Campden Hill view, it would be undesirable to have such a high block, and a letter to that effect was sent to the London County Council.

Permission to build the block of flats was refused by the London County Council. The proprietors of Lex Garage, however, appealed to the Minister and a Public Enquiry was held at the Town Hall. Mr. W. S. Corfield represented the Society at the Inquiry. As we go to press we have been informed by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government that the Minister has decided to dismiss the appeal and has, accordingly, refused permission for the proposed development.

#### *Traffic in The Boltons.*

A rumour heard by some of the residents in The Boltons that the Kensington Borough Council was planning to re-route heavy traffic through The Boltons was investigated and found to be baseless.

#### *1-20 Stanhope Gardens, 2-20 Stanhope Mews East.*

We considered the several alternative schemes for the redevelopment of this site. The scheme favoured by the Society was the erection of 39 terrace houses and 21 self-contained flats.

The London County Council refused planning permission for this scheme, the developers appealed to the Minister. The appeal was successful, the Minister giving permission for the development.

#### *16, Kensington Square.*

Messrs. Baron & Warren, of 16, Kensington Square, applied to the London County Council for permission to form a vehicular access in connection with providing parking space for two cars in the forecourt of their building. The Society strongly recommended the London County Council to refuse, as parking of cars in the forecourt of Kensington Square was highly undesirable. Planning permission has now been refused. As we go to print we understand

from the L.C.C. that Messrs. Baron & Warren have appealed to the Minister. The date of the Enquiry is not yet known.

380-386, *Kensington High Street.*

Planning permission had been sought for the redevelopment of this site, a 16-storey tower building 150 feet high, comprising flats, shops and offices.

The Society informed the L.C.C. that it was most anxious that the area, zoned in the County Development Plan as residential, should remain so, and that we set great store by this site making an effective impression as an entrance to the Borough.

A Public Inquiry was held on July 18th. The Minister's decision has not yet been announced.

*Campden Hill School Prize.*

When the Campden Hill Preservation Society came to an end in 1953, the Chairman, Mr. W. G. Corfield, had in hand a sum of £20, which he handed over to the newly-formed Kensington Society, with the suggestion that the money should be used for a prize when the new school in Campden Hill was opened.

The Kensington Society has now agreed to increase the amount by £30 making a total of £50, from the income of which a prize will be presented each year for the best essay on Kensington. The Headmaster has welcomed this suggestion.

*Plaques.*

The London County Council has agreed to the Society's suggestion to commemorate Lady Mary Coke by a plaque, but has rejected the idea of one to Leslie Stephen.

#### OTHER ACTIVITIES

Other activities included a Recital for Viola d'Amore, square Piano and Flute, arranged by S. Montague Cleeve.

A visit to B. T. Batsford, Ltd., Mr. B. C. Batsford gave a talk on Book Production.

Mr. H. Gandell gave a lecture entitled "Royal Heraldry."

A visit to the Byam Shaw School of Drawing and Painting.

Mr. Andor Gomme gave a lecture entitled "Beauty still in Danger."

Professor W. F. Grimes gave a lecture entitled "Excavation in Roman London."

Mr. John Betjeman gave a lecture entitled "Victorian Architecture."

A visit to the Savill Gardens, Windsor Great Park.

Mrs. G. Christiansen again opened her house and garden, 18, Kensington Square, to members. Unfortunately, the weather did not permit having tea in the garden, or of showing the exhibition of charming pictures of Kensington, painted by Miss Beatrice Langdon.

A visit to Luton Hoo, Bedfordshire.

A visit to the Design School—Royal College of Art, South Kensington.

A visit to Chiswick House conducted by Mr. Faulkner, who has been responsible for the restoration.

A coloured film lecture, entitled "Birds of Britain," by Mr. P. E. Brown, Secretary of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

A lecture illustrated by coloured slides of the work of the National Trust, by Mr. Carew Wallace.

A visit to Holy Trinity Church, Prince Consort Road, conducted by Major Gubbins.

#### FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS

*December 16th, at 6.30 p.m.*

At Queen Elizabeth College, Campden Hill Road, W.8, the Annual General Meeting followed by a lecture by Dr. Stephen Pasmore, entitled "The Life and Times of Sir Walter Cope of Holland House, 1604-1614."

*January 15th, at 2.30 p.m.*

A visit to Lloyds. Meet at the main entrance, Lime Street, E.C.3. Tickets required, numbers limited.

*February 24th, at 8 p.m.*

At Queen Elizabeth College, Campden Hill Road, W.8, a lecture by Mr. C. H. Gibbs-Smith, entitled "What is the use of Art?" Chairman: Mr. Trenchard Cox, C.B.E.

*March 16th, at 2.30 p.m.*

A visit to the Mercers Hall, Ironmonger Lane, E.C.4. Meet at the main entrance. Tickets required, numbers strictly limited.

*April 7th, at 2.15 p.m.*

A visit to the London School of Weaving and The Kensington Weavers. No. 136, Kensington Church Street, W.8. Meet at the main entrance. Tickets required, numbers limited.



### TREE GROUP

The growing interest in tree preservation and in new tree planting schemes was evident during the year. The Society's activities in these matters help in this admirable trend.

