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Annual Report

1985-86



THE
Kensington
Society

THE

Kensington Society

The objects of The Kensington Society are to preserve and improve the amenities of Kensington by stimulating interest in its history and records, by protecting its buildings of beauty and historic interest, by preserving its open spaces from disfigurement and encroachment, and by encouraging good architecture in its future development.

Annual Report 1985-86

FRONT COVER

Clock Tower, Kensington Palace, c. 1860



H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester,
Patron of the Society

The Kensington Society

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HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, G.C.V.O.

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AUDITORS: Messrs. Croft, May and Co.

Foreword

It is fashionable, especially in those areas of society concerned with the arts, to decry the present, to feel that nothing today is as good as it was, that somehow we have outlived the best. Whatever future generations may say of our contemporary contribution to music, literature, architecture or the visual arts—and only the future will sort out the complexities and contradictions—one thing they will have to recognise is that in these difficult times we discovered the power of the concerned individual or group of individuals to make a real contribution in safeguarding the best of what we already have. The long shadow of the past may make it harder for us to come to terms with our own time. But, to offset this, we have at least learnt to acquire a better sense of history. Or at least some of us have. The planners, the speculators, so reviled by my predecessor, may have damaged London in the past 40 years more than did the Second World War, but, thanks to societies like this one, they now find it harder. It is impossible not to read previous editions of the Annual Report (and compared to many what a well-produced and interesting publication it is) without a sense of pride in the active concern of so many to work constructively for the area in which they live. Among these my predecessor must rank high. Not only through his writings, but most particularly through television, Alec Clifton-Taylor reached out to a vast public. His last television series attained the highest viewing figures of the week on BBC 2. Through his enthusiasm he taught us to look around and to evaluate the urban environment in which the majority of us now live.

In the foreword to the book *Spirit of the Age*, based on the television series that brought us together, I wrote of the 'affective blindness' that has been such a feature of our behaviour toward architecture. Only away from home, I ventured, did we raise our eyes from the pavement. The work of Alec Clifton-Taylor, like the work of the Kensington Society, encourages people to do just that. It is a very real pleasure to be asked to take over from him. On his appointment he wrote of his sense of surprise in being invited to become our President. It cannot have been as palpable as mine. But as a believer in all he and the Society stand for and as a Kensington resident, who was also born in the borough, it proved impossible for me to refuse.

The history of architecture has often been told only in relation to great monuments. The majority of its course is made up of smaller statements, inhabited by people much like ourselves. It is a mark of our age, that we have come to realise how important it is for all of us to contribute to making the city, and in particular a borough like ours, a place where future generations will continue to want to live. This is not a negative backward-looking aspiration. It represents a proper sense of responsibility for our heritage and an insurance for human values in an otherwise hostile world. The Royal Borough of

Kensington deserves the best. It has often fallen short of that standard. Let us remember the enthusiasm, commitment and energy of Alec Clifton-Taylor and strive to keep it up to the mark.

JOHN DRUMMOND.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was held in the Town Hall, Hornton Street, on April 30th. This was attended by H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester.

Prior to the meeting the Mayor, Councillor Adrian Fitzgerald, entertained His Royal Highness and members of the Committee in the Mayoral Suite.

Owing to the sudden death of the President, Mr. R. T. Wilmot took the Chair.

Mr. Wilmot in opening the Meeting said the Society was greatly honoured by the presence of His Royal Highness, who had agreed to address the meeting. Mr. Wilmot asked members to stand in silent tribute to the memory of Mr. Alec Clifton-Taylor; he then called on Mr. Ian Grant to pay tribute to our late President.

The Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting, previously approved by the Committee, and circulated in the Annual Report, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman. Mr. Jabez-Smith was asked to move the adoption of the Report.

Mr. Jabez-Smith said the main activities of the Society during the year had been chronicled in the Annual Report.

The Bill to amend the Ten Per Cent Tolerance, was passed in the Commons on February 5th, meaning that developers of blocks built before 1945 will not be able to claim compensation for refusal of planning permission for additions.

He then spoke about the Local Government Bill which abolishes the G.L.C., and the Society's reluctance to see Holland Park brought under the aegis of the Borough Council.

Mr. Wilmot called upon Mr. Keon Hughes, Honorary Treasurer, to present the accounts and propose their adoption. Mr. Hughes then presented the audited accounts for the year ending December 31st. In moving this adoption he said they had broken better than even, nearly half of the cost of the Annual Report was covered by the advertising in the Report.

