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Annual Report 1976-77



THE
Kensington
Society

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

Annual Report

1976-77

FRONT COVER

Clock Tower, Kensington Palace, c. 1860

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The Kensington Society

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HON. TREASURER: Keon Hughes, Esq.

HON. SECRETARY: Mrs. G. Christiansen, 18 Kensington Square, W.8

AUDITORS: Messrs. Wright, Stevens & Lloyd

Foreword

It is to me quite a thought that while we live our daily lives in this Royal Borough there are those amongst us who devote their time and efforts to preserving the values of the environment we enjoy. Those who direct the affairs of our Society exercise constant watch over developments official and private which could, if allowed to go unchecked, desecrate much that should be preserved. I would that the purpose and work of the Society should have that wider support which its achievements merit. If every member would pledge his or her determination to enrol just two more members in the coming year, the Society's work could be extended with benefit to all the citizens of the Borough whether they be members or not. I cannot accept that many residents, if they had this pointed out to them, would not feel it a pleasurable duty to join the Society in its work.

I have the privilege of reading the Minutes of your Committee's meetings, and confess to be astonished at the number of planning applications to the Local Authority that come to the Committee for review. Each is considered: to some no objection is raised; to others suggestions for amendment are put forward. To some there is downright opposition. Our officers, having a good and close relationship with the Planning Authority, the Society's views are given full and fair consideration.

During the past year the Society has given evidence at a number of public inquiries, but the broad proposals for the Russian Embassy extensions have given and are giving the greatest concern of any project yet put forward. Plans are still not yet available but with the co-operation of our local M.P. the position will be closely watched and dealt with, so far as we are able, by your Committee.

In this, my second foreword to the Annual Report, I hope I may be allowed to do what I could not last year. I wish to associate myself with the gratitude and pleasure we all feel that H.R.H. Princess Alice's interest and support continue to be given in full measure. Her Royal Highness keeps closely in touch with the Society's work through our Honorary Secretary, Mrs. Christiansen, and graced this year's Christmas Sale in Mrs. Christiansen's house: in fact, I believe Her Royal Highness did more than just visit. She made it a shopping occasion! It is now 24 years since the Society was founded and Her Royal Highness became a founder member. I know I shall carry with me every reader of this Annual Report when I tender our respectful good wishes to Her Royal Highness and acknowledge to Mrs. Christiansen a debt of gratitude for so many years' selfless work for the Society.

BALFOUR OF INCHRYE.

Annual General Meeting

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING was held at Leighton House on 27th May, 1976.

The Rt. Hon. Lord Balfour of Inchrye, President of the Society, was in the Chair, supported by Mr. Geoffrey Dearbergh, Chairman of the Executive Committee, and Mrs. G. Christiansen, Honorary Secretary.

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

Lord Balfour paid tribute to the late Lord Hurcomb and Lady Stocks, who he said had worked so diligently for the Society and indeed for Kensington. He applauded the affiliation of local associations to the Society and said this correlation was of great value.

Mr. Geoffrey Dearbergh, in moving the adoption of the Report, also expressed the Society's indebtedness to both Lord Hurcomb and Lady Stocks. Mr. Dearbergh welcomed Lord Balfour as President of the Society.

Mr. Dearbergh referred to the proposed Russian Embassy proposals and assured the meeting that as soon as the plans were available a public meeting would be arranged. Lord Balfour intervened and said he thought a resolution should be sent to our Member of Parliament expressing our concern. This was passed unanimously. The adoption of the Report was seconded by Mrs. Hughes.

Mrs. Christiansen presented the audited Accounts for the year ended 31st December, 1975. Mrs. Christiansen regretted the absence of Mr. Keon Hughes owing to an accident from which he was slowly recovering. She said that although costs had increased considerably during the past year, the balance at the bank on 31st December, 1975, was £400 more than in previous years. This was partly due to the handsome donation of £633 from the Victoria Road Precinct Defence Committee, to donations made to the Hurcomb and Stocks Lecture Fund (£265) and to the increased revenue from advertising and the Sale. Visits arranged for members had covered their costs. A plea was again made for subscriptions to be paid on the due date, 1st January.

Miss Brown seconded the adoption of the Accounts.

No nominations had been received and Miss Balian proposed and Miss Yetts seconded the election *en bloc* of the officers and Executive Committee for a further 12 months.

Mrs. Potts asked if the Society was giving support to a local group whose aim was to make Avondale Park less unattractive. Mrs. Christian-

sen said the Society had not been approached and suggested that Mrs. Potts should ask the group to get in touch with her.

Mrs. Norman Butler kindly invited members to attend a Notting Hill Housing Trust function on 7th June.

The meeting ended. Lord Balfour introduced the lecturer, Mr. Simon Jenkins, who gave a forthright talk on 'Can Kensington be Saved?'

CHRISTMAS SALE

The Society was greatly honoured by the attendance of H.R.H. Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, Patron of the Society, at our Christmas Sale in November. Miss Joan Lascelles was in attendance. We are grateful to members for their gifts, to those who come and buy, and to those who send donations because they are unable to attend. We extend our special thanks to those who help at the sale, including our veteran doorkeeper, Miss Price. The proceeds of the sale, with donations, was £343. This has been set aside to help with costs which may be incurred if a public inquiry is held about the Russian Embassy proposals.

RETIREMENT FROM THE COMMITTEE

Sir Allan Quartermaine, C.B.E., M.C., a valued member of the Executive Committee since 1964 and at one time a member of the Royal Fine Arts Commission, has retired from the Committee. The Committee records its gratitude for his interest, generosity and work for the Society. We are glad that Sir Allan has accepted nomination to the Council of the Society. Mrs. Eric Keegan was co-opted to the Committee during the year. She has now left London. We record our thanks for her help. We are glad to know that she intends to continue her membership to the Society.

LOCAL SOCIETIES

We are glad to report that there has been a further increase in the formation of local societies. Fourteen of these groups are corporate members of the Society. We are glad to have copies of their letters to the Borough Council, so that when possible we may add our support. We hope that members living in these areas will also support their local association. Reports from the societies will be found on page 16.

ADVERTISING

The advertising in this Report has again been collected and organised by Mr. John Maclay, a member of the Executive Committee. Prospective advertisers for our next Report should write to Mr. Maclay, 40 Kensington Square W.8. Proceeds from the advertising in this Report will cover a third of the production cost.

OBITUARIES

We report with deep regret the deaths during the year of the following members: Miss Catton, Professor Carus-Wilson, Mrs. Emerin Chute, Mrs. Clements, Mrs. A. B. Riddle, Mrs. McPherson and Mrs. V.

McSheehy. They were all members of long standing and will be greatly missed. Professor Carus-Wilson was Chairman of the Ladbroke Society.

DONATIONS

We are very grateful to members and to others who have made donations to the Society, thereby showing confidence in our work.

STOCKS AND HURCOMB LECTURE

The Stocks and Hurcomb Lecture was given in the Public Library Lecture Theatre on 19th October. The lecturer, an old friend of our late President, Lord Hurcomb, was Mr. Stanley Cramp, O.B.E., Senior Editor of *British Birds*. Mr. Cramp gave a very interesting talk on 'Bird Life in Inner London'. Owing to a chapter of unforeseen events the talk was somewhat informal. The box of slides was dropped and the sequence in which they were packed was lost. The bulb was missing from the spotlight, making it difficult for Mr. Cramp to read his notes, the Library seemed to be without a porter, so that we could not get help with the lights. In spite of these happenings members enjoyed the talk immensely and we tender our thanks to Mr. Cramp. In reply to a request to print his talk in this Report Mr. Cramp said: 'I cannot hope to do a report which would cover the lecture in the form it was actually delivered, but I can give you a brief summary of the main arguments and conclusions.' This will be found on page 24.

LORD HURCOMB

At the time of going to press last year the appreciation given at St. Margarets Church, Westminster, by the well-known ornithologist, Mr. E. M. Nicholson, C.B., C.V.O., was not available. Lord Hurcomb was known personally to so many members that we thought members would like to read this appreciation, and that it would be appropriate to include it as a preface to Mr. Cramp's talk (page 22).

THE GREATER LONDON DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This was formally approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment in July 1976. The London Government Act 1963 required the G.L.C. to prepare this plan. A Public Inquiry was held from 1970 to 1972 by a panel chaired by Mr. Frank Layfield, Q.C., to hear objections. Mr. Geoffrey Dearbergh, Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee, gave evidence for the Society at the Inquiry. The plan was subsequently modified and made available for public inspection. Objections and representations regarding the plan were accepted between December 1975 and March 1976.

The London Boroughs are required to submit their individual plan for their area by July 1979.

The Kensington Borough Council has prepared 10 Context Papers and has arranged a number of Community Forums to allow for public participation. The Society is represented at the Forums by members of the Executive Committee, and we have been asked to comment on the Context Papers.

Ten papers have been prepared and we have studied and commented on the following (1) Movement, (2) Leisure and Recreation, (3) Conservation and Development, (4) Hotel and Tourism, (5) Employment, (7) Housing, (10) Resources. The two papers which have not been dealt with by the Society are (6) Social and Community Services and (9) Education. These were considered to be outside our terms of reference as an amenity society.

TREE PLANTING

The Society has been anxious to become involved in tree planting in the Borough, particularly this year, as our Silver Jubilee year effort. We would have liked to plant a whole street or group of trees and have made various suggestions to the Borough Engineer, without success. As we go to press we are awaiting a decision from the Borough Engineer on further suggested areas for tree planting. We have, however, planted trees in Earls Court Square and Ladbroke Square. We would like to hear from any Square Garden Secretary who would welcome one or two trees for planting this autumn in their Square gardens.

Last July we wrote to the Council asking that the trees in St. Mary Abbots churchyard and school playground should be recommended for a tree preservation order. Mr. Sanders, Borough Planning Officer, replied: 'You will be pleased to learn that the trees in the churchyard itself are now cared for by this Council on an agency basis, so I'm sure you will agree do not require the added protection of a preservation order.'

I hope members who have written to the Society about these trees will watch them carefully.

IRIS BED, HOLLAND PARK

Members may remember the Society's concern about Holland Park last year, particularly about the removal of the iris bed (by the Orangery). We have been informed by the Parks Department, Greater London Council, that a decision has been made to renovate the bed and to plant new irises.

MEMBERSHIP

May I remind members that the annual subscription was increased to £3 last year. Would members who pay their subscription by banker's order, please use the form at the back of this Report and make a new order, not forgetting to cancel their present order.

For the Society to continue its work effectively, it needs to recruit more members, since its subscriptions are its main source of income. Existing members are urged to introduce new ones to the Society. A membership form appears at the back of this Report and further copies can be had from the Honorary Secretary. Members who have not already done so are recommended to execute a deed of covenant, which nearly doubles the subscription to the Society without any extra expense to the member. A Deed of Covenant form appears on page 53.

A selection of cases dealt with

RUSSIAN EMBASSY

The Society's greatest concern during the past 12 months has been the proposed Russian Embassy development at the north-eastern end of Kensington Palace Gardens, and Kensington Church Street Barracks site.

We learned of the proposals when Mr. Nicholas Winterton asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in the House of Commons on 7th May if he would make a statement regarding the Soviet Embassy's proposals.

Mr. Hattersley replied:

My Department is discussing with the Soviet Embassy the formulation of plans for the development of two sites on Crown Estates land in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea which, if they are to go ahead, will need to be the subject of a notification by my Department to the local planning authority under the provisions of Circular 80. This is the normal procedure for Crown development and includes full public consultation. Since my Department will be responsible for notifying the planning authority of the proposed development the Soviet Embassy will be submitting plans to the FCO in due course, and will be doing so in the context of providing mutual assistance with accommodation problems in Moscow and London.

On 21st July the M.P. for Kensington, Sir Brandon Rhys Williams raised the matter again. The following is a quote from *Hansard*:

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: It was in 1930 that there was first an outcry when the Russian Government acquired the lease of the Crown property at No. 13 Palace Gardens for their ambassador. Now, however, they occupy no less than five of these very grand properties in Palace Gardens, as well as many other sites in the borough I have the honour to represent.

Those properties known by the council to be occupied by Russian officials, when I inquired a year ago, were No. 3 Rosary Gardens, Nos. 2 and 43 Holland Park, No. 79 Addison Road, Nos. 9, 10 and 11 Earl's Terrace, Nos. 21 and 23 Pembridge Villas, No. 23 Campden Hill Gardens and No. 8 Holland Park. There may well be others. That is surely a large Russian presence in Kensington. I believe that the Russians also have extensive accommodation in other boroughs, especially in Camden.