As expected, a number of reports reached the Society of impending schemes involving the unnecessary destruction of trees. Each report was carefully investigated. Some were, happily, found to be incorrect, and action was taken in the others.

The Borough Council continued with its modest long-term tree planting scheme. Since our last report over 360 trees were planted in the streets by them, but there are still dozens of residential streets needing planting.

It will surprise some to hear that in one street there was heated opposition to the planting. The Society, on hearing of it, canvassed the views of the residents in the street and proved that the great majority of them favoured the trees. The Society conveyed this information to the Council, and included with it a contribution of £10 towards the cost. The Council expressed their grateful thanks to the Society for their encouragement in the matter.

A most encouraging development during the year was the action of the residents of Upper Addison Gardens. Having decided that their street could do with an avenue of trees they planned the scheme themselves, collecting the cost, and the Council did the planting for them. A very generous individual effort was made by a resident of Upper Addison Road. It gave him pleasure, he said, to pay for the planting of 20 trees in his street.

These generous and public-spirited people deserve our grateful thanks.

(Sgd.) F. Carter.

### PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD GROUP

Although for a number of reasons the Photographic Group has not been active during the past year, the need for preserving a photographic record of Kensington is as urgent as ever, and it is hoped that in the near future some development will take place. The Annual Subscription to the Kensington Society covers membership of the Group and new members will be gladly welcomed.

(Sgd.) C. G. Boxall.

### KENSINGTON SOCIETY NOTES

Please note that subscriptions for 1958-59 were due on October 1st.

The Inland Revenue has agreed to accept claims for repayment of tax on covenanted subscriptions to the Society.

This year a monthly programme card has been sent to members, instead of the programme card previously sent twice a year. It was thought that this would have the advantage of reminding members each month of the Society's activities.

Extra copies of the Annual Report, 1957-58, can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, price 2s.

The Society is affiliated to The London Society, the Metropolitan Parks and Gardens Association and the Central Council of Civic Societies.

The Society would be pleased to receive from members names of notable residents worthy of commemorative plaques.

The Society is still anxious to hear from members interested in the formation of a Local History Group.

Will members taking part in visits please make a point of being on time to avoid keeping the host and party waiting.

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

A great number of letters have been received by the Secretary with various suggestions. These have been carefully considered by the Executive Committee and, where it was felt desirable and possible, steps have been taken to comply with the requests.

Members are reminded of the aim of the Society and are urged to inform the Secretary, as soon as possible, if they hear of any plans or proposals which conflict with the objects of the Society.

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.

We would like to record our thanks to the Civic Trust for the grant of £15 towards the expenses of holding the Public Meeting to discuss the Notting Hill Gate Scheme.

Membership, which is subject to fluctuation owing to loss by death and by some members leaving the district, is now 438. It is nice to know that some members retain their membership when they move elsewhere and continue to follow our affairs with interest. We have one member in Portugal and two in Australia.

### CHRISTMAS CARDS

*Christmas Cards.*

The Secretary would welcome volunteers for selling Christmas Cards. These are 4d. and 6d. each and are seen facing pages 3 and 28.



## PUBLIC MEETING

held at the

### KENSINGTON TOWN HALL

on April 1st, to discuss the

#### DEVELOPMENT OF NOTTING HILL GATE

*Chairman:* SIR HUGH CASSON R.D.I., F.R.I.B.A.

*Speakers:* L.C.C. Planning Officers.

MR. KENNETH BROWNE, *Architects' Review*.

MR. R. E. ENTHOVEN, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A.

MR. IAN NAIRN, of Counter Attack Bureau.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have an apology from the representatives of the London County Council, who are delayed in committee, so, although they were to have been the first speakers, I think we should get started in any case. Our speakers tonight are L.C.C. representatives—officials, architects and engineers. Then we have Mr. Kenneth Browne, an architect, a member of the staff of the *Architectural Review*, and one of the best architectural draughtsmen in the country. We have Mr. Enthoven, a very distinguished architect, living in the Notting Hill Gate area who, therefore, looks at the problem as an inhabitant as well as an architect. Finally, we have Mr. Ian Nairn, well known to you all as the inventor of the word "subtopia"—amongst other activities.

Mr. Whittaker, here, says that, although he is not prepared, he will start our proceedings with a short introduction on the history of this development.

MR. WHITTAKER: I would like briefly to run over the course of events as they have occurred from the point of view of the London County Council. The main thing is that the Notting Hill Gate road improvement was originally projected prior to the last war. Notting Hill Gate has always been a very important intersection and local centre. Improvements in road widening have been carried out in the past from time to time, and they sufficed until the coming of the petrol age, when traffic began to increase at an alarming rate. Various small widenings were carried out in the early part of the century. Immediately prior to the war, the Council took powers to carry out a road improvement on the present scale. In addition to the traffic congestion, a great deal of inconvenience was caused by

the two Underground stations at that point, and the Council had discussions with the London Transport people at that time. The outcome was a proposed improvement, not only of the road but of the railway system by having one single station placed underground which would obviate the necessity of people who wanted to change from one line to the other having to cross the road.