The increase in income was matched by increase in expenditure, accounted for by the inevitable rise in the cost of postage, printing and stationery. Mr. Hughes said he must again make his annual plea, that annual subscribers should pay their subscription on January 1st. One hundred and twenty-one reminders had to be sent out again in

April at considerable cost of postage, etc., this also greatly increases the work of the Honorary Secretary.

The adoption of the Report and Accounts was seconded by Lady Beresford Clark. The Chairman closed the meeting, thanking members for attending.

The meeting was followed by a stimulating address by H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester.

His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester

H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester, Patron, The Kensington Society, gave the following address at the Annual General Meeting on April 30, 1986.

It gives me great pleasure to have this opportunity to address this Society, which has been kind enough to invite me to be Patron.

Since I last met you all I have been appointed a Commissioner of the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission, and therefore have become involved much more directly with architectural preservation from a national point of view. The new commission has decided to call itself English Heritage so that the public will find it easier to remember and to recognise that it hopes to be a less bureaucratic organisation than its predecessor. Our first problem is that we have inherited all our predecessor's responsibilities without any extra resources to carry them out. We have 400 properties—mostly ruined castles and abbeys, but with a few roofed structures as well. These we must maintain and present to the public as best we may. We have a large sum of money with which to assist owners of historic buildings who have difficulty preserving them. Unfortunately this figure seems very small relative to the need. Consequently only the most pressing and deserving become eligible for grants. Our only way of increasing revenue at a time of Government retrenchment is at the turnstiles where the public come in. All the new ideas and concepts that we would like to carry out await the resources to be available—the most cost effective take precedence so that we can maximise those resources. We hope to build up goodwill and support from the communities, where our properties are situated.

At the same time we have to be seen to take the leadership of the architectural preservation movement nationally and also for

the archaeologists—who are in many ways years behind the architectural historians in terms of organising public support.

We cannot achieve much without the help of local amenity societies. It is their role to really know what is happening in their community, to find out what is threatened, to identify what should be improved, what could be restricted or protected from neglect, always to educate people in how and why their locality matters and should be protected from development from outside with its statistical approach to planning and its new buildings to match.

I would say that I don't believe that all new buildings are for the worse—but I do believe that the usual process that causes a building to be created is just the process that most places least need. To caricature a statistically calculated increase of some assumed demand by imaginary clients with no reference to the immediate neighbourhood, creates a building, cold and unfriendly, designed negatively to surmount planning restrictions rather than positively to solve a valid problem. All too often the conflicts between the new building and its site are overlooked for purely commercial reasons.

You are the guardians to preserve Kensington, just as your colleagues up and down the country are protecting their home towns from outside pressure, individuals and companies used to indifference to aesthetic considerations and to the power of solely economic arguments. Some battles you will win, because the public is behind you; some you will lose because maybe the politics get too involved. But every conflict has its validity—you must not become complacent with victory or despondent in defeat. You must preserve Kensington's heritage in your own way, while we in the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission are preserving the nation's heritage in our own way with the resources we can muster and the expertise we can call on to identify the best. Like you, we will lose occasionally but in a democratic society the lines of propriety will be constantly redefined and it will be redefined according to public support—you, and societies like this, define and create that public support—you and your like can survive without us—but we cannot survive without you. Therefore, without losing sight of our national standards, the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission gives every encouragement to amenity societies for what will be a continuous struggle—a struggle in which the perfect must sometimes give way to the merely good, but in which our townscape can retain its character, where wanted, and our historic architecture preserved for the future and presented to the public so they can appreciate and relate to it, and thus feel that our heritage is part of their lives.

Lastly I would like to say how right you are to value Kensington. It grew in that interesting period during and after

the Great Exhibition and reflects the self confidence and the affluence of a new class of high Victorian achievers. I had the great pleasure of reading Mark Girouard's masterly book, 'Sweetness and Light', and being able to see from my bedroom window several of the buildings he referred to in his exploration of how the naughty young architects of the day appalled their elders and betters by breaking every architectural rule of the day to found a brash new architecture that appealed to the new professionals. Today these buildings are the very epitome of respectability but a century ago they created shock waves of disapproval.

Will posterity judge us as creators or reactionaries? I have no doubt that the arguments of the preservers are considerably more creative than those who pursue economic goals—economic not only in money terms but economic of outlook, imagination and understanding. Kensington deserves something more special and it is for that that I support the Kensington Society.



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Will you join in the most ambitious community effort ever mounted in Kensington & Chelsea and the first of its kind in the country?