To accommodate the Russians' desire for space, the eye of the Foreign Office lit, some 10 years ago, on the old barracks in Kensington Church Street. This stands on Crown property and was given up by the Services in 1972. It is beginning to become rather derelict through planning blight, and is being used in unsatisfactory, temporary ways.

The barracks site covers about 1.7 acres and is potentially one of the most valuable sites in the Royal Borough awaiting redevelopment, having a frontage on to Church Street sufficient to accommodate 11 shops and with useful commercial and residential potential at the back in an area greatly in demand, standing near to the High Street and having easy access into Kensington Gardens.

I understand that from the outset the borough council made known its reservations about the use of the barracks site for a low-density diplomatic development, particularly if it would have the effect of shutting the people of Kensington out and, of course, losing much of the potentially useful income from rates. I have made known my own objections very plainly over a number of years.

To make progress, in 1973 I suggested to the borough council that it might consider putting forward another site which it would prefer the Russians to use, and this it did. It came forward with the recommendation of the magnificent site at the top of Palace Gardens, which was formerly occupied by Nos. 1, 2 and 3, and takes in as well the land where Nos. 4, 5, 6 and 7 Palace Gardens still stand. Each of those buildings would be large enough for a normal embassy in itself, so together with the other five buildings which the Russians already use in Palace Gardens, this site would bring up their accommodation to the equivalent of 12 embassy buildings besides the trade delegation property in Highgate, and all the rest. This alternative site, facing south over Kensington Gardens and taking in the corner of Palace Gardens, is one of the most splendid in London and is about an acre larger even than the barracks site. It covers about 2.7 acres, I understand.

It was only in the past fortnight that I was finally allowed to see the draft plans. These include, for the Palace Gardens site, an office block, six floors of flats, the new consular building and the embassy proper, in a lavish layout with trees and open space. The plans for the barracks site are startling. They include accommodation for 60 flats in a tower block, a school, a gym and paddling pool, a sauna, a theatre and dressing room, a library, cultural and interview rooms, car parking, a garden area and concourse and a tennis court. All are to be built at very low density—about one-third of the normal for central London. Most striking of all is the proposal to build a range of shop fronts along the pavement of Church Street, which can be used for propaganda displays.

The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. John Tomlinson) replied:

I am grateful to the Hon. Member for raising the question. It is one that has concerned Her Majesty's Government for some time and it may be helpful to the Hon. Member and the House if I mention briefly one or two aspects of its past history.

Some years ago the Soviet authorities indicated their wish to concentrate most of their accommodation in London in the Kensington Palace Gardens area, where they already had leases on a number of sites. They have been in the area since the 1930s. Their wish was to rehouse the ambassador, his principal offices and much of his embassy's staff accommodation in this area.

Discussions have been going on for a number of years about the possibility of the mutual provision of sites in London and Moscow on which the premises of the Soviet Embassy in London, and of ours in Moscow, could be erected.

The Soviet authorities have at various times shown interest in several different sites in the Kensington Palace Gardens area and have at various

times contemplated seeking permission to develop different combinations of sites. Last year they expressed a firm preference for three of them: Nos. 1-7 Kensington Palace Gardens, the ambassador's existing house on No. 13 Kensington Palace Gardens, and the old Kensington Barracks site.

The sites in London are the property of the Crown Estates Commission. It is envisaged that their development as sites for the Soviet Embassy would be Crown development, which would be governed by the Department of Environment's Circular 80 procedure. The procedure is intended to ensure that applications governed by it do not receive more favourable treatment than those for private development. This means that building plans are submitted in the normal way to the local planning authority, Kensington and Chelsea in this case. This involves full public consultation by the local planning authority, in the same way as for a private application. Subject to the local planning authorities' view it is then open to the Secretary of State for the Environment to call a public inquiry.

This is a perfectly normal procedure where Crown development is concerned. There is no question of riding roughshod over local planning requirements, given the existence of the planning safeguards that I have mentioned.

At present the Soviet authorities are working on the plans and specifications of the buildings that they would like to have on these sites if planning authority for them can be secured. They are being assisted in this work by a British firm of architectural consultants, whose role is to advise the Soviet authorities on the harmonisation of their proposals and the various local planning constraints.

Perhaps I should again spell out what those procedures are. The Circular 80 procedure, which would apply in this instance, is intended to ensure that no applications governed by it receive more favourable treatment than those for private development. The Soviet plans will have to meet the normal requirements of the local planning authority, including, of course, full public consultation by the planning authorities, and thereafter the plans may be the subject of a public inquiry. In that sense there is no question of any decision being taken that in any way pre-empts the normal planning requirements.

I think that I should mention why the Government are helping the Soviet Embassy with its planning application. It has been suggested that they do not normally give assistance of that kind to other embassies. We are involved in this case because we require assistance from the Soviet authorities with the rehousing of our embassy in Moscow, in the face of a planning decision by the Moscow city authorities to take over our present site, which we do not own, in the not-too-distant future. But I emphasise that any assistance that the Government provides in the development of sites for the Soviet Embassy in London will be fully in accordance with normal planning procedures and will be conditional on the Soviet authorities providing us with corresponding assistance in Moscow.

Since July the Society has tried in vain to see the plans and to obtain further information. We have been in touch with the P.S.A. (Property Services Agency of the Department of the Environment) and with the architects concerned. The Chairman and Hon. Secretary met Sir Brandon Rhys Williams, M.P., and representatives of the Crown Commissioners at Nos. 6 and 7 Kensington Palace Gardens. The internal condition of the building is poor but the façade is intact. The Society arranged a public meeting last September to discuss the plans; this had to be cancelled because the plans were not available. A public

meeting will be arranged as soon as the plans can be seen, and it is the Society's intention to be legally represented at any public inquiry.

In principle the Society supports the Borough Council that the barracks site should be developed for the benefit of residents of Kensington. We are opposed to the demolition of two listed houses.

Miss R. Ensing has written a paper on page 26 dealing with the history of Kensington Palace Gardens and Palace Green, and on page 41 an extract will be found from the *G.L.C. Survey of London*, Volume 37, Northern Kensington 1972; the latter appears by kind permission of the Greater London Council.

12 Kensington Square

The Society strongly supported the residents in opposing planning permission being given for any office use in this house, which until the present occupier has always been a family house. The Society regrets to report that the Council has given conditional planning permission for office use for part of this house. The same Council has fixed a plaque to the Square garden railings, drawing visitors' attention to the importance of this and the adjoining house. (Illustration frontispiece by permission of the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council.)

Golly's Garage Site 225-241 Cromwell Road, 111a-119 Earls Court and 12-13 Redfield Lane

The Society supported the Kensington Borough Council and local residents at the public inquiry in January in opposing the hotel development on this site. The Society considered that a hotel on this site would add to the traffic congestion; it was also thought that the massing of the buildings was out of scale with the surroundings.



Proposed Amendments to the General Development Order

The Department of the Environment put forward proposals last July for relaxing planning control. These proposals were studied by the Society and comments were made on the following items:

18 Class I 1: extend the permitted enlargement of a dwelling-house from 50 cubic metres or one-tenth, whichever is the greater, to, say, 70 cubic metres or one-fifth, whichever is the greater, subject to a maximum of 115 cubic metres.

19 Class I 1: to make erection of a separate garage permitted development without counting against permitted enlargement of a dwellinghouse.

27 Class VIII: increase the permitted extension of industrial premises from one-tenth to, say, one-fifth and the aggregate floor space from 500 square metres to 750 square metres.

Proposed new provisions

29 The alteration of shop fronts to be permitted development, with appropriate limitations.

30 The use as two or more separate dwellinghouses of any building previously used as a single dwellinghouse, which is declared to be a material change of use by Section 22 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971, to be permitted development, with appropriate limitations.

(DoE item 18) The permitted enlargement should not be extended, anyway in London, and particularly in conservation areas. Such extensions can do much damage, e.g. roof lines, loss of private garden space, etc.

(DoE item 19) The erection of garages can have a damaging effect, particularly in conservation areas, and powers should not be relaxed.

(DoE item 27) The same point applies to permitted extensions of industrial premises.

(DoE item 29) Shop fronts need to be controlled—they can wreck a street scene, particularly in streets such as Beauchamp Place, etc.

(DoE item 30) This appears to permit the subdivision of houses and large flats into smaller units. In this borough it is essential that houses suitable for families should not be lost in this way and control should not be relaxed.



Building at the rear of Nos. 25-30 Kensington Square

In 1964, following a public inquiry, the then Minister of Housing and Local Government allowed the appeal of the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council to use these buildings for office use. The appeal was granted conditionally:

- (a) the permission hereby granted shall enure solely for the benefit of the Council of the Royal Borough of Kensington and their successors under the London Government Act 1963 and shall not run with the land; and
- (b) the said use shall cease on or before 31st December, 1968.

In 1968 a further grant of time was given because the new Town Hall was unfinished. This further grant was not opposed by the Society; it was accepted in good faith that when the Council vacated the buildings, they would revert back to their original use as a warehouse for the Derry & Toms building.

The leaseholders, 'British Land', are now applying for permission for permanent office use.

The buildings are obviously of much higher value as office premises than as a warehouse. The Society considers that these buildings should have been offered for sale with the Derry & Toms building for use as a warehouse and thereby reducing the number of vans, etc., using Derry Street and Kensington Square, which have both become traffic saturated areas. The Society strongly opposes a permanent office use of these buildings. Kensington Square has been the subject of many threats over the years from proposed development, loss of gardens, change of use from residential to office, etc.

It is zoned as a residential area, but the growing volume of traffic in

and through the Square is causing much concern to residents. It is the Society's view that a block of so-called prestige offices can only generate more traffic.

The Society has written to the Secretary of State for the Environment, to the Greater London Council, and to the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council opposing the continuation of office use.

13-30 Pembroke Gardens, 43-61 Warwick Gardens

The Society was asked by the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council to comment on a report with propositions put forward by the Prudential Assurance Co. The report was considered by the Society and our comments have been sent to the Borough Planning Control Office.

Thorney Court, 55 Hyde Park Gate Site

Outline planning proposals to develop this site for a new Libyan Embassy were strongly opposed by the Society. The height of the proposed building adjacent to Broadwalk House (five-storey and plinth) was considerably lower than Broadwalk House, which was built to an agreed height, so as to maintain a comparatively uniform scale of building along this edge of the park.

The height of the building adjoining No. 2 Palace Gate (12 storeys) was much higher, and it was thought by the Society to be out of place on this important site.

NATIONAL THEATRE SITE

The Greater London Council, who are the freeholders of this site, are offering a 99-year building lease for development. Offers had to be submitted by October, 1976.

We have been informed by the Council that discussions are taking place with the architects of schemes and we have received a brochure from the Royal Society of Arts describing their scheme. We have invited the architects of the other schemes to make available to the Society information of their proposals. It is important that any development on this site should fit in aesthetically with the character of the area.

The Society will consult with the Thurloe & Egerton Association (the site being in the area covered by this local Association) when all the plans are available and before our views are expressed to the Council. The G.L.C. has short-listed four schemes:

- (a) Religious centre for the Aga Khan's Moslem sect. Architect: Conder & Partners.
- (b) Schools and Departments for the Royal College of Art, with a National Gallery of the Crafts. Architects: H. T. Cadbury-Brain and John Metcalf.
- (c) Thirty-six large flats. Architect: Clifford Culpin & Partners.
- (d) Eighty-four flats. Architect: Richard Seifert & Partners.

The number of planning applications referred to the Society by the Borough Planning Department are too numerous to list. They have all been examined by the Chairman and Architectural Adviser to the Society Mr. Ian Grant, by Mr. Marlow, Mrs. Christiansen, and in cases of large developments by other members of the Committee.

We have made our views known to the Planning Department, and are happy to report that in a number of cases our views have coincided with those of the Borough Planning Department.

When our views have differed from the Council we have made our views known and alerted residents in the area concerned.

We have in all cases adopted an objective view; our main concern has been to ensure that a new development is a good neighbour and not detrimental to the area. A brief list follows:

3 Russell Gardens. Opposed change of use from residential to office.

Kensington Square. Studied and approved a report by Mr. E. G. Golding, late Borough Engineer, for road reduction at Derry Street corner of the Square, to prevent large vans using the entrance into the Square. A decision is awaited from the Greater London Council.