The war held that up, and immediately after the war it was not possible to make a start owing to financial restrictions. When, finally, a release of capital was made for this purpose by the central Government, the Council turned its attention not only to the road improvement but to development. The Council had, during the period of small activity during the war, acquired additional land in order to obtain a really good site for redevelopment, and then had to turn its hand to carrying out this considerable improvement. It could have dealt with this by demolishing property, widening the road and then leasing off the individual sites as they then were for individual redevelopment, but it felt that it was important that, such an important shopping centre being affected, to try to obtain a comprehensive development which would provide adequate car parking facilities and give access to all the shops. The Council therefore decided that it would carry out comprehensive redevelopment of the three main sites.

The largest site lies on the north of the road between Ladbroke Terrace and Pembridge Road. The other two sites are on the south side, both east of Kensington Church, and the Council decided that it would like to see a proper redevelopment of the existing shopping centre. It also wanted as much residential accommodation as possible, and some office development in order to provide some local employment, as it was felt that Notting Hill Gate was sufficiently outside the central area as to allow for some office accommodation without adding to the general congestion. It would allow people in the area to obtain employment outside the central area and so, to some extent, alleviate that situation.

In addition to deciding the fundamental basis, that is, the rebuilding of the important shopping centre, the provision of as much residential accommodation as possible, and some office accommodation to provide local employment, the Council took another fundamental decision. It decided to invite offers from private developers. This was done, and one firm, has been chosen out of an initial 60 interested developers. In September last the Council granted consent to a development designed by these people with the benefit of the guidance and advice of the architects, engineers and designers of the London County Council.

The basis of the scheme is quite straightforward. Two tall buildings are involved. One, on the side north of Notting Hill Gate, is for residential use. The other, at the junction of Notting Hill Gate and Kensington Church Street, is for office use. Those two buildings were intended to give point to the centre and to emphasise the fact

that Notting Hill Gate is an important centre, both from the traffic point of view, as a rail connection and as a shopping centre.

The remainder of the development comprises shops on the ground floor of almost all the buildings proposed, with the larger shops, the multiple stores, concentrated at the corner of Pembridge Road and Notting Hill Gate, and, above, a series of residential and office accommodation. The tall buildings will mark the centre and become visual entities. The lower buildings will allow some sun and light to penetrate. The majority of the residential accommodation has been sited in the tallest block, which will keep the residents away from the traffic noises of the street.

The situation now is the Council has granted consent to development, the lines of which can be seen on the model and on the screen, and the developers' architects are now engaged on developing those proposals in detail.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much indeed, Mr. Whittaker. Mr. Whittaker deserves especial thanks for standing in so ably for his colleagues. We now have with us Mr. West, the Deputy Chief Architect, so I will ask him to carry on from where Mr. Whittaker left off. With the large attendance here I am sure that there will be a lot of questions, so I will ask all speakers to be fairly brief.

MR. WEST: I must apologise for the absence of the Chairman of the Planning Committee, who had every intention of being here in time for the opening of the meeting. However, this is the last meeting of the present London County Council, and he was still engaged in the heat of debate when we left. But he hopes to come along as soon as he is free of the particular matter that was being debated when we left, and to say a few words to the meeting.

As a matter of fact, I do not think that I have anything to add to the points I heard Mr. Whittaker put forward. He has told you of the general history of the scheme. It really was, initially, a pre-war traffic improvement scheme, and the properties were acquired under a pre-war act. After the war we were all too busy building houses and schools, and road improvements had to take rather a back place. They are a sharp priority now, and this is one of the first major schemes which is being put forward, and being put forward on the basis of what was, in fact, a pre-war proposal. It is something which has been in cold storage and has now been taken out.

One thing I should like to make quite clear is that the opportunity has been taken to look at this pre-war scheme again in terms of securing some form of comprehensive development. If this scheme had gone ahead in the old pre-war days the sites would probably have been developed in a much more piecemeal way, although I think, whatever the merits or demerits of the scheme that might come about, the fact that it is a comprehensive scheme is something that has resulted in the job being done now.

Mr. Whittaker has told you how this came about and what the accommodation is. It is a mixed development scheme, with office, residential and shopping accommodation, because Notting Hill Gate is, of course, a great shopping centre. It has two major high buildings, because we feel that there is particular need to avoid the "classic" suburban shopping street. We have sought to make it big, and there are illustrations and models at the back of the hall. We have sought to prepare a scheme which, at least, still gives physical expression to Notting Hill Gate as a place, so that when you are going on the road to Marble Arch and the west it will not be just an endless shopping street, but rather that you will feel that you have got to Notting Hill Gate. That was our feeling in suggesting the general outline of the development.

The position now is that the County Council, as planning authority and as landlord authority, has taken the scheme to the point you now see illustrated at the back of the hall, and which was, as it were, presented to the public at a Press conference some time ago. As Mr. Whittaker has told you, the matter is now in the hands of the private developers. We have yet to see their final outline proposals of the scheme as a whole in detail, but we hope to do so soon. We ourselves took the scheme to the stage of indicating a general outline of what we considered was proper development, with the uses contained in it—offices, residential and shops. It has now been taken over by the architects for the private developers who will carry out that scheme, subject, of course, to the approval of the London County Council as planning authority and landlord. I cannot take the matter any further now, but other speakers will answer questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: We shall now ask Mr. Kenneth Browne to show us some pictures. This is partly to assist you in seeing what the job might look like to people walking about Notting Hill Gate. Models, you know, are very dangerous things. You see that model there, but I very much doubt if you will ever see Notting Hill Gate like that. You will get the pavement or pedestrian view, and that is what Mr. Browne will now show us by means of some of his beautiful drawings.