We propose that the Borough of Kensington & Chelsea should take on a group of villages in Nile Province, Sudan, as its African Neighbours. By planting over half a million trees over four years the Sahara can be stopped in its tracks and the future of the villages and their fields secured.

The project will be managed by SOS Sahel International (President - Lady Ewart-Biggs).

Official launch of THE SUDAN FOREST PROJECT is on Wednesday 9th April, 7.30 p.m. at Kensington Town Hall.

For further information write or telephone
The Sudan Forest Project

43 Redcliffe Road, London SW10 9NJ Tel: 01-352 5276

SURVEY OF LONDON

Volume XLII

Southern Kensington: Kensington Square to Earl's Court

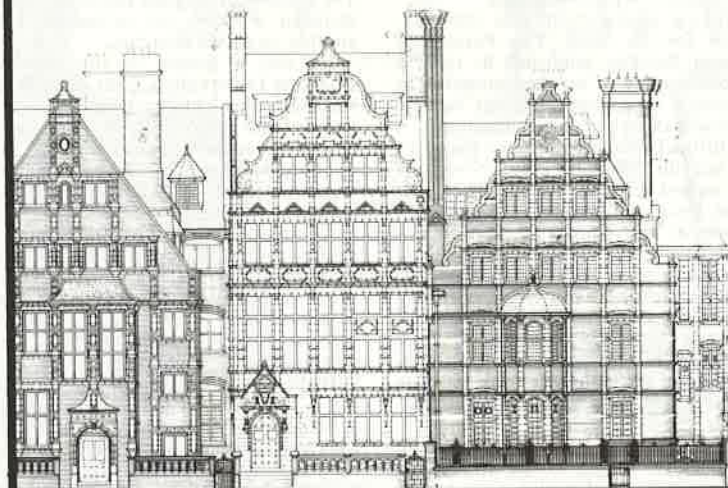
The publication of this volume, the fourth to be devoted to Kensington, concludes the work of the SURVEY OF LONDON on this parish which began in 1970. It describes an area bounded by the High Street, Gloucester Road and Old Brompton Road and which includes Kensington Square, Edwardes Square, Kensington New Town, Collingham Gardens, St Mary Abbots Hospital and the Earl's Court Exhibition. The buildings dealt with range in date from the late 1680s to 1983.

475 pages of text, 152 pages of plates, 160 line drawings, coloured frontispiece and end-pocket map £55

Until 31 December 1986 the four Kensington volumes of the SURVEY are being offered for sale as a set at the special price of £150 instead of the normal price of £200. In addition to Volume XLII the Kensington set comprises Volumes XXXVII, *Northern Kensington* (1973), XXXVIII, *The Museums Area of Kensington and Westminster* (1975) and XLI, *Southern Kensington: Brompton* (1983)

'Although it is "official history" [the Survey of London] is alert and imaginative - and never a mere catalogue.' (Sir John Summerson)

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Specimen line drawing (reduced in size) of part of Collingham Gardens

Alec Clifton-Taylor, O.B.E., Hon. F.R.I.B.A.

The Society suffered a great loss in 1985, and it is with sadness, which I think is felt by many members of the Society, that we have to report the death of our late President. The death of Alec on April 1st brought to an end a long and happy association with the Society. He joined in 1954 and he was elected to the Council of the Society in 1964, and President in 1978.

Since 1958 he has lectured to the Society, with colourful and beautiful slides, many times.

Ian Grant's appreciation is on page 21. The following is the obituary notice published in *The Times*.

Mr Alec Clifton-Taylor, OBE, who died on April 1 aged 77, was a writer and lecturer on historic buildings who became known in recent years to a widely spread public through two series of television programmes. In them he was seen walking through ancient English towns and describing their architectural character and history with an ease and fluency that concealed a considerable depth of learning.

Among specialists he was most admired for his book *The Pattern of English Building* published in 1962, a scholarly study of building materials as employed throughout English history, especially in vernacular architecture.

Clifton-Taylor was a close friend of the late Sir Nikolaus Pevsner—in fact his earliest English friend. They met when Pevsner first visited England to lecture at the Courtauld Institute in 1930, five years before coming to settle here as a refugee.

Alec Clifton-Taylor was born on August 2, 1907. He was educated at Bishop's Stortford College, Queen's College, Oxford, and the Courtauld Institute of Art where he took 1st class honours. He later studied at the Sorbonne.