Derry & Toms Building. The Society regretted the alteration to the High Street façade of this building.

351 Kensington High Street. Opposed Persian 'Take Away' food shop.

Lexham Gardens. Opposed casino at Majestic Hotel using a Lexham Gardens entrance.

Final Report of the Environmental and General Study Group—Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council. Comments were sought by the Council. Report studied by Society and observations sent.

Site adjacent to Gloucester Road Station. Supported Borough Council at public inquiry in planning refusal for this site to be used as a temporary market.

Street trees in Addison Avenue. Views requested by Council on the removal of certain trees. Residents' views obtained and passed on to Council.

Asphalt paving. Opposed by the Society, in particular in conservation areas such as Edwardes Square.

99-105 Kensington High Street. Opposed Exhibition Centre as having a further adverse effect traffic-wise in Derry Street. Planning permission given by Council.

11 Aubrey Walk. Additional storey opposed.

Earls Court Road Traffic Scheme. Again stressed the Society's view that this traffic scheme should be abandoned.

New Town Hall. Society has been much concerned about the effect the large expanse of brick wall on the West Side of new Town Hall has on the houses in Campden Hill Road. Request also made that the cooling-towers on the roof should be screened. The treatment of the Town Hall along Campden Hill Road is of considerable concern to residents in the houses opposite.

22 *Holland Park Avenue*. Reminded Council of their policy on roof additions and opposed the garden extension.

89 *Holland Park, house adjoining*. Opposed an extension of planning permission.

62 and 63 *Oxford Gardens*. A request that front and rear elevation should be preserved and restored.

35 *Arundel Gardens*. Opposed roof extension in its present form.

29–35 *Colville Square*, 8–13 *Colville House*, 7–10 *Clydesdale Road*. A request that the front and rear elevation should be preserved and restored.

77 *Ladbroke Road*. Opposed change of use of this house.

152 *Holland Park Avenue*. A request that the mansard roof proposed for this house should match those existing in the road.

112, 114, 116 *Holland Park Avenue*. A request to the Council that greatest care should be taken to ensure that the original fronts of these buildings, which can be seen above the ground floor shop level, should be preserved and restored.

28 *Lansdowne Road*. Society reported that, in view of the mutilated state of the extension of this building the removal of any architectural feature could only constitute a loss to the general appearance.

62 *Kensington Park Road*. Strongly opposed the addition of an extra storey on this building, since it would break the skyline of an otherwise uniform terrace.

13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23 *Denbigh Road* and 36–38 *Chepstow Villas*. A request was made to the Council that the greatest care should be taken to ensure that the exteriors of these buildings should be preserved and restored; the Society regretted the demolition of 13–15 *Denbigh Road* as it was thought that the use of this site for access would constitute a loss to the general appearance of the street; the Society would have liked to see the houses incorporated into the scheme.

11a *Lansdowne Walk*. The Society opposed plan and commented that as this undesirable piece of infilling had already been allowed, the new building should be as reticent and unobtrusive as possible.

The Quest, 85 *Clarendon Road*. The Society applauded some restoration being carried out to the architectural ornament of the façade of this building; a suggestion was made that the applicants should consult the G.L.C. Historic Buildings Division, since the building in its glory as the Clarendon Hotel is featured in the *G.L.C. Survey on London*, Volume XXXVIII.

Pottery Kiln, Hippodrome Mews. A request to the Council that care should be taken to ensure that the external appearance of this structure should not be altered in any way.

25 *Kensington Park Gardens*. The Council were asked to ensure that the external elevations of this important corner house were not altered

and that an effort should be made to persuade the owners to restore missing architectural features.

The Garden, 31 *Colville Road*. Request to the Council that the lean-to building should be roofed in slate and not in corrugated asbestos.

Rank Organisation. New proposals for the top of Earls Court Road are being considered by the Society.

Roof additions and car parking in garden space. A large number of cases have been seen and discussed by the Society and where it has appeared to be detrimental to the street scene, objections have been made.

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Other activities and future arrangements

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Arrangements were made for members to visit the following: Leeds Castle, Maidstone, Lympne Castle, Swanton Mill, Milton Manor House, Abingdon. A recital was given at St. Jude's Church, Courtfield Gardens, by Mr. Jonathan Rennert. Mr. Stanley Cramp gave the Hurcomb and Stocks lecture, 'Bird Life in Inner London'. Other visits also arranged were a preview of the new Town Hall, a visit to Dudley House, the Norwegian Ambassador kindly invited members to the Embassy Residence at 10 Palace Green and Lord Balfour of Inchrye arranged a visit to the House of Lords. A visit to the Chelsea Physic Garden was also arranged.

FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS

5th MAY, 3 p.m. Central Royal Parks Nurseries, Police Station Walk. Hyde Park entrance facing Serpentine, by kind permission of Mr. Stephenson, the Park Superintendent.

9th MAY. A visit to the Royal Horticultural Society's Garden, Wisley. Coach leaves Kensington Square 1.30 p.m. Ticket, including coach, entrance fee, and tea £3.

24th MAY. The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held at Leighton House, 12 Holland Park Road, W.14, at 7 p.m. This will be followed by a reception, giving the officers and members of the Executive Committee an opportunity, this Silver Jubilee Year, to meet members of the Society.

21st JUNE. A visit has been arranged to Eythorne Manor, Hollingborne, by kind permission of Mrs. Simmons, on a day not normally open to the public. Tea will be given by Mrs. Christiansen at Swanton Mill, approximately 20 minutes from Eythorne Manor. Coach leaves Kensington Square at 1 p.m. and will leave Swanton Mill for the return journey at 6.15 p.m. Tickets, including coach and entrance fee to Eythorne Manor, £4.

JULY. We had hoped, with the kind assistance of the Officer-in-Charge of the State Apartments, Kensington Palace, Mr. Purver, to have arranged a function, to mark the Jubilee Year, in the rooms vacated by the London Museum. We regret that the Lord Chamberlain has refused permission.

16th AUGUST. A visit has been arranged to Claremont, Esher, the childhood home of our Patron, H.R.H. Princess Alice. Claremont will be opened on a day not normally open to the public by kind permission of Mr. John Cole, Bursar, Claremont School Trust Ltd. Coach leaves Kensington Square at 1.30 p.m. Tickets, including coach, entrance fee and tea, £3.

20th SEPTEMBER. A visit to Greys Court, Henley on Thames, by kind permission of Lady Brunner, on a day not normally open to the public. Coach leaves Kensington Square at 1.30 p.m. Tickets, including coach, entrance fee and tea at Greys Court (tea and biscuits only), £4.

Will you please enclose stamped addressed envelope when applying for tickets. Visits must be paid for at the time of booking; money cannot be refunded but tickets may be passed to non-members. Coaches will leave promptly. We cannot wait for late-comers. Local visits are charged at the rate of 25p to cover costs of arranging, printing, etc.

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Reports from Local Societies

ABBOTSBURY RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

The Association joined with other interested parties in 1976 in successfully resisting a planning application in respect of 16 Holland Park that would have adversely affected members living nearby and, even worse, set a precedent for building over the few large gardens remaining in the area. The Association has also pledged support for the Kensington Society in opposing reported plans to construct a Soviet Embassy compound adjoining Church Street, Kensington.

Control humps installed in Abbotsbury Road on an experimental basis by the Department of the Environment have brought about a welcome reduction in the speed of through traffic.

The Secretary of State for the Environment has approved in principle the retention of management powers in respect of enfranchised leaseholds on the Abbotsbury Estate and a draft scheme is now in preparation by the freeholder for consideration by the High Court. The situation is being kept under review by the Association's officers.

A well-attended drinks party was held in 'The Orangery' at Holland House on 28th April when the Association's guests included the Member of Parliament, local authority representatives and senior Borough Council staff. General meetings of the Association were held at Leighton House on 10th June and 18th November.

The 1977 Annual General Meeting will be held on 18th October at Leighton House.

Chairman: Professor R. J. L. Allen, O.B.E.

THE BOLTONS' ASSOCIATION

The Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council have now begun their work on a Policy Document for the Bolton's area. A sub-committee of the Association will work together with the Officers of the Council and the aim is to state clearly the Council's policy for development and to supplement this with a library of typical and appropriate details in the Conservation Area. This will be available as guidelines for any proposed development.

After nearly four years of discussion, an Article 4 Direction has been made for a considerable part of the Conservation Area and makes all development subject to planning control. The area covered by the Direction has certain omissions and we will press for a further Direction to include these roads.

One of our major points of concern continues to be the problem of enforcement. We have urged the Council to ask for the work to be carried out in accordance with the approved planning permission but very often it is too late to get effective action.

Planning applications have been slightly less numerous than last year and the more important ones have included the refusal for permission to demolish 3-5 Gilston Road—now pending a decision of the planning appeal—and the extension of the Telephone Exchange at the northern end of the Boltons which we are opposing.

We are most grateful for the support the Kensington Society gives to our comments on planning issues.

Chairman: Mrs. Ile Austin-Smith. *Planning Controller:* Mr. S. Ivatts. *Hon. Secretary:* Mrs. P. Newall. Telephone number for the Association: 01-734 6161.

THE CAMPDEN STREET PRESERVATION SOCIETY

The Society continues to enjoy good support from the residents of the street.

There was only one major event in 1976, and that was the final act in the long saga of the Rowley Galleries. The old building had lain empty for six or seven years and had become derelict; it was an eyesore and a potential hazard. Meanwhile a number of plans were submitted for redevelopment which the Society felt bound to oppose, including as they did an extra storey and/or excessive building at the rear of the site. The efforts of the Society to restrain the over-development of the site have now borne fruit, and the old building has been gutted and restored in a manner which fits in admirably with the adjoining buildings and the area in general.

A note of thanks to the Council would not be out of place as they reacted promptly to our request for the repair of footpaths damaged during building work which had been unsightly and dangerous. We are also grateful for the action taken to restrict parking on the crest of Campden Hill Road.

Hon. Secretary: Group Captain P. H. T. Lewis, 31 Campden Street, W.8.

EDWARDES SQUARE AND SCARSDALE ASSOCIATION

For the past year the Association, through its Kensington High Street Study Group, has been concerned with the continuing problem of the Rank site at the top of Earls Court Road. Because of the apparent lack of activity the Chairman, with the concurrence of the Borough Planning Control Officer, arranged a meeting with Mr. Russell Evans, the Managing Director of the Rank Organisation. This took place in April and Mr. Derek Montague, Managing Director of Rank City Wall, was also present. As a result close co-operation was promised in the preparation of a scheme for the development of the east side and corner of Earls Court Road that could hopefully be supported by the Association.

Drawings were received in July (albeit dated August, 1975) and were commented on by the Committee. They were submitted to the Council in September accompanied by an O.D.P. and a coloured elevation. The Association expressed its approval in a letter to the Borough Planning Control Officer.

The Association supported the Council in their objection to the application by B. S. Zeinaty and S. El-Mitwalli for a music and dancing licence at the ground floor and basement of the J. Lyons building at the corner of Earls Court Road and Kensington High Street which is part of the Rank Development included in their current planning application. It is proposed that the manager will live above. The licence was granted with permission to keep the premises open until 2 a.m. The applicants claim to have a 20-year lease.

Close contact has been maintained with the Prudential Assurance Company in regard to their proposed redevelopment of the Pembroke Gardens/Warwick Gardens property. Whilst supporting the Council's general approach there is some apprehension over the designs that may be offered and the Association would prefer to see these on a competitive basis.

The Association was also represented at the week-long inquiry into the appeal against the refusal of planning permission for a hotel on the Golly's Garage site. It supported the Council in refusing permission on the grounds that it does not consider that there is a need for another hotel in this area and that the site is, in any case, unsuitable. It fears a high level of traffic congestion and overloading of residential side streets.

Again through its High Street Study Group the Association has been given a preview at the offices of the English Property Corporation of their further proposals for additional developments in Wrights Lane including a stepped-back office block on the site of the Pontings' buildings with a block of flats at the rear.

With much regret the Association has accepted the resignation of Lady Brown who has been Honorary Secretary almost since its inception. She is leaving London and her invaluable services will be greatly missed. She takes with her our gratitude and best wishes. We welcome Mrs. Mary Bain who has taken over this post. We also welcome Mrs. Jane Grant who has become Honorary Treasurer in place of the Chairman.