MR. KENNETH BROWNE: Before showing the pictures, I do want to emphasise what a tremendous opportunity is presented by the development of 600 yards of existing shopping street at one go and by one firm of architects. It is a pretty tricky problem and demands a great deal of imagination and innovation to create the character of Notting Hill Gate and not just to give us a neutral kind of street that you might see anywhere. Since the end of the war we have seen a great deal of "inhuman" rebuilding—things just chucked down on the street—piecemeal rebuilding; and self-interest has been the principal aim. That is a different kettle of fish altogether. There has not been, perhaps, enough public feeling expressed about some of the atrocities that have been perpetrated. People have been



indifferent. They have waited until they were confronted with these things and then have moaned about it. That is why I think this meeting is so important. It does show that we are really taking an active interest in architecture. We have a full house tonight of people who are sufficiently interested in their surroundings not just to wait until the things are put up and then moan about them. If we do not take an interest in architecture we deserve just what we get.

A few months ago I was asked to write an article for the *Architects' Journal*, with some pictures, about this particular scheme. To do that, having seen the model, I tried to imagine myself walking round in the Notting Hill Gate as it might be. I had to ask myself, "What will it add up to as urban or town scenery? What will it look like walking around—from the ground—not as isolated pieces of architecture, but as a street scene?" That is the question that everyone should ask, and then look at a model, because, as Sir Hugh Casson has just remarked, a model can be terribly misleading. Everyone loves models. They are exciting to look at. But they give the one view of the scene that is least likely to be seen at all, and that is the area. The view that really matters is that of something living and moving about in Notting Hill Gate, what is seen at eye level and what the surroundings will be. Is this going to be a pleasant place to live in, to shop in, to move about in?

I must mention the essential need, when designing a shopping street, to consider the pedestrian. He is the bloke who really does matter. We have had enough of the "corridor." For example, there is Kensington High Street, even with pavements—absolutely no hope at all. Traffic governs everything and the man in the street does not matter at all. The modern shopping street must have pedestrian spaces breaking back from the line of the street, where the shopper is safe from traffic, can rest his feet, have a pint, if he likes, or have a coffee and meet his friends—a sort of static place where he can rest. After all, why should he not enjoy things, instead of it being just a misery?

You can see this going on in Coventry. There are excellent examples of pedestrian enclosures and spaces where it will be a real pleasure to shop. Are we getting that here? Mr. West has explained the difficulties confronting the London County Council and the architects. He has told us that the pre-war road widening scheme limits the area of development, but there is sufficient latitude to make it exciting. The London County Council have a jolly good record in this kind of thing. Their building since the war is of international repute, and we can congratulate them on that. The only thing is that in this case they will not be the architects, but the planning authority. But I must congratulate them that, in their plan, they have made a definite effort to get away from the corridor street. Have they gone far enough? What is shown is a diagrammatical thing which is not a representation of what will be seen on the street.

The pictures were done some months ago to show what the possibilities of this scheme will be, and also its dangers.

(Mr. Browne then completed his address by means of slides and pictorial drawings.)

THE CHAIRMAN: We have now seen how the London County Council can prepare a programme sufficiently imaginative for some very imaginative architect, and I think that you will agree that we have had from Mr. Browne a most exciting trip round the Notting Hill Gate as it might be, and as we hope it will be. It will now ask Mr. Enthoven, as a resident in the area, to contribute his opinion of the proposal, and also as an architect.

MR. ENTHOVEN: I would like first to say how very impressed I was, as I am sure we all were, by the pictures that Mr. Browne has just shown. He has emphasised the fact that this very admirable outline scheme prepared by the London County Council is only the beginning of the story. What we, as residents, are worried about, is the implementation. The whole thing could go wrong on us. As a resident, I have looked out on Church Street for 40 years, and realised many years ago that changes were going to occur. I looked forward to them with enthusiasm and excitement, which has turned to disappointment, fear and near panic.

We are all worried, I think, about a change in environment. We do not mind moving to a new environment but are worried about our own being changed for us—like a complete stranger doing a living room without consulting the owner. We know from the evidence that this is to be an improvement. That word has already been used, but I personally prefer to say reconstruction, and wait for developments. After all, something is being taken away, and something is being added, and we must see whether, by gaining on the swings we may lose on the roundabout—and we all expected that there would be a roundabout, but we now believe that it will not be built.

We must not be sentimental. We know it will be changed. My memories take me back to a gentleman in a top hat riding in a carriage and pair, though he was probably only the local J.P., and to the Kensington gravel pits. Change has to come about, but what are we getting? There will certainly be an improvement below, but the junction seems to remain as before. You get an extra line of traffic and a lot of big buildings attracting more people and more traffic.

The whole scheme seems to depend on the car parking facilities. From the photograph, we saw a car park alongside the Underground. We need that, I think, to cope with our present car parking troubles—cars all over the place. Those big new buildings will bring in a lot more of them, and we would like to know what this development body or company intends to do about that.