From 1934 to 1939 he lectured on architectural history at the Institute of Education of London University and at the Royal College of Art. His war service was at the Admiralty; he was Private Secretary to the Parliamentary

Secretary from 1943 to 1946.

After the war he became an extramural lecturer of London University, and subsequently lectured widely abroad, including America, as well as all over Britain. In 1981 he was Ferens Lecturer in Fine Art at the University of Hull. At the same time he was an industrious contributor to magazines, and published several books in addition to *The Pattern of English Building*. These included a book on cathedrals and another on parish churches.

He was a trustee of the Historic Churches Preservation Trust. In 1979 he was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and he was appointed OBE in 1982.

Those who saw Clifton-Taylor on the television screen might have identified his burly white-haired figure with that of a farmer or an old-fashioned country squire, and he had some of the latter's traditional forthrightness of speech, often expressing himself in ultra-conservationist terms; but he was a genuine scholar with a fine understanding of architecture.

He had a warm gift for friendship and was a supporter of many good causes, some peculiarly his own. Their variety is indicated by his presidency of the Kensington Society (he lived in the borough for much of his life) and his vice-presidency of the Men of the Stones and of the Society for Italic Handwriting. He was unmarried.



Vice-President The Dowager Marchioness of Cholmondeley and the late President Alec Clifton-Taylor.

Obituaries

Hon. Ewen Montague, C.B.E., Q.C.

Died during the year, he joined the Society in 1972 and had often attended the Society's activities.

Ewen Montague had a very distinguished career. He was a member of the Wartime Deception Services. He was an eminent lawyer, Judge Advocate of the Fleet from 1945-1973, and held many other important posts.

We shall miss his attendance at our activities.

Mr. Frederick Gordon Roc, F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.

Died last January aged 90. He was a founder member of the Society, and first served on the Executive Committee in 1953. He was the author of many books on British painters, historical subjects and antique furniture. He was formerly the editor of the *Connoisseur*. Although he moved some years ago from Kensington, he continued to be a member of the Society.

Miss Emily Low

Died in September. She had been a member of the Society for 22 years.

Our annual sales have greatly benefited by her generosity, and she will be sadly missed.

Dr. Constance Wood, M.A. (Cantab), M.R.C.P., F.R.C.R.

Died on October 11th. Dr. Wood had been a member of the Society since 1959. She was at that time Director of the Medical Research Council's Radio Therapeutic Unit and Department. Before her last illness we saw a great deal of her, she attended many of our activities and will be greatly missed.

Mrs. E. M. Gordon—late of Victoria Grove

The Society has recently heard from Mrs. Gordon's son that his mother died two years ago. We regret that a notice about her death did not appear in our last Report. Mrs. Gordon joined the Society in 1954.

Miss Thorman

Gallant Miss Thorman died in November aged 93, she graduated in Science at Kings College, London, in the days when there can have been few women pursuing that course. She became Publications Editor at the Meteorological Office where she stayed throughout her career. She was Hon. Treasurer to the United Services Club, for over 40 years. She hardly ever missed any of the Society's activities, and at the age of 92 was still making marmalade for the Society's sales. We shall miss her very much.

Mr. Roderick Enthoven

Died last November. Mr. Enthoven joined the Society in 1954, he was by instinct a traditionalist, but he was always interested and aware of current needs, and gave valuable advice to the Society on many occasions. He was President of the Architectural Association 1948-1949. From 1956 to 1958 he was Chairman of the Board of Education of the Royal Institution of British Architects. Vice-President of the R.I.B.A. 1951-53, and held many other important appointments.

Mr. John Drummond

We are delighted that Mr. John Drummond has consented to follow his friend, Alec Clifton-Taylor, as President of the Society.

Mr. Drummond has recently been appointed Controller of Music B.B.C. He was Director of the Edinburgh International Festival 1978-1983. Assistant Head of Music and Arts B.B.C. Television from 1975-1978—programmes produced include Tortelier Master Classes; Diaghilev in 1967; Kathleen Ferrier in 1968; Music Now in 1969; Spirit of the Age in 1975; The Lively Arts 1976-1978.

One of his pronounced recreations is looking at Architecture. Members will learn more about him, and the way he introduced Alec Clifton-Taylor to the television screen, at the Annual General Meeting on May 14th. Mr. Drummond will be the Chairman.

The Memorial Garden

The irrigation of the Garden has been changed, with better results than the previous scheme.