Chairman: Dennis Marlow, Esq., 6 Stratford Studios, W8 6RG.
Hon. Secretary: Mrs. Mary Bain, 6 Phillimore Terrace, W8 6BJ.

ONSLOW NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

The Association has had a successful year with a steady rise in membership. Even more pleasing has been the increasing 'feedback' from members with comment, suggestion and criticism concerning our activities and policies. As in the past the two favourite subjects have been refuse and traffic in their various forms. We commend the Council on the continued improvement in street cleansing and refuse collection,

at least in part the result of the promptings of organisations like our own. The major traffic item has been the suggestion for the zoning of Residents' Parking, much resented by our members and concerning which we have received the written assurances of our Ward Councillors that while the present majority party remains in power it is their policy that no such zoning shall take place.

The Annual General Meeting was enriched by an illustrated talk given by Miss Dorothy Stroud, Deputy Curator of the Sir John Soane Museum, on the history of the Kensington Estate of Henry Smith's Charity.

With our neighbours, the Thurloe and Egerton Association, we have attended our local ward meetings on the Council's Context Papers. The discussions have often been most interesting and we have been gratified that many of our comments and suggestions have been included in the final report to be considered by the Planning Committee.

Hon. Secretary: Hugh Brady, 16 Selwood Terrace, S.W.7.

THE LADBROKE ASSOCIATION

The Ladbroke Association has suffered a sad loss due to the sudden death of our Chairman, Professor Carus-Wilson, on 1st February. Professor Carus-Wilson, who had been Chairman for the last three-and-a-half years, devoted much time to preserving and enhancing the amenities of the Ladbroke area.

During the last year the committee has met regularly to discuss numerous matters affecting the area. Two of these have been of special concern. One is the large number of empty houses, whose fabric is deteriorating. The other is the gradual encroachment of car parking, both in front and in back gardens.

The Borough have recently produced a Report on the Ladbroke area. In the making of this Report the Association committee co-operated closely with the officers of the Borough.

There have been two Newsletters, in spring and autumn, for members' information. A film *Europa Nostra*, specially made for European Architectural Heritage Year, was shown at a members' meeting. It was introduced by Mr. Michael Middleton, C.B.E., Secretary General of the United Kingdom Council for European Architectural Heritage Year. The Annual General Meeting in June was followed by a most enjoyable wine and cheese party.

Hon. Secretary: Miss M. Cosh, 20 Kensington Park Gardens, W.11.

PEMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Although this is its first appearance in this Report, the Pembridge Association has been active since it started in October, 1972. The area concerned is the Pembridge Conservation Area which extends from Notting Hill Gate northwards to beyond Chepstow Villas with the Borough boundary on the east and Kensington Park Road on the west.

The Association has shown an interest in matters concerning Portobello Road Market and the Housing Action Area in Colville which are to the north. It made recommendations regarding traffic in Pembridge Road.

The Association was much exercised by planning applications for the redevelopment of 1 Pembridge Square (above Pembridge Library) where it was anxious that the building's distinctive architectural features should be retained, and concerning the Sion Convent site in Chepstow Villas where change of use from a school to office use as a Science Centre was opposed. A watching brief was kept on the developments regarding the Russian Embassy in Kensington Palace Gardens, which adjoins the Conservation Area, and on the setting up of the Avondale/Colville/Norland/Pembridge Local Planning Forum.

At the Annual General Meeting Mr. Ian Grant, F.R.I.B.A., gave an illustrated talk on Victorian architecture.

Chairman: The Rev. D. S. Richardson, 48 Ladbroke Road, W.11. (01-229 7275.)

ROYAL CRESCENT ASSOCIATION

The Royal Crescent Association was formed at a public meeting attended by Royal Crescent residents and others on 4th December, 1974, at which architects Alan and Sylvia Blanc explained their proposals, outlined in their report commissioned by the Norland Conservation Society, for restoring the Crescent as a project for European Architectural Heritage Year 1975. The primary object of the Association was to make the most of this golden opportunity by bringing it to the attention of freeholders on the Crescent, keeping contact with public authorities, etc., and generally co-ordinating action and views.

The necessary work has been done by the Committee, elected by members at the Annual General Meeting, which has also striven to improve and maintain the quality of living of residents by acting as watchdog over such matters as traffic control, area development and public cleanliness.

These activities have fostered a good community spirit, which the Association has encouraged among residents by arranging informal coffee evenings at the Kensington Hilton Hotel, by courtesy of the management, and picnics in the garden, by courtesy of the Royal Crescent Garden Committee.

Two years' activity by the Association has resulted in substantial improvements on the Crescent and a growing awareness by members of their neighbourhood.

Chairman: Colin D. MacInnes, 35 Royal Crescent, W.11.

THURLOE AND EGERTON ASSOCIATION

We continue to meet regularly to discuss recurrent issues, but this year a lot of our energy has been devoted to making a positive response to the

Council's invitation to take part in the public consultation programme they are running in preparation for the drafting of the Borough Development Plan. We have been represented on the Brompton/Hans Town/Royal Hospital ward Local Planning Forum and, concurrently, as a committee we have studied and commented upon the Council's Context Papers. The opinions we have expressed have been endorsed by members of T.E.A. (now over 200) to whom we sent a summary of our submissions to the Council, asking for comment.

One planning issue this year does deserve particular mention. Last autumn the G.L.C. invited tenders for the development of the old National Theatre site, South Kensington. Four applicants were invited to develop their schemes and to gain planning consent from the Borough before June, 1977, when one will be chosen. With the Planning Control Officer, we initiated the planning brief adopted by the Council in 1974 for the development of the site. We want to see there a building worthy of its importance.

Hon. Secretary: Susan Walker, A.R.I.B.A., 95 Walton Street, S.W.3.

Memorial Address for Lord Hurcomb

ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER

What kind of man was Cyril Hurcomb, for whose life we are here to give thanks? What did he make of his life, and what has been its meaning for us, his friends and relatives? Such questions are easier to pose than to answer, especially since the entire first half of his great lifespan of over 92 years already lies so far back that few here can recall him from those days. It is only a few weeks since in this same church we experienced a comparable gulf at the memorial service for his friend from school days, Arthur Salter. We never knew them as young men.

Both were Oxford men in the fullest sense, springing from the city and growing together with the University later. From a highly literate background Cyril developed at Oxford High School his scholarly bent and his connoisseur's appreciation of the English language, so evident in his speeches and writings. His contemporaries there included two other masters of English, the poet John Drinkwater and T. E. Lawrence of Arabia. Still without having to move much more than a mile, he went up with an Open Scholarship to St. John's College as a classic. To his intense pleasure he was elected an Honorary Fellow there, nearly 40 years later.

After taking his degree, he entered the Civil Service as an Assistant Surveyor in the General Post Office, still pervaded by something of the atmosphere lingering from the days of a somewhat earlier surveyor, Anthony Trollope. For all his progressive views and his adaptability to change, Cyril never ceased to carry with him some flavour of those more gentlemanly and less hurried times.

However, with the coming to power of the Liberals in 1906 the pace of change began its still gathering acceleration. He was lucky at this time to be picked as Private Secretary, first to the permanent head of the Post Office, and then to that outstanding public figure Herbert Samuel, the new Postmaster-General, who gave him a vivid insight into the inner workings of the ministerial world. Samuel undertook the first visit ever made to Canada by a British Cabinet Minister, taking with him his 30-year-old Private Secretary on an unforgettable three-month trip across North America and back.

Being forbidden to volunteer for military service in the First World War, Cyril got himself transferred to the Transport Department of the Admiralty, housed first in the attics of Admiralty Arch and then in a hut on the drained bed of St. James's Park lake. Lloyd George, on becoming Prime Minister, absorbed it into a new Ministry of Shipping under the independent-minded Shipping Controller, Sir Joseph

Maclay, who, as Cyril recorded, once replied to a deputation by referring to the Cabinet as 'those people in Downing Street' and adding that they must be mad. The team at the Ministry was a happy and brilliant one, including allies such as Jean Monnet and Norwegian and other shipping men. Soon after the war, he transferred to another newly created Ministry—Transport—becoming its Permanent Secretary just in time to defeat an attempt by Winston Churchill to abolish it.

The record shows first of all that Cyril was tough and gifted, with almost measureless stamina and powers of survival. He made unusually few serious mistakes, during a period when wrong decisions were so much more frequent than right ones. His rare wisdom was founded on study of history and of human character. Like some other wartime leaders, he also drew strength from quiet communing with nature, and from his sturdy non-attachment to sectional creeds or loyalties, which could have biased his good judgment. Although far from colourless, and indeed dedicated to such causes as conservation, he had a judicial temperament, and was never blind to the merits and the motives of opposite points of view.

In 1923 he joined the Confreres and remained for 50 years a keen and valued participant in its varied and sometimes unorthodox discussions. Much later, in 1950, he became an Honorary Member of the Smeatonian Society of Civil Engineers, another fellowship which he greatly valued. In the Order of the Bath he rose to Knight Grand Cross in 1950 and he was also a K.B.E. and held the Grand Cross of the Netherlands Order of Orange Nassau and the Norwegian Order of St. Olaf. Yet despite these and other honours, he never sought or obtained fame in the sense understood by the media. Short of resorting to extreme measures, he always chose to keep outside rather than in the limelight, and when in it his role was as a spokesman.

His strong personality was well balanced. He successfully restrained such impatience and antipathies as he not infrequently felt. Although classically educated, he felt at home among technologists; much less so among scientists. He was naturally a bridge-builder and an integrator of differing views, ever interested in new standpoints but not given to flights of imagination, and keeping his sense of humour on quite a tight rein. The pursuit of power for its own sake, and what is called 'making money', were foreign to his nature. He was always more concerned to give his efforts for the good of others than to take things out for himself.

To have to speak of such a man is a humbling assignment. The more one looks at his life, the greater is the sense of loss, and the more insistent the question whether there can really be others coming on now who will bring comparable gifts and dedication to the service of our nation. One even has qualms whether the style and clarity of the English in which one tries to recall him would pass muster under his quizzical scrutiny. Perhaps, at this very moment, a celestial pencil-stub is poised over my shoulder, ready to put that sentence right. In the end, however, we are here to give thanks for his life, and that we can surely do.

E. M. NICHOLSON.

The Hurcomb and Stocks Lecture

THE BIRDS OF INNER LONDON 1900-1976

The famous naturalist, W. H. Hudson, was confined to London for the summers of 1896 and 1897. He devoted this 'wasted and dreary period' to extensive excursions from his Kensington home to survey the birds of London, and in the resulting book *Birds in London* (1898) he painted a gloomy picture of the steady decline in the variety and interest of the bird life of the metropolis. Indeed, he went so far as to say that many species, 'the tits and finches, robin, wren, dunnoek, pied wagtail, the missel-thrush and some warblers', were dying out in London. Fortunately, events have not justified his pessimism.

In 1900, there were 25 species breeding regularly in inner London. They included four water-birds (mute swan, mallard, moorhen and little grebe), two pigeons (woodpigeon and feral pigeon), swift, great spotted woodpecker, tawny owl, three corvids (carrion crow, rook and jackdaw), three thrushes (song thrush, mistle thrush and blackbird), robin, wren, dunnoek, two tits (great and blue), spotted flycatcher, two finches (greenfinch and chaffinch), starling and house sparrow. Only two of these (swift and spotted flycatcher) were summer migrants. By 1950, seven more species were nesting every year—tufted duck, coot, kestrel, jay, black redstart, goldfinch and pied wagtail, but one had gone—the rook which last bred in the Temple in 1916. By 1976, another 12 regular breeding birds had arrived—pochard, Canada goose, coal tit, bullfinch, blackcap, herring gull, house martin, tree-creeper, long-tailed tit, magpie, heron and great crested grebe, while three had been lost—little grebe, great spotted woodpecker and jackdaw. Another 14 species have bred occasionally this century, the most frequent being stock dove, nuthatch, willow warbler, yellow wagtail and grey wagtail. Many of the regular breeding birds of 1900 have, far from declining as W. H. Hudson forecast, increased markedly in numbers since then, e.g. feral pigeon, blackbird, robin, wren, dunnoek, blue tit and great tit, though the house sparrow has decreased, at first considerably as horse traffic vanished from the streets and more slowly in recent years. In addition, some winter visitors, especially gulls and ducks, have become more common.