We are certainly grateful to the London County Council for seeing that the locality is emphasised with special treatment, and will not be just repetitive of the Kensington High Street, but many of us hope that, in order to implement this scheme—or hoped—a brilliant team of architects would be brought in by the London County Council so as to make it rather an L.C.C. scheme, not an L.s.d. scheme, and I fear that that is what is rather governing the visual appearance. The developers have not shown us a scheme. We are beating the air. We do not know what is coming.

This is a problem that very few architects would be likely to tackle with success, so I am sure the architects will not be hurt when we suggest that they will need all possible help from residents and inhabitants in Kensington generally. The problem is to achieve some comprehensive scheme. We need cohesion, but we need variety within that cohesion, and such a scheme as this is much more likely to achieve that aim by having several architects working together, or even in disagreement. They could work together, even though they were in disagreement. They are much more likely to produce the human touch that we want.

Had this problem occurred in such a country as Italy, there would, perhaps, have been a competition, but, in any case, anybody would have known what was happening. Here—we have this meeting. It is this human touch that we want. After all, Notting Hill Gate has grown out of a village and there are many things left to be exploited—little terraces hidden away that might be introduced—all these touches, emphasising in a sensitive sort of way, in order to have a scheme of interest and not just a string of tasteless buildings.

I am sorry if I appear to be pessimistic about the future, but it is only right that the London County Council should come to us for our comment.

THE CHAIRMAN: Before questions are asked, I will ask Mr. Nairn to speak.

MR. NAIRN: First, I should like to say that these sketches of Kenneth Browne's are not necessarily what is going to happen, but what he hopes will happen. If you liked them, as I did, and as I think everyone who has seen them does, it is up to you to try to see we get something like that. Unless people are prepared to press for it they will not get it, but something more like the awful examples he showed us. I want, too, to say how good I think Kenneth's scheme is. In a sense, this is epoch-making. It is the first time that someone has tried to take over from where the architect leaves off and make a place that no one else has thought about. In a sense, Kenneth Browne is trying to make a place in spite of the architecture, and I think that the potentialities of that kind of thing are enormous. There are plenty of places at the moment where the architect has put up his shocking buildings and now there seems to be a chance to

redeem them, as it were, after the architect has finished. The technique will be very valuable.

Three things can happen to the objects left over. They can just be left over—badly designed and related. The design can be improved, but they are still left unrelated, which is not very much better. It is just a weak, negative and uninteresting approach. Or the design can be improved and they can be brought together. They can be related to each other to make something positive. I think that, as you might have seen in the illustrations of the canopy, once the things are related the thing that was a vice originally then becomes a virtue, because, if related, they become a pattern—and a rich pattern.

Kenneth Browne has produced a sort of optical illusion of two Notting Hill Gates on the same land. There is the materialist Notting Hill Gate which is, at the moment, the pedestrian's Notting Hill Gate as well. You can see that in Kensington High Street. If you go along Kensington High Street either on the pavement or in a car you see exactly the same thing and get exactly the same impression. In Kenneth's scheme, if you go in a car you still get this "corridor" street, which is quite legitimate because it is, after all, a stage of the A40 and it does emphasise that it is really the edge of London; that it is still Notting Hill Gate—still a gate between the heart of London and the outer part—.

FROM THE BODY OF THE HALL: We have been here nearly an hour and, so far, have not heard a word about the easing of the traffic problem. (*Hear, hear!*) Is it quite beyond all the possibilities of modern planning to put a few pedestrian crossings? Are there to be no lay-bys? We should be interested to know.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am afraid that Mr. Nairn is not qualified to answer that, but there are one or two of the London County Council gentlemen who would be able to answer them, I will ask Mr. Nairn to be as brief as possible.

MR. NAIRN: I would like to see this scheme, as we have seen it, adopted by the L.C.C., and publicised nationally, either by the County Council or the Civic Trust so as to be a specimen scheme for the whole country to see.

Finally, there are four things that worry me about the proposed scheme. First, why was not the public asked in at an earlier stage? At the moment, effectively, it is all cut and dried. It would have been fairly easy, and much more courteous, to have had this meeting first. People would at least have had a chance to say what they thought. Secondly, why was not the job done either in the London County Council offices or put out to competition so that the best people in the country could have had a chance to try it, and the residents, again, have had a chance to comment on the designs before they were fixed. I mention that because there must be many more schemes like this—possibly some of them in Kensington—and I





the buses can go to the airport along the new Cromwell Road, across the North End Road and on to Talgarth Road, where 500 people have been displaced. One does not like to see that, but these things have to be done in the public interest. Then on past Colet Gardens, over the new Hammersmith fly-over or roundabout, and then out to the river side near Hammersmith Town Hall, and so on to the airport.

All that, however, is not enough. All this must still be part of a pattern, and, while we improve Notting Hill Gate we must link it and make one part interdependent with the other. If I may take you into my confidence, my committee intends to bring Westway over the railway tracks into West Kensington so that we can get that road from London Airport coming in at Westway, through Kensington, across the Edgware Road and so on to Marylebone Road, and eventually out towards Eastern Avenue.

That is the pattern, and Notting Hill Gate fits into it. I am sorry to be longwinded, but these things need to be said. In 1940, Professor Abercrombie made it quite plain that the Notting Hill Gate scheme, by itself, was not an improvement; it would congest Shepherds Bush, but we shall in this way improve it by the Westway development.

The other point I want to refer to is this. It is said that the people of Kensington have not been taken into the confidence of the L.C.C. That is far from fair, because it is an incorrect statement. For, I think, the first time, the Press conference on this matter was moved from County Hall to this town hall—thanks to the co-operation of the Kensington Mayor and councillors—and we were able to use the council chamber and invite the councillors and the general public and stage an exhibition showing the model. I think that was on 17th October—I am not quite sure—but it was followed by a week's exhibition of the models, and the problems involved were shown. It was a deliberate decision to come here and take the people of Kensington into our confidence and to hear their views. It was a most favourable and helpful meeting. I will admit that that is not necessarily the end of the matter, but it was certainly a beginning, and I was very delighted that we were able to do it.

At this stage, I will say no more, but I think it might be helpful if Mr. Rayfield dealt with some of the individual cross-traffic matters raised by Mr. Nairn.

MR. RAYFIELD: It gives me great pleasure to be here this evening, and although it is rather late I hope that I may be able to answer questions. One question has been asked about pedestrian crossing facilities. Obviously, at present, they are far from what they ought to be, and the Council, in pre-war days, agreed, after consultation with London Transport, that any facilities for passengers reaching the new station should be combined with a wide public subway for people not wishing to go to the station. That work is under construction, and we all hope that it will be a helpful facility for many people.



I wonder if you would like to fire questions at me? If so, with your Chairman's consent, I shall do my best to answer them.

MR. CORFIELD: I think that one of the disappointing things about this plan is that there seems to be no proper arrangement for the north-south traffic to be separated from the east-west traffic. (*Applause.*) I think that adequate steps have not been taken to get a better flow of traffic. Why is there no fly-over? Also, I believe that there is an idea of having a roundabout at some time or other, but the model shows a building where, later, there might be a roundabout, so it seems that they will be putting up buildings that will be pulled down later. But can you explain why we have not a fly-over?

MR. RAYFIELD: I take it that people have heard the gist of the question, which is the problem of the cross traffic south to north. The difficulty is that the district layout, to use engineers' jargon, involves what is called a displaced crossing, which is worse than an ordinary crossroad to deal with. And when one talks in terms of a fly-over, it needs much appreciation of the difficulties. Such a fly-over would be rather like a dog's hind leg. The result is that you have to take it for a much greater distance before coming down to the street that it is intended to serve. I do not for a moment say that it would not be a useful adjunct, but when we have suggested such a thing in other parts of London we have met with strong protest. We do not find them universally popular, although, expensive as they are, they are extremely useful. We do hope that for some years to come, what is being provided here in the way of increased road space, plus better and more efficient signalling arrangements than now exist, will result in a considerable freeing of traffic combined with pedestrian crossing facilities. It is possible that later some form of rectangular roundabout will be introduced. I can assure you that no material factor will be allowed to interfere with the safety factor, unless economics make it desirable to put up something now to take down in 10 or 15 years. We do try to study your pockets as ratepayers.

MR. BURTON: Will it be possible for me to turn right by Church Street?

MR. RAYFIELD: The question is: coming out of Pembridge Road or Pembridge Gardens, can one turn right to Shepherds Bush? I see no reason why that should not be done, although I think that many people would find it more convenient to go another way. (*Laughter.*) Another point is about Church Street. I am sure you all know the condition there now, with the one-way street arrangement, which it probably making the place a bad job. We can either widen Church Street all the way, or continue the present arrangement of one street a little further east being used for southbound traffic. That has raised apprehensions in the minds of some residents, that traffic will continue southwards until they get through Kensington by way of residential streets. That can be overcome by the device

of making the top end of the particular street near Notting Hill Gate one-way northbound. We think that would be the greatest benefit to the greatest number.

MR. KEMP: There is first the Notting Hill Gate plan as it will be, and the Notting Hill Gate as it is now. I do not know how long it will be before the plan is in operation, but I think that it is something like two years. My first point is about the traffic problem. At the back of the hall there is a list of the reasons for the London County Council deciding on this present scheme. One is to ease the traffic congestion that undoubtedly exists in Notting Hill Gate; and another is to provide a subway to connect the Underground stations.

People have searched for the solution of this traffic problem without actually finding it. The obvious and simple solution is a cross roads held by a roundabout, or an offset "T" junction—but the simple one is the cross roads. That is too late now, but they could easily have done one opposite Pembridge Road at very little expenditure.

Secondly, there is the point about the connection between the two stations. I would point out that it must not be assumed that most people who come off the Circle Line immediately go over to the Central Line. That is not true. Most people crossing the road do not do so from the station but from the buses at Pembridge Road to the Circle Line station. Two points are expenditure and time spent—("is this a speech, Mr. Chairman, or a question?")—These are points not made by anybody else, and probably will not be made by any other speaker.

I want to know why a whole row of houses was pulled down at the proposed car-park space. They have been pulled down for something like a year. Presumably those people have had to be rehoused—possibly at public expense, though that, of course, does not matter. Why were they all pulled down then, when nothing was to be done then?