What are the reasons for this dramatic reversal of the impoverishment feared by Hudson? Many factors influence bird populations, often complex and little understood, so it is unwise to be too dogmatic. I have little doubt, however, that the change in the human attitude to birds has been the most important. In 1880, the first general bird protection law was passed and this led to the ending of the barbarous

practice of shooting gulls from the Thames bridges, as well as the increase in species once trapped in large numbers for cage-birds, such as the goldfinch. People began to feed birds (and erect nest-boxes) and some species now depend largely on bread so provided, especially waterfowl and gulls on the park lakes, and pigeons, house sparrows, starlings and blackbirds elsewhere. Then active conservation measures were taken, especially in the parks, fostered by the Committee on Bird Sanctuaries in the Royal Parks, under the wise and energetic leadership of its Chairman for many years, the late Lord Hurcomb. Sanctuaries were provided, both on the lakes, so ensuring the survival of the heron colony in Regent's Park and the recent nesting of great crested grebes in Kensington Gardens and elsewhere, and on land, whereby blackcap, robin, wren and other species which need cover for nesting benefited.

There are, of course, other factors involved. There have been changes in habitat besides the provision of sanctuaries. Two major, though not permanent, changes have had dramatic effects—the derelict areas left by bombing in the 1939-45 war, which made inner London for some years the headquarters of one of Britain's rarest breeding birds, the black redstart, and helped the kestrel; and the recent closing of the Surrey docks, which has led to a spate of new nesting records for the area, including such unlikely species as red-legged partridge, lapwing, ringed and little ringed plover, skylark, sedge warbler and reed-bunting. The felling of old trees has not, however, helped the woodpeckers, but the cleaning of the Thames has led to great increases in wintering duck, mainly so far in the lower reaches. W. H. Hudson favoured artificial introductions to avert the catastrophe he foresaw; most of the new regular species have arrived naturally, but the coot, pochard and Canada goose were all helped by the transference of birds or eggs. Competition between species has played a part—the major increase in feral pigeons has possibly had harmful effects on the numbers of wood-pigeons and house sparrows. Cleaner air since the passing of the 1966 Act has, in my view, played some part in the increase in numbers and variety of insectivorous species in inner London, including the dramatic return of the house martin after nearly 80 years and the increase in such species as the blackcap, coal tit, long-tailed tit and tree-creeper. Inner London has also benefited from the general resurgence of some of these species, and others such as the wren and robin, following the recent succession of mild winters. Finally, there are the puzzles—why has the little grebe vanished from inner London while its relative, the great-crested grebe, has moved in; and why has the small colony of jackdaws gone when the jay and magpie have been successful colonists?

Whatever the reasons, the facts are clear—inner London can now offer a greater variety of bird life than at any time during this century. Man, who once destroyed birds and their habitats, now regards them with benevolence and often affection, and is at least modifying his impact on their habitats. The late Lord Hurcomb could wish for no better monument to his untiring labours.

STANLEY CRAMP.

Kensington Palace Gardens and Palace Green

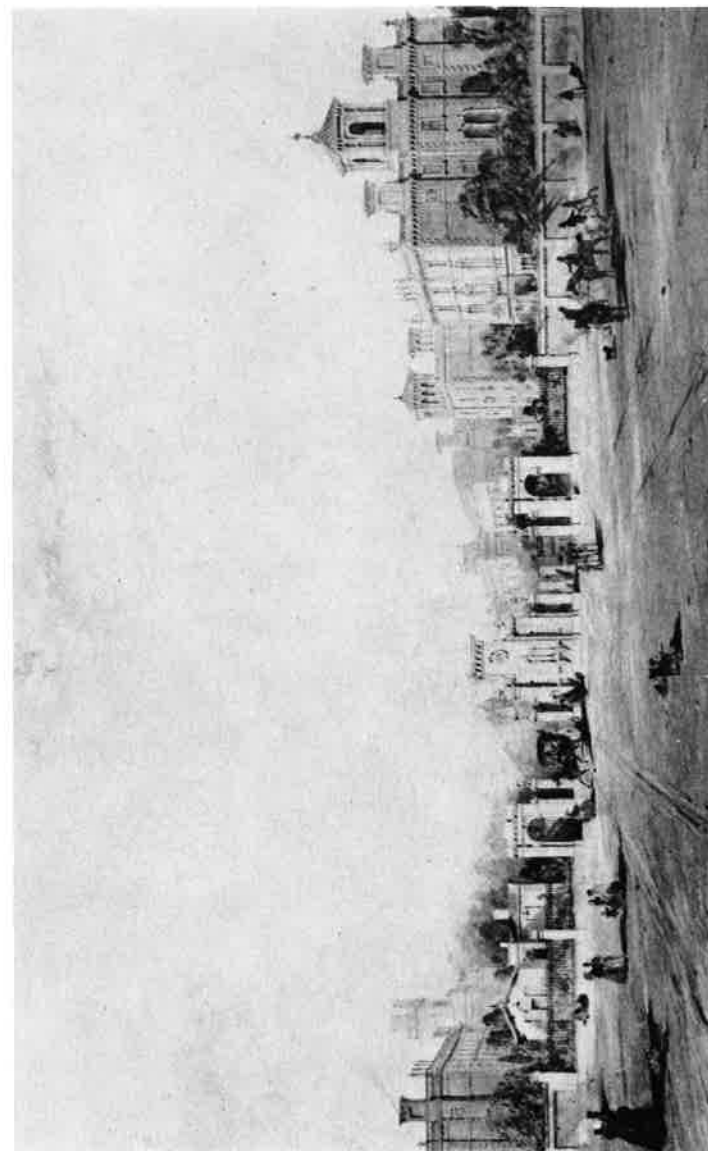
These notes on the Crown Estate of Kensington Palace Gardens and Palace Green have been written as an historical background to the present controversy about the future development of the site. The G.L.C. *Survey of London*, Volume 37, 'Northern Kensington', 1972, which is the most complete published source of information, has been used very heavily—and with gratitude. Other material, mainly biographical, comes from other printed sources in the Kensington Central Library, particularly from the special biography collection, the reference library and the local studies collection.

The illustrations of Nos. 6 and 7 and of No. 12 are from the Greater London Council Photographic Unit: the others are from the Kensington local studies collection of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The illustration of No. 3 Palace Green is from Estella Canziani's *Round about 3 Palace Green*, by permission of the publishers, Methuen & Co.

The area covered is a Crown Estate constituted in 1841, lying between Kensington Palace and Kensington Church Street with its northern entrance in the Bayswater Road at Notting Hill, the southern entrance in Kensington High Street. It is in the form of a wide avenue lined with plane trees with houses on both sides of the road at the northern end numbered 1–26 consecutively (Nos. 1–3 are since demolished), and houses at the south, on the west side only, numbered 1–10 Palace Green.

The land north of the Palace, the sites of Nos. 1–26, was previously kitchen garden. Before that it was part of 'the Wilderness' which had been laid out by Queen Anne on the site of a gravel pit. Palace Green is the piece of ground on the west side of Kensington Palace. It was the parade ground for the palace guard and for the militia: the guard house, the stables and two water towers stood on it—all now demolished except the stable block. Part of this ground, together with a very old kitchen garden called the King's Forcing Ground on the west, form the southern part of the estate. Three old houses numbered 1–3 stood at the south-west corner of Palace Green.

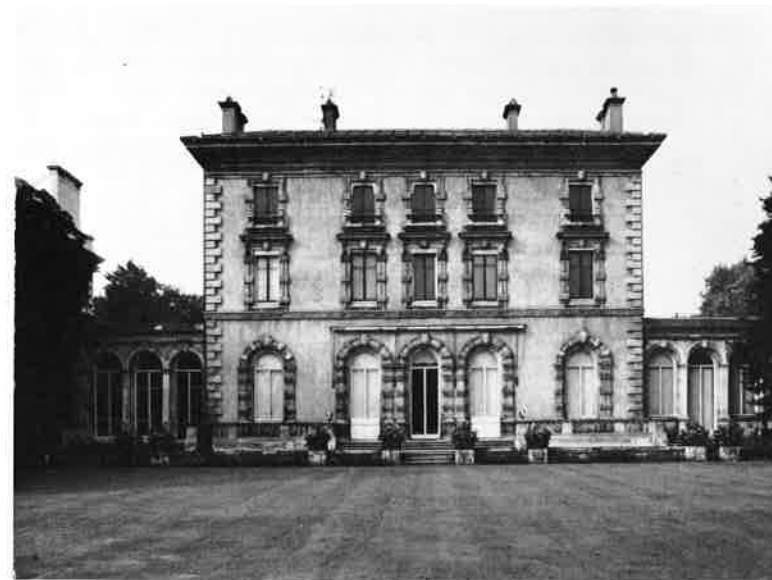
The estate was formed as the consequence of a report of 1838 on the organisation of the several royal kitchen gardens which recommended that new gardens should be laid out at Windsor, and others, including



KENSINGTON PALACE GARDENS, ENTRANCE GATE NORTH
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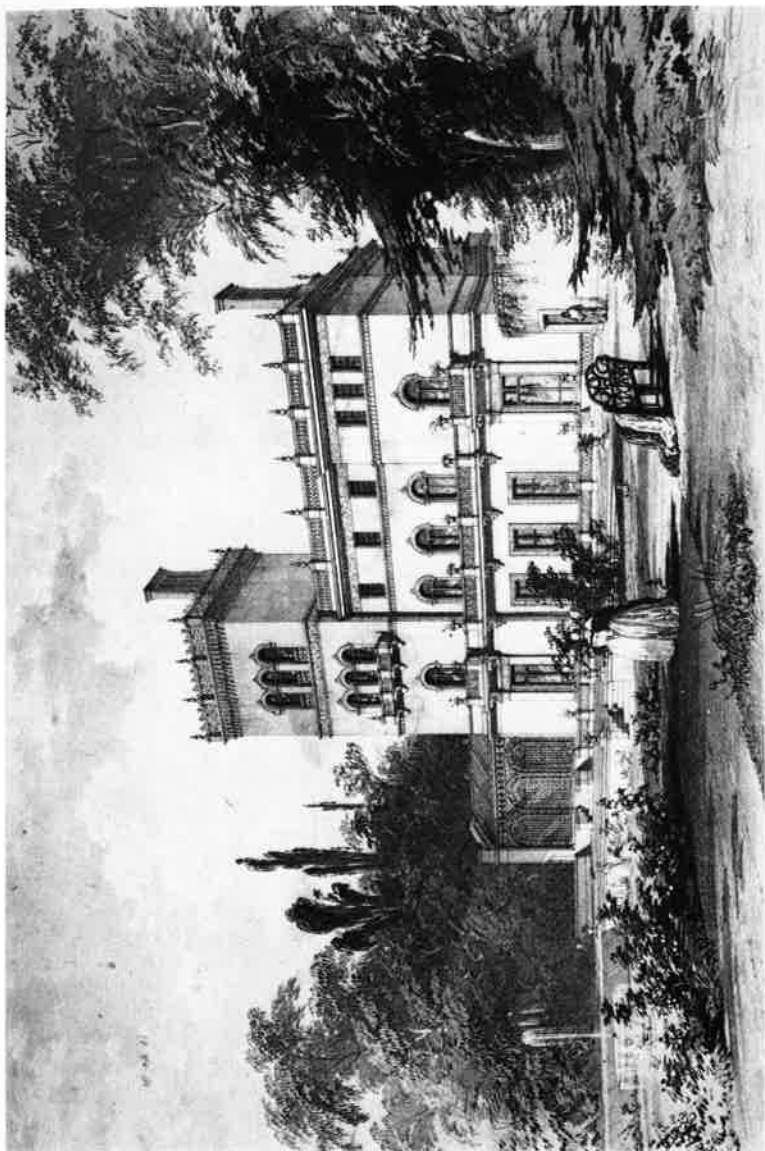
6, 7 KENSINGTON PALACE GARDENS, 1963
By kind permission of Photographic Library, G.L.C.



12 KENSINGTON PALACE GARDENS, 1971
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3 PALACE GREEN, HOME OF MISS CANZIANI
demolished 1969
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8 KENSINGTON PALACE GARDENS

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those at Kensington, should be abolished. It was understood that the ground released at Kensington would, if let on building leases, finance the new gardens. Accordingly, the ground was transferred from the Lord Stewards Department to the Commissioners of Crown Estates (at that time the Office of Works), some old houses and 'The Grapes' public house in the High Street were purchased to make way for a southern entrance, and the plots were advertised in 1842. The development was planned and controlled by James Pennethorne, the official architect to the Commissioners.

The venture did not get off to a good start, but the Commissioners accepted a tender from Samuel Strickland of Bayswater for the plots on which Nos. 1-5 were eventually built. In 1843 they accepted tenders from John Marriott Blashfield for 20 plots on which Nos. 6-14 and Nos. 16-26 were eventually built, but not all by Blashfield. He was a manufacturer of ceramic pavements with more enthusiasm than experience or sound capital. He probably had not intended to build on all the plots himself, but by 1847 his venture foundered uncompleted and he was declared bankrupt. It was 1851 before the estate began to succeed, when conditions generally were improving, and Kensington especially was becoming a favourable area for building enterprise. *The Illustrated London News* for 31st January, 1846, had commented: 'There seems to be a general feeling that the road from its great breadth, imposing aspect, and the correct taste displayed throughout bids fair to become a most aristocratic neighbourhood.' Blashfield had in fact submitted plans for larger and more costly houses than the conditions of the Commissioners demanded. This set the style for the whole estate. Town palaces like these could only be afforded by the very wealthy. The aristocracy, however, with few exceptions, were not attracted and from the beginning until the time in the 1930s when the embassies started to take over, the occupants were mainly merchants, financiers and contractors.

Because the houses belonged to the very wealthy their occupants understandably wanted to change their homes to their own taste. They could afford to make extensive alterations, sometimes with unfortunate effects on the appearance of the house. Much original outstanding decorative art has been lost from the interiors, notably that of Webb, Burne-Jones and Crane from No. 1 Palace Green, and from Kensington Palace Gardens that of Owen Jones at No. 8, Welles Coates at No. 1 and Alfred Stevens at No. 20.

PALACE GREEN

No. 1 Palace Green was built on the site of the southernmost of the three old houses on Palace Green. In 1867 George Howard, the 23-year-old nephew and heir of the Earl of Carlisle, but an avowed artist, purchased a lease containing the provision that the old house be demolished. This was Howard's wish anyway (unlike Thackeray at

No. 2) because he wanted a house designed by Philip Webb, and had ascertained that the Commissioners would not object in principle to a red brick house by Webb. But Pennethorne, who had been a pupil of Nash, and who still saw good architecture in terms of traditional styles, did not approve of the drawings—he thought the design inferior and commonplace, and objected particularly to the masses of red brick without relief of stone. Philip Webb was a member of the William Morris circle. His constant aim, according to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, 'was to carry on and develop English architectural tradition without copying any particular style'. Webb thus took it as a compliment that the architects called in as referees were 'unable to discover what actual style or period of architecture' he had used. After a few alterations were reluctantly conceded by Webb the design was eventually accepted.

The original interior was beautifully decorated to designs by Webb and artists of the William Morris circle. The masterpiece was the dining-room by Burne-Jones, completed by Walter Crane, which had a frieze illustrating the legend of Cupid and Psyche from William Morris's *The Earthly Paradise*.

Until 1957 when it was converted into flats the exterior remained much the same. Barkers had purchased the lease in 1911, and in 1922 proposed to demolish it. The house was saved by a strong protest by a group of writers and architects, but the south front is obscured by the building on the High Street designed by Reginald Blomfield for Barkers.

No. 2 Palace Green

No. 2 became the home of William Makepeace Thackeray who was tired of living at 36 Onslow Square in genteel Brompton and wanted to move back to his favourite corner of Kensington near Young Street. He wanted an old house in red brick in which he could perhaps start his book on Queen Anne, and found it in 1860. The old house at 2 Palace Green had recently been vacated by the daughters of a grace and favour tenant. Thackeray was to have taken a repairing lease but a survey showed that the house would have to be rebuilt. The new house (the architect was Frederick Hering) was, however, of the red brick he wanted, and in approximately Queen Anne style, with brick pilasters across the front and a balustrade concealing five dormer windows. His library was a one-storey extension on the north running the whole depth of the house. Thackeray was to delight especially in working in this room with its view of the Palace and the Green.

The work took longer than expected and was going to cost much more than the £4,000 estimated cost. On 24th May, 1861, he wrote to his American friend Mrs. Baxter that if her son's expected visit was to be in December 'we shall most likely be able to house him in "Vanity Fair House";' but it was not completed until March, 1862.

Thackeray was already ill, and his less than two years in the house were not as happy as they should have been. His daughter Anny particularly resented the cost of the house. He persuaded himself, however, that it would in the end be an investment. In this he was right. The house on which he said he had paid £8,000 was sold to Charles Frederick Huth (who was later at 9 Kensington Palace Gardens) for £10,000.

In 1882 the library wing was heightened to two storeys and bay windows added at the front. In 1939 further extensive redecoration was carried out by Darcy Braddell for Eugene Speir leaving almost no trace of Thackeray's interior.

It is now, with the new No. 3, the Israeli Embassy.

No. 3 Palace Green

No. 3 Palace Green was the only one of the three old houses existing on the site when the Commissioners started to develop it, which remained until very recent times. It had usually been the home of the Clerk of Works of the Palace, and at the time of the development it was occupied by Peter Hogg.

From 1885 until it was demolished in 1969 it was the home of the Canziani family. Louisa Starr, the painter who was American born but had lived in England most of her life, had married Francesco Enrico Canziani, a wealthy sugar manufacturer. Their only child Estella was born here on 12th January, 1887, and lived all her long life in the house, and wrote her reminiscences of her life with her parents and their friends. Louisa Starr Canziani, who was the first woman gold medallist at the Royal Academy Schools, discovered the house when she needed larger studios, and from then on it was a lively meeting place for many well-known artists—Millais, Leighton, Alma Tadema, Walter Crane, Brangwyn. Louisa Starr continued to paint (mostly portraits), and exhibited at the Royal Academy until her early death in 1909. Her daughter joined her in exhibiting there when only 15 years old. Enrico Canziani ran his business in Italy, constantly travelling between England and Italy. He was active in the Italian community in London, and also in local affairs as a member of the Libraries Committee.

After her father's death in 1931, Estella, who had become a Quaker, lived alone at No. 3 with her cook and housekeeper, busy with her painting and her voluntary work.

As its owner grew old the house became shabby and untidy and filled with canvases. The garden was allowed to become an overgrown bird sanctuary. When Estella Canziani died in 1964 the house remained empty for some time and could hardly be seen for the tangled shrubs and trees which enclosed it. In 1969 it was demolished.

4-10 Palace Green

While Queen Victoria was still alive, there were objections to building opposite the Palace on the remaining piece of undeveloped ground on

the west side of Palace Green between the old house at No. 3 and No. 15a Kensington Palace Gardens. With the accession of Edward VII in 1901 the Commissioners were able to build.

In 1903 the plots were available for letting and the tender of the building firm of William Willett was accepted. This firm had a reputation for excellence in material and sound structure, and these houses are all of a very high standard of building. Although they are by different architects, there is a similarity of style. Nos. 4-7 are symmetrical with modillioned cornices and pediments; Nos. 8-10 are asymmetrical. All have Dutch influences, especially in the gables of No. 9. Nos. 8-10 have two-storey entrance halls panelled in a Jacobean style, but otherwise decorations are basically classical in character.

All are now part of the Embassy enclave. Some (for example, Nos. 8 and 10) are found to be just right in style and size to be the house of the Ambassador, away from the offices of the Embassy.

KENSINGTON PALACE GARDENS

No. 1

Of the five houses built by Samuel Strickland only the architect of No. 1 is known—Henry Duesbury. It was first occupied in 1846 by the M.P. Charles Lushington. At the end of the century it was again the house of an M.P., Arthur Strauss, a tin merchant who was also Conservative M.P. for Paddington North. After his death in 1920 it continued to be the home of his son George Russell Strauss, the Labour M.P. for the Vauxhall Division of Lambeth, Minister of Aircraft Production during the war and now Father of the House. In the year of his marriage in 1932 the interior of the house underwent a thoroughgoing change in appearance. The Canadian architect and designer Welles Coates who carried it out was one of the best known architects of the style of the 1930s. The *Architectural Review* of July, 1932, showed photographs as it was then and in 1893. Coates explained his philosophy of the house: '... Very soon it will be considered quite as fantastic to move accompanied by wardrobes, tables and beds, as it would seem today to remove the bath, or the heating system including all the pipes ...'.

The house was demolished about 1962.

Nos. 2 and 3

Nos. 2 and 3 were a pair of semi-detached houses (now demolished) completed in carcase by March, 1845. No. 2 was occupied at first by Samuel Strickland himself.

Nos. 4 and 5

Nos. 4 and 5 are the only remaining houses of the five originally built by Strickland. They are semi-detached, Italianate in style. No. 4 is now occupied by the Institute of Rubber Industry. From 1890 until about 1919 it was occupied by a Mrs. Leech who may have been a connection

of John Leech, the first occupant of No. 18. No. 5 is now the Soviet consulate. In 1895 after the death of Charles F. Huth his widow moved here from No. 9, their home since 1866.

Nos. 6 and 7

These are a pair of semi-attached houses, the northernmost of the houses in which Blashfield was involved, on the east side of Kensington Palace Gardens. He had planned to build one house designed by T. H. Wyatt and David Brandon, and received the Commissioners' approval in April, 1844, but did not carry this out. Instead he sold the site to Joseph Earle, a timber merchant, and on his behalf submitted a design in July of that year by the same architects for a double house.

Thomas Henry Wyatt and David Brandon, both in their thirties, had been partners for six years. Brandon's work was concerned mostly with country houses and clubs. Wyatt, a member of an architectural family, and pupil of Philip Hardwick who designed No. 10, had a large practice mainly building and restoring churches and other public buildings. At the end of his life he designed two more buildings near Kensington—the Knightsbridge Barracks (since demolished) and the southern part of Brompton Hospital.

By February, 1845, the carcasses of Nos. 6 and 7 were completed, with some alterations made while work was in progress, including the enriched parapet of unusual star-shaped design. The style of the house is pleasant, Italianate, and was symmetrical until 1863 when David Brandon designed a fourth storey for No. 7.

The first occupant of No. 6 was the builder Joseph Earle himself: then after his death in 1856 his widow, and then his son Joseph Sim Earle until 1901. It was not uncommon for families to stay for many decades in Kensington Palace Gardens.

No. 7's first occupant was Anselmo de Arroyave, a Spanish merchant, but he soon had grander ideas and had a house built for himself at No. 9.

Nos. 8 and 8a

No. 8 was the first to be built by Blashfield. His architect was Owen Jones, an architect and artist who had travelled in Greece and Egypt and spent three years in Spain studying Moorish architecture. This influence shows in the designs he made for Blashfield which were enriched with 'Moorsque' details such as the first-floor windows. Blashfield had perfected a new way of making tessellated pavements, and in 1842 published a book of designs by Owen Jones: these or similar designs would have been used for some of the floors.

Although the house was finished in 1846 it was 1852 before it was occupied. The tenant Mrs. Caroline Murray found the house too large and, after building an extension to the south in the same style, she divided the house into two and occupied the southern half for herself.

The other half was occupied by Russell Gurney, barrister and Recorder of London.

During the war the house was used for the interrogation of German prisoners. Afterwards it remained empty for many years and was found to be too dilapidated to repair. In 1961 it was demolished and a block of luxury duplex flats was built on the site.

No. 9

The early history of No. 9 was linked with that of No. 11, although the buildings are separated by No. 10. They were built for two Spanish merchants who both were already living in the road. No. 9 was built in 1852-54 for Don Anselmo de Arroyave who was at this time living at No. 7, having been its first occupant; No. 11 for his kinsman Don Cristobal de Murietta, the first occupant of No. 26.

The designer of their new houses was Sydney Smirke, an architect whose career was usually connected with designing or adapting public buildings, much of it in the shadow of his more famous and much older brother Robert. He designed the portico and domes of the Imperial War Museum and the British Museum Reading Room.

His designs for Nos. 9 and 11 were submitted in 1852, and he described his intentions in each as to treat all four fronts similarly and uniformly. They are of stucco, classical in design, with symmetrical façades, porches, flanked by fenestration made interesting by the use of cast-iron columns. The contractors for both houses were Lucas Bros. Interior decorations for both were by Alfred Stevens who was outside the general circle of artists of the time, and whose work is now little known beyond the Wellington Memorial in St. Paul's. He may have got the commission through his friend Leonard Collmann, who was Smirke's assistant. Nothing of his work for No. 9 is known, however, except for a few working drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

In 1866 No. 9 was bought by Charles F. Huth, a commission merchant who had purchased Thackeray's house in Palace Green. The first of the major alterations was an attic floor designed by William Thompson.