I have now finished with Notting Hill Gate as it will be at some indefinable future date, and I want to speak of Notting Hill Gate as it is now. I have spent a little time examining the Notting Hill Gate traffic problem, which is the basic problem, and I have devised a traffic scheme—.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am sure your scheme is a good one, but—.

MR. KEMP: Sir, my scheme is good, and you should listen to it, and—.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, do you want speeches, or questions?

THE AUDIENCE: Questions.

MR. KEMP: It so happens that I have run off a 100 copies on the duplicator of my scheme, and I will give them to members of the Council, to the L.C.C., to interested parties, and to the Ministry of



Transport. The scheme is realistic and dramatic. It could be put into operation tomorrow night. It could be based on traffic lights, and it takes everybody into account—both pedestrians and all road users. The present use of traffic lights is completely without control, confusing, and without any sense at all.

Is anything to be done now? I have spent a great deal of time with a stop-watch, making my own observations. I am a car owner myself, and I am convinced that something could be done now, at a very small cost, to relieve the traffic problem and cut down the delay by a half or a third, which, you would agree, is very considerable. (*Applause.*)

ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: I have come here tonight to hear what is in the mind of the L.C.C., and I am very glad that a gentleman over there has given his views. I am only a small tradesman, and I have heard it said that you have a big firm of architects to plan us. Does that mean doing away with the small tradesman who, for the last 70 years, have got their living in Notting Hill Gate? The small tradesman is undoubtedly an asset to everybody—(*Hear, hear!*)—because you cannot get better service from the other people. According to the plan, it seems that the small people will not be able to afford any of those places. You have so many frills to it, and, undoubtedly, those frills have to be paid by the people who purchase in the shops.

When I was a small boy, my Dad bought his things in Hammer-smith. One day he took me to Oxford Street. I saw the lovely shops and asked why we did not buy there. He took me inside, and said: "Doesn't it seem nice? But you have to pay for the carpet." All of us in this country want to get back to realities, and to do that I think we have to realize that the small tradesman has been, is now and always will be, the backbone of the country. If you keep out the small tradesman you keep out everybody. (*Applause.*)

CHAIRMAN, TOWN PLANNING COMMITTEE: I am sorry that the Council planner is not here, but the simple position is that the Notting Hill Gate widening scheme was first advocated in 1909. Governments have come and gone since then, and have been hot and cold about it but, with few exceptions, all the 129 traders who have been here in recent years have known their time in Notting Hill Gate was limited. I know that they have had great uncertainties and many worries, but they did know, at any rate, that the Council meant to get on with the job when the time came. That is why, when the time came, we decided to do the job in three and a half years instead of six—so that people should have their shops back as soon as possible.

The question of the small traders has worried us a lot. I have seen many of them. We have tried to fit them into various parts of London, and West London, and it has not been easy. I do feel that, in the interests of the many, these traders were most helpful to us

at a very difficult time, when we could possibly have been held to ransom as we were in the Strand, and great expenditure could have been undertaken, not at the public good. Tonight, I want to say, "Thank you" to all those Notting Hill Gate traders for the way they have co-operated. If any of them has a query, we are always glad to see them and to do what we can to help. I do understand their difficulties.

MRS. GURNEY: We have heard a lot about the pedestrian areas, and we have also been told that the ground floor of the building is to be a shop. We know that it is the A40 and will have six lines of traffic. Can all that space be of value as pedestrian areas? Could we not have had a shopping precinct north or south of the main road, not accessible to traffic, where elderly people could have shopped in a little peace?

MR. WEST: As I understood it, the question related to the reference to pedestrian spaces by Mr. Browne. Arising from that, the questioner wondered whether there would be sufficient space for pedestrians having regard to the fact that the whole of the ground floor was to be occupied by shops. She also asked whether there could not have been a shopping precinct north or south of the road so that, in particular, older people could have shopped in comfort. I will answer the second question first, if I may, because it does assume that another alternative scheme could have been achieved.

We are very anxious to achieve these things where we can. We would like to achieve a separation between pedestrians and traffic where possible, but the main factor is the fixed point of the scheme. One has to deal with realities. There are limits to the property that could be acquired, and there are other fixed points on the scheme. There is the electricity substation, which is very permanent indeed. Another is a comparatively new block of offices behind Site E. We had to make suggestions within what was a very narrow field of limits and divisions. Although the Council could have purchased more property to get greater flexibility, there was not enough space to make precincts that would be anything at all. We have striven in the outline scheme to get widenings of pavements at the focal points of the scheme, particularly at the end of Church Street and the junction of Notting Hill Gate and Pembridge Road. A very considerable setback—about 20 ft.—has been made at the latter place, which, we hope, will provide some opportunity for the development architects to provide a place where pedestrians can rest a little and, perhaps, have a cup of coffee, as Mr. Browne suggested in his talk.

MRS. CHRISTIANSEN: Why did not the L.C.C. develop the site through its own Architects' Department instead of putting it out to developers?