In 1938 Cornelius W. Dresselhuys redecorated the interior extensively. The drawing-room, which extends the full depth of the house, was completely panelled in carved and gilded wood in Louis Quinze style.

The house is now occupied by the Indian High Commissioner. The panelling and other decorations have been retained.

No. 10

No. 10 was designed by Philip Hardwick, but has been extensively altered by later owners. As originally designed it was smaller in scale than others in the road and only two storeys high. It was finished in 1847 but remained untenanted until the lease was acquired by James

Meadows Rendel, the civil engineer, in 1851. Even before he moved in he had alterations made by Robert Banks and Charles Barry. In 1896 Leopold Hirsch, the financier, added a mansard roof, square attic windows, a balustrade above the cornice; the windows were altered and the brick walls were rendered with Portland cement. In 1903-4 an extra storey was added to an extension already made in the north side.

The house is now one of the Soviet Embassy buildings and the office of the Soviet ciné film distributors.

No. 11

The early history of No. 11 has been related with that of No. 9. The Murietta family continued to live at No. 11 for several decades.

The interior designs by Alfred Stevens are no longer in existence; they were described by Hugh Stannus in his biography of Stevens, and the pencil drawings are in the R.I.B.A. collection, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Tate Gallery. They consisted of a painted ceiling in the morning-room, and painted panels on canvas in the drawing-room depicting the heroines of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*.

The ceiling paintings were still in existence in 1937 when the Commissioners ordered a photographic survey to be carried out before the house was redecorated for its new occupant the Duke of Marlborough. The wall paintings on canvas had, however, disappeared and their whereabouts are unknown.

In 1873 extensive alterations and redecoration were carried out for José de Murietta. A one-storey ballroom and art gallery were added to the south side by Edward Tarver. After a fire the following year the present high-pitched roof was added which gives the house a somewhat French appearance. Walter Crane contributed a frieze of animals and birds to the internal redecorations.

The house is now the residence of the French Ambassador. An extension on the north side added for the Embassy has further reduced the symmetry of Smirke's design.

No. 12

Thomas Grissell began building No. 12 with his cousin and partner Samuel Morton Peto, and submitted plans in 1845. In March of the following year they had parted amicably so that Peto could devote himself to railway contracts, and Grissell completed it alone. The architect was Charles Barry who also designed Nos. 18, 19 and 20.

The vacant plot next to No. 12 on the south side was acquired to lay out a garden. The house, although finished in 1846, remained unlet until 1853 when Peto himself took the sub-lease. The design recalls that of Barry's Italianate designs for London club houses. Peto added a conservatory at the south-east corner. In 1863, however, he was building himself a large house (No. 12a) in the garden alongside.

In 1864 the new owner, Alexander Collie, a cotton merchant, employed Matthew Digby Wyatt (brother and pupil of T. H. Wyatt)

to make extensive alterations, and to redecorate. Like his friend Owen Jones, with whom he had worked on the designs of Paddington Station, Wyatt was a decorator as much as an architect, favouring medieval and Moorish styles and patterns. He built a breakfast room at the north-east to balance Peto's conservatory.

The kitchen was transformed into a billiards room which still survives as a flower room. This, in an exuberant Moorish style, is one of the hidden architectural treasures of Victorian Kensington. Above a dado of coloured tiles is a cornice supported on carved brackets, extending over the panelled doors. Above is an arcade of marble colonettes behind which mirrors reflect to infinity the rich carving, strong colours and gilding. The ceiling is coved, decorated with arabesques, and supports a clerestory in which the lights are in the form of eight pointed stars.

From the time of Wyatt's alterations, the house has since preserved its early state—perhaps more than any other house in the road. Collie's career ended melodramatically when in 1875 he was prosecuted for obtaining £200,000 from a bank by false pretences, broke bail and disappeared. The house was then empty for 10 years, but has since been occupied by only two families.

The first was Samuel Montagu the banker. He was M.P. for the Tower Hamlets division of Whitechapel from 1885 to 1900 and became Baron Swaythling in 1907. After his death in 1911 his wife and daughters continued to live in the house. Estella Canziani in her memoirs writes of her work with two of the unmarried Montagu daughters Lily and Marian in a Jewish Girls' Club. After the death of Lady Swaythling in 1919 the lease was taken by Lord Rocksavage, as he then was (later Marquess of Cholmondeley), and Lady Cholmondeley still lives there.

No. 12a

No. 12a was the house built by Sir Morton Peto on the plot of ground which he had leased as extra garden ground for his house at No. 12. It was designed by James Murray.

The size of the house, the massive use of luxurious materials, the stone facing were not to be had cheaply. *The Builder* estimated the cost as between £45,000–£50,000. One advanced feature was a coal lift which went from top to bottom of the house, communicating on every floor. Sir Morton had always had definite views on mechanisation taking the place of unnecessary human labour: the building of the railway at Balaclava in the Crimean war to save wasting the labour of the fighting troops (he took no profits from it) won him his baronetcy.

Sir Morton's own maidservants had little time to appreciate their master's consideration for their ease and health, for in the following year his financial crisis caused him to give up the house, and a year later he became bankrupt.

The house is now the Royal Nepalese Embassy.

No. 13

No. 13 commenced in 1851 when the 5th Earl of Harrington took a building plot on which to build a house for himself. The Harrington connection with Kensington went back to the 18th century and the Brompton Park estate.

The surveyor of the Harrington estate was C. J. Richardson, and it was he who supervised the building of this house, one of the largest in the road, following Lord Harrington's desires for a Gothic design. It is not clear how much was designed by the owner himself—he may have made preliminary sketches with Richardson actually designing in detail. The Commissioners may have been influenced in their acceptance of a Gothic design, which differs so greatly from its Italianate neighbours, by their desire to welcome an aristocratic tenant to the half-empty road. The house was completed by July, 1853.

The exterior was criticised at the time for its tortuous appearance. Even now the front elevation is dominated by the Gothic balustrade and heavy sash windows. The centre bell turret was removed and the conservatory roof altered in 1924 when it was acquired by Sir Lewis Richardson, a South African ostrich feather and wool merchant, and considerable alterations were made to the interior.

An engraving in C. J. Richardson's *Picturesque designs for mansions* of 1870 shows the saloon on the ground floor. A large picture gallery lay behind, but the engraving shows the saloon and the first-floor landings also closely hung with paintings.

The house was acquired in 1930 by the Russian Government as an Embassy, despite the protests of residents to the Commissioners of the Crown Estate and to the Foreign Secretary. This was the beginning of what is by now almost total occupation by embassies.

No. 14

No. 14 has undergone considerable changes since it first appeared as a modest two-storeyed house in 1850–51. Indeed Pennethorne was at first concerned that the house was not up to the standard of other houses in the road, but since it fulfilled the conditions of costing not less than £3,000 the plans were finally accepted. Edmund Antrobus, a tea merchant, had commissioned the design from Thomas Cubitt, and lived there until his death in 1886. The work was undertaken by Cubitt towards the end of his career, a very modest affair compared with his developments in Belgravia and the Bedford estate.

The next owner was Henry Solomon who made the house rather grander by adding another storey and an attic. The front was altered to give it a French Renaissance appearance. In 1908 Solomon's son James made the front even more elaborate with bay windows on the ground floor and a parapet on the roof with urns at each end.

The house is now that of the Finnish Ambassador.

No. 15

The site of No. 15 was only released for building in March, 1852, together with No. 15a opposite when it was found that the expenditure on the estate and on the new kitchen garden at Frogmore had exceeded the estimated value of the plots already let for building. George Moore, a lace manufacturer and philanthropist, offered to build a substantial house costing £10,000 (more than the minimum required by the Commissioners) to designs by his architect, James Thomas Knowles.

The resulting house is one of the most distinguished architecturally. The west front is Italian in style, symmetrical with three storeys over a basement, with wings extending to north and south.

The interior plan was symmetrical with a morning room beyond the entrance hall overlooking Kensington Gardens. On the left of the entrance hall was the library, behind it the dining-room. On the south side of the house the music room ran the whole length of the house flanked by a loggia. Both the library and the music room had large bow windows overlooking the Gardens.

George Moore was born in Mealsgate, Cumberland, in 1806. He had a rough boyhood enjoying birdnesting and hunting on a bareback horse with the celebrated John Peel. After a meagre education he was apprenticed to a draper in Wigton, then came to London where he gained a place in a wholesale drapers. He eventually became a partner in a small firm. Like Hogarth's industrious apprentice he both prospered and married the daughter of his first employer in London.

It was his wife who wanted a grand London house. Moore, by now a Baptist, expressed himself as mortified by his extravagance. 'It was long before I felt at home in it, nor did it at all add to our happiness. I felt that I had acted foolishly.' He determined that the first party in the new house should be for his workers. After this it was necessary to entertain their own friends to large weekly dinners but to Moore 'promiscuous company takes one's mind away from God'. The house was always open for meetings of the charities he supported, and every Monday there were Bible meetings.

No major alterations were made until Sir Alfred Bert acquired the house in 1937 and commissioned Lord Gerald Wellesley and Trenwith Willis to redesign it. The garden front was very much altered. The original design had a large recess in the centre forming a light well. Windows were added under the cornice in front and the back recess was screened with two Corinthian columns in antis carrying the entablature across. The columns are surmounted by two draped classical female figures giving an effect of splendid sumptuousness.

The interior was an exercise in the mixing of styles—existing Greek columns and friezes, the new owner's fondness for rococo and Regency and the outstanding collection of Dutch, Flemish, Spanish and English paintings of the 17th and 18th centuries all had to be accommodated. Ornate plasterwork has been added extensively, particularly in the spectacular conversion of the library which is a pastiche of a Bavarian

rococo monastery library. The loggia and music room extending the depth of the house were thrown into one to enhance the view over the Palace and Green.

The house is now the residence of the Iraqi Ambassador.

No. 15b

No. 15b was originally the stable block of No. 15 designed and built, as was the house, by Knowles and Lucas. In 1937–38 it was converted into a house by J. Fooks (the son of Daniel Fooks who had occupied the main house) and T. Ritchie.

No. 15a

No. 15a like No. 15 opposite was on a site released by the Commissioners only in 1852. It was designed by David Brandon (now no longer in partnership with T. H. Wyatt) for Peter Carthew and remained in the occupation of this family until about 1912. The design is undistinguished, of white brick with stucco dressings.

The piece of land to the south was originally let with the house; most of it was paddock, with the Crown right of way across it reserved. Estella Canziani who lived all her life on the other side of the paddock described the long hay grass which reached to her shoulders, and the foot track leading to the garden gate of York House in Church Street. On the walls of the passage leading to Church Street snapdragons and wallflowers grew wild. The paddock except for a small piece which remains became the site of Nos. 4–10 Palace Green.

No. 16

No. 16 was one of those originally leased by Blashfield, and purchased from him in 1846 by John Sperling. It was designed by Wyatt and Brandon. The style is Italianate but undistinguished.

In 1877 the ground lease was purchased by Stuart Rendel, later Baron Rendel of Hatchlands the armaments manufacturer. He had first lived in the road at No. 10 as a young man of 17 until his father's early death in 1856; he lived here at No. 16 in the 1870s; later at No. 10 Palace Green, and finally and very briefly before his death in 1913 at No. 20.

For some years around the turn of the century it was occupied by the Minister of the Argentine Republic, but this remained an isolated instance of diplomatic occupation—it was the coming of the Russian Embassy to No. 13 in 1930 that set the present overwhelming trend in motion. No. 16 is in fact now part of the Russian Embassy.

No. 17

No. 17 was one of the earlier houses, built by Blashfield before his financial collapse in 1846. The original Italianate villa designed by

Henry E. Kendall Jr. can hardly be discerned amid the many alterations and additions of later years. S. P. Kennard, the occupant in 1884, had extensive alterations made, including the pediment and crowning cornice which are the distinctive features of the present façade.

In 1899 the banker Isaac Seligman bought the lease and added the three-bay extension on the south. After his death his son Sir Charles Seligman balanced this with a three-bay extension on the north side.

The last owners, who are of the family of Bertram Mills, the circus proprietor, have completely redecorated throughout but have made only minor alterations.

Nos. 18 and 19

Nos. 18 and 19 form a double Italian palazzo designed, according to the G.L.C. Survey, in the office of Sir Charles Barry. Peter Hodson, however, who researched a life of Barry, maintains that the design as well as those of Nos. 12 and 20 were by Barry himself. The building contractor was Thomas Grissell. By 1847 both houses were completed, and were occupied in 1851—No. 18 by John Leech a merchant, No. 19 by Grissell himself.

Most exterior additions (including a third tower on the south-west) have been to the sides and the rear. The building at present stands out from its near neighbours mainly because the massive towers and the ivy cladding give it a rather gloomy late Victorian appearance in contrast with the mid-Victorian bare brick or stucco and glossy cream paintwork of the others.

One notable resident of No. 18 was Baron Julius de Reuter, the founder of the international news agency who lived here from 1867 until his death in 1899.

No. 18 is now part of the Soviet Embassy, and No. 19 is the Egyptian consulate.

No. 20

No. 20 shares the early history of No. 12, that is Grissell and Peto were the original contractors, Barry the architect, and Grissell the completing contractor.

The original design was reminiscent of the work of Vanbrugh or Hawksmoor. Across the façade were massive Roman Doric pilasters. The balustrade above concealed the dormer windows. Urns capped the dies of the balustrade. This effect was later much altered, firstly in 1857–58 by raising the roof and putting in attic windows; secondly, by the addition of a front porch in 1884 for the occupant John Edwin Taylor by the firm of Ernest George and Peto.

The house is now occupied by the Commission for European Communities.

Nos. 21, 22 and 23

Nos. 21, 22 and 23 were all designed and built by Charles Frederick Oldfield on sites which had been acquired by Blashfield. No. 21, completed before Blashfield's bankruptcy, is of conventional Italianate design, stucco-faced with three storeys, and rustication on the ground floor façade.

Interior decorations by William Flockhart for Maurice Herzfelder who came to the house in 1905 include richly moulded plasterwork of 18th-century style in the entrance hall, staircase and drawing-room.

It is now the Lebanese Embassy.

No. 22 was not built as a speculation: Oldfield already had a tenant William Frederick Gostling who concluded his agreement with the Commissioners and was living in the house by 1854.

One of the later residents was Sir Alfred Hickman, M.P. It was Sir Alfred who made the major alterations to the house adding a two-storey extension with a ballroom on the north side in 1883–84, designed by Francis Hooper.

No. 23 although completed by Oldfield in 1854 was not occupied until 1856—by Isaac Moses, a merchant who straightaway added a two-bay three-storeyed extension at the south-west corner and a bow-fronted ballroom at the back.

Very little of the original interior decoration remains except the cornices in the hall, dining-room and drawing-room. The ballroom has a large bow window and is decorated with pilasters based on Florentine Renaissance originals. The conservatory adjoining the front of the house on the south side was designed by Edward Salomons in 1877–78 as was the billiards room at the north-west corner. In 1925 the particulars of sale described the stable block as a garage, but it had retained its harness room and four-stall stable. A one-storey wing was added in 1970–71.

The house is now the Japanese Embassy.

No. 24

Like No. 8, this house, including the interior, was designed by Owen Jones for Blashfield. It was not completed when Blashfield became bankrupt in 1847, and the builder James Ponsford, who eventually bought it and completed it to live in himself, may not have completed it to Jones's original design. Unfortunately, the original drawings have not survived. The decorative Moorish motifs are superimposed on a basically classical façade and consist mainly of the geometrical decoration of the balustrades, the onion-shaped domes, and the detail of the windows. The domes on the parapet can be considered as a Moorish equivalent of the classical urns on the parapet of No. 20.

The house was known as Baroda House since the tenancy in 1891 of the Gaekwar of Baroda who made long visits to Europe almost annually. In 1914 it was bought by Alfred Chester Beatty. *The Times* described

him as 'the greatest of all living figures in the mining industry'. One of his main concerns was the development and equipment of the Zambian copper industry. In 1930 he gave funds to set up the Cancer Research Institute which bears his name, at the Royal Cancer Hospital in Fulham Road.

All the houses from No. 19 to No. 26 had substantial stables built by Blashfield at the backs of the gardens, with access from Bayswater Road. Chester Beatty had his stable converted to a library in 1934 by Herbert Cescinsky and a year later the same architect built a connecting link to the house to form an L-shaped art gallery for Beatty's picture collection.

The house is now occupied by the Saudi Arabian Ambassador.

No. 25

Nos. 25 and 26 occupied the site of what was to have been one house, but eventually two houses were built, similar in their Italian villa style, each with a campanile tower. The two houses are prominent in the water-colour drawing made by the architects Wyatt and Brandon in 1845 which shows also their houses on the east side and the lodge and gates.

No. 25, the larger of the two, was completed but not occupied when Blashfield went bankrupt having already spent £10,000 on it. Frederick Dawson, to whom Blashfield had mortgaged it for £7,500, became possessor and leased it to Benjamin Buck Greene, a landowner and merchant whose family was still living in it in 1903. In 1947 it was demolished on account of extensive dry rot, and together with No. 26 became the site of the new Czech Embassy buildings.

No. 26

The first occupant of No. 26 in 1845 was, for a brief time, Cristobel de Murietta, a Spanish merchant and banker who by 1855 was living in No. 11 which he had built for himself.

The most distinguished of later tenants was James Heywood from 1858 until his death in 1897. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society, M.P. for Lancashire North and was very active in religious reform measures. He was concerned in the removal of Jewish disabilities in 1858, and in the Act of Parliament of 1871 which abolished religious tests from the universities.

In Kensington he will be remembered best for setting up and maintaining the first free library in the parish—in 1876 in Notting Hill, and afterwards giving active support to the public libraries movement on a national and local scale. Meetings were held in his house in 1886–87 to plan the successful campaign for the adoption of the Public Libraries Act for the parish of St. Mary Abbots, Kensington.

RITA J. ENSING

THE BARRACKS, KENSINGTON CHURCH STREET

These barracks, erected in 1856–58, stand on the site of the original kitchen garden of Kensington Palace, which was laid out at the end of the 17th century and which was later known as the forcing ground. In the north-east corner of this garden stood the brick conduit, illustrated by Faulkner, which was said to have been built by Henry VIII to supply water to his house at Chelsea Place. At the time of its erection this conduit was on the east side of a four-acre field called 'the More' (and subsequently Conduit Close), comprising the site of the forcing ground and an area to the north, later the sites of Maitland House and York House. During the 17th century Conduit Close was divided, and by 1672 the forcing ground site had passed into the hands of Sir Heneage Finch, later first Earl of Nottingham, whose son sold it to William III in 1689.

In 1841 the Commissioners' architects, in their plan for building over the kitchen gardens, had proposed that a short road should be laid out across the forcing ground between Kensington Church Street and The Queen's Road. This plan was approved and in June, 1844, a contract for laying a sewer was awarded. By July, however, the Commissioners and the Board of Ordnance were discussing the possibility of building a barracks on the forcing ground to replace the old barracks on Palace Green, which stood on the line of The Queen's Road. An agreement to let part of the site for a barracks was concluded, but in 1854 this was set aside by mutual consent.

Thereupon the Commissioners decided to let the ground for building: a layout plan was selected, which included a row of shops along the Church Street front, a road was constructed across the ground, and in November, 1855, terms were arranged to let the whole site to the builder John Kelk. But this development did not take place, for in December the War Department informed the Commissioners that the forcing ground was, after all, required in its entirety for a barracks of large extent.

Under an agreement of 1st July, 1856, the site was leased to the Secretary of State for War, who contracted to have the barracks completed within two years.* They were to cost not less than £14,000, and the eastern elevation was to be 'in a plain but good style of architecture of such a character as shall not in the opinion of the . . . Commissioners . . . be unsightly or in any use detrimental to the houses on each side of the Queen's Road'. The architect was probably Colonel Frederick Chapman, R.E., whose signature appears on the contract drawings; the builders were Benjamin and John Dale of Warwick Square.

* The old conduit stood on the site but did not itself belong to the Crown. It was acquired by the Commissioners in 1861 and is said to have been demolished in 1871.

The barracks consist principally of two residential blocks, one of two storeys and the other of three storeys, intended originally for the cavalry and infantry respectively. The 'plain but good' style of architecture adopted for the outward-facing façades of each block is a curious mixture of late 17th-century English motifs (including brick quoins) and mid-Victorian Italianate.

To compensate the residents of The Queen's Road for the loss of the road laid out in 1855, which they had found useful as a short-cut into Church Street, the War Department constructed a footpath along the north side of the site. This still survives. In 1906 part of the site of the barracks was given up for the widening of Kensington Church Street. The building ceased to be used as a barracks in 1972.

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1,498	Balances at 1st January, 1976		1,963.63
	Membership Subscriptions:		
685	Annual		727.57
	Other Receipts:		
	Receipts from Sales	507.11	
	Deduct: Expenses of Sales, less Stock on		
223	Hand	163.79	
			343.32
	Bank Deposit Interest	113.08	
	Income Tax recoverable on Covenanted		
32	Subscriptions	43.01	
392	Receipts for Visits	473.96	
235	Advertising in Annual Report	300.00	
899	Donations	400.00	
			1,330.05

KEON HUGHES, *Hon. Treasurer.*
G. CHRISTIANSEN *Hon. Secretary.*

£4,057

£4,364.57

We have prepared the above Accounts from the books and vouchers of the Society submitted to us. We have obtained verification of the Balances at Bank at 31st December, 1976.

ACCOUNTS For the Year ended 31st DECEMBER, 1976

1975	Expenses	£	£
	Printing, Typing, Stationery and Equip-		
418	ment		432.45
400	Postage and Telephone		492.55
698	Producing Annual Report		740.77
33	Bank Charges		23.96
75	Professional Charges		162.00
41	Sundry Expenses		75.05
25	Hire of Hall, Lectures, etc.		104.45
343	Coach Visits, etc.		394.72
7	Subscriptions to other Societies ..		7.15
33	Tree Planting and Society's Labels ..		93.11
20	Photographic Records		23.39
			2,549.60

Balances at 31st December, 1976

At Bank—

Current Account	427.99
Deposit Account	1,441.43
Stock of Sale Articles	138.55
Income Tax Recoverable	41.92
	2,049.89

Less: 1977 Subscriptions paid in advance	72.92
Professional charges accrued	162.00
	234.92

1,964

1,814.97

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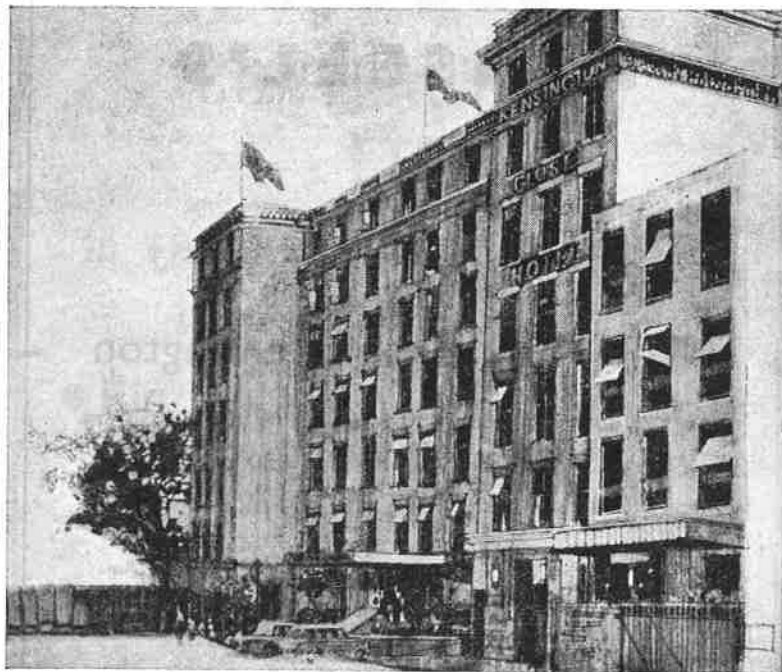
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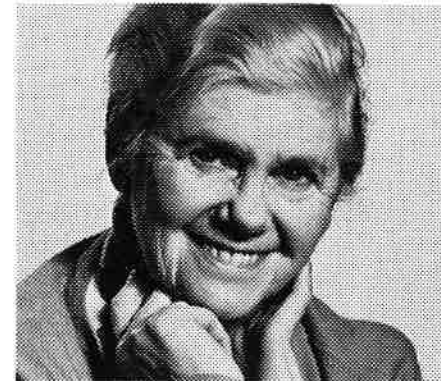
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