CHAIRMAN, TOWN PLANNING COMMITTEE: The questioner is posing an extremely big point. I suppose her suggestion is that the Council should not only buy the land but develop the shops and the other enterprises that lie within the scheme. That would be an interesting

departure. It may well be that in some areas it will come to be tried. I think the point is that when you look at the pattern of Notting Hill Gate to-day, from Millionaires' Row to the Cash Register Company that was in Ladbroke Terrace—that is a very long roadway, and when you look at the re-entrant into Church Street I wonder, really, whether you would think it wise that Council money should be expended on three large blocks there, not knowing the degree of co-operation that could be had from the streets. It might possibly be risking public money, and our Finance Committee Chairman might be in difficulties. However, it is an interesting suggestion, and I would have thought that in some parts of London the Town Planning Committee might work on those lines when it comes to look at intersections and their redevelopment. But we need experience in such a matter and I do not think you would wish us to jump brashly in.

A further point that has to be remembered is that Notting Hill Gate was suddenly programmed by the Minister and it was essential to go ahead quickly—get the road widening, get the station improvement, erect the shops, so that the people of Notting Hill Gate could get their shops back. That is why we decided, here, to ask big developers to look at the scheme so that we could act with speed in the public interest. But it is an important question, and I am glad that it has been asked.

The meeting continued; the Chairman, Sir Hugh Casson, had a strenuous evening dealing with criticisms and counter proposals fired across the hall by incensed residents. One gentleman proposed the following resolution:—

“That this meeting is profoundly dissatisfied with the scheme as it stands and suggests that further action be taken to extend and improve the scheme.”

This motion was carried by a large majority.

Mrs. Mary Stocks, of Aubrey Road, near Notting Hill Gate, proposed a further motion. It read:—

“This meeting is profoundly disturbed by what it has heard about the Notting Hill Gate Scheme, in that it fails to give prior consideration to the problem of traffic congestion.”

Received amidst cheers from the audience, the resolution was carried by a large majority.

As the meeting was closing a final resolution seeking an assurance that Notting Hill would not become a shopping centre like Oxford Street, but would remain a village shopping centre, was put to the meeting as:—

“It is the wish of this meeting that the shopping centre in Notting Hill Gate Scheme should be of a local and not universal nature.”

The meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the speakers.

## CONSTITUTION 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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## THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 1957-58

1956/57		INCOME		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
£	Balance at 1st October, 1957								
285	brought forward .. ..			378	17	7			
<b>Subscriptions—</b>									
—	Life Subscriptions .. ..	31	10	0					
392	Annual Subscriptions .. ..	355	17	0					
—	Income Tax Reserved .. ..	8	16	7					
				396	3	7			
<b>Other Income—</b>									
18	Profit on Sale of Christmas Cards .. ..	35	18	2					
4	Interest on Bank Deposit Accounts .. ..	11	8	5					
5	Interest on Post Office Savings Bank Account .. ..	6	4	9					
12	Donations .. ..	—	—	—					
1	Coach Visits—Excess of Income over Expenditure ..	—	—	—					
				53	11	4			
				£717			£828	12	6

1956/57		EXPENDITURE		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
£	London Meetings—								
	Net Cost of Halls, Chairs, etc:								
	Notting Hill Gate								
	Public Meeting	63	12	0					
	Concert Recital	3	14	0					
73	General	35	18	0					
				113	4	0			
2	Advertising .. ..	2	7	10					
	Printing, Typing and Stationery .. ..	182	16	7					
159	Postage and Telephone Calls	87	0	5					
63	Bank Charges and Cheque Books .. ..	4	0	0					
3	Planting Trees .. ..	10	0	0					
13	Sundry Expenses .. ..	9	9	1					
8	Stock of Christmas Cards donated to the Kensington and Paddington Friendly Service Unit .. ..	—	—	—					
17	Donations .. ..	5	5	0					
—	Office Equipment — Filing Cabinet .. ..	8	2	2					
				422	5	1			
<b>Coach Visits—</b>									
—	Net Cost of Hire, Meals, etc.						8	17	0
<b>Balance at 30th September, 1958</b>									
<b>Martins Bank Limited—</b>									
9	Current Account .. ..	17	10						
145	Deposit Accounts—								
	General .. ..	70	0	0					
	Life Subscription .. ..	276	12	7					
	Prize Fund .. ..	50	0	0					
225	Post Office Savings Bank A/c.	—	—	—					
				397	10	5			
				£717			£828	12	6

We have prepared the above Account from the Books and Vouchers kept by Martins Bank Limited, Kensington High Street Branch, and certify it to be in accordance therewith.

NORFOLK HOUSE, LAURENCE POUNTNEY HILL,  
LONDON, E.C.4.

17th October, 1958.

WRIGHT, STEVENS & LLOYD,  
*Chartered Accountants.*

THE HON. TREASURER, THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY,  
c/o Martins Bank Ltd., 208, Kensington High Street, W.8.

I wish to become a member of The Kensington Society. I  
enclose herewith the sum of £ : s. d. for my annual  
subscription, or, I enclose herewith the sum of £ : s. d.  
for Life Subscription.

Signature.....

Address.....  
.....

#### BANKER'S ORDER

To.....Bank.

.....19.....

Please pay Martins Bank Ltd., of 208, Kensington High Street,  
W.8, to the credit of the account of The Kensington Society, my  
subscription of £ : s. d., and continue the same on the  
1st of October annually until further notice.

Signature.....

Address.....  
.....

(Mr. or Mrs.) (Title).....

Annual subscribers will simplify the collection of their subscriptions  
if they will fill in the Banker's Order. Cheques should be made  
payable to The Kensington Society.



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