We have, however, had two expensive disasters. In the first place, an employee of the Borough Council sprayed the wall surrounding the Garden, in an effort to remove the algae from the brick work. Much of the spray went on to the plants, 28 fully grown plants, azaleas, fuchsias, rose-bushes, etc., were killed. The second disaster was the vandalism of the Memorial Tablet, this had been defaced and covered in paint. Several of the nearby plants, Pieras Forest Flame, were also covered in paint.

The Tablet has been restored by the Stone Carvers, see page 23, it has been re-sited, by fixing to the west side wall, where we hope it will be less vulnerable.

Obtaining replacement plants, and general planting has been undertaken by Mrs. Christiansen. At the end of December, Miss Seabrook and Mr. John Bickel gave Mrs. Christiansen considerable help. Miss Seabrook who was the Princess's Gardener, is always helpful with advice, but she is now in a very time consuming employment.

It was decided by the Committee during the summer, that some paid help was necessary, to keep the Garden clear of Coca-cola tins and other rubbish and to dehead dead flowers. A part-time gardener has occasionally been employed.

We would again like to record our appreciation of the help given by the Royal Parks, particularly of plants given by Mr. Brown, Manager of the Nurseries, Hyde Park. Donations towards the upkeep of the Garden will be gratefully received.

Annual Report Advertising

We are grateful for the support given by our advertisers, our thanks again are particularly due to Mr. John de Vere Hunt, who continues to pay for the charity advertisement for R.U.K.B.A.

The Ownership and Development of 15 acres at Kensington Gravel Pits

The history of the 15 acres falls in three periods. The first, pre-Conquest to 1599, and the second 1599 to 1848 appeared in the 1984-85 Annual Report. The third period 1845-1864 appears on page 39 by kind permission of the London Topographical Society.

This article, written by Miss Irene Scouloudi, M.Sc. (Econ.), F.S.A. (a member of the Kensington Society since its foundation in 1953), and A. P. Hands, M.A. (Oxon and Melbourne), appeared in the *London Topographical Record*, Vol. XXII, pp. 77-125 (1965).

For the full references to the sources upon which this article is based, please see the annotated copy from the above *London Topographical Record*, in the Reference Library, Kensington Main Public Library, Hornton Street, W.8.

A selection of cases dealt with

Holland Park

The Society has been anxious to ensure that the Park and its historic buildings are maintained to the high standard that has been achieved, under the G.L.C.'s Department of Recreation and the Arts.

The Society considered, as indeed Lord Hurcomb, a President of the Society, felt in 1968, the Borough Council's experience in park management to be very limited. The Society had hoped that Parliament could be persuaded to take advantage of the expertise of the Royal Parks. The Society does not think that the running costs of the Park, bought by the L.C.C. and enjoyed by Londoners generally and visitors from home and abroad, should be borne entirely by local ratepayers.

Under the existing arrangements with the G.L.C., entertainment for all tastes, ranging from Gilbert and Sullivan to Pop and Reggae, are provided in the beautiful open-air theatre. There are two buildings, the Orangery and the Ice House, available for exhibitions and other functions.

When the Local Government Bill was before the House of Lords, Lord Lloyd of Kilgerran tabled a number of amendments for the Society, designed to vest the management of Holland Park either in the Department of the Environment (Royal Parks), or in the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England.

Letters were sent to 170 Peers, with copies of Lord Hurcomb's 1968 letter to *The Times* and his article in the 1968 Society's Annual Report, asking them to support Lord Lloyd's amendments. The Society's reluctance to see the Park brought under the aegis of the Borough Council, should not be construed as a political opposition, it was entirely due to a wish to ensure that the Park, and its historic buildings, be maintained to the high standard that has so far been achieved.

Extension of the King George VI Memorial Youth Hostel

An extension was proposed by the London Executive of the Youth Hostels Association, in conjunction with the London Hotel for Disabled People. The Society opposed the application, and the Borough Council refused planning permission.

The Hostel appealed against the Council's refusal, and a public inquiry was scheduled for December 17th/19th. The Society had arranged to be represented at the inquiry, supporting the Council's planning refusal. The inquiry was withdrawn at the beginning of December 1985.

The Society has recently written to the Secretary of State for the Environment, supporting the Borough Council's request that permission should not be given to the G.L.C. for disposal of Holland Park land to the Youth Hostel Association. As we go to press we have heard that the G.L.C. have withdrawn their application for consent to dispose of this site.

Transfer of Roads in London to the control of the Department of Transport

Mr. Philip English, member of the Executive Committee, represented the Society on July 15th at a meeting with Mrs. Lynda Chalker.

The purpose of the meeting was to make the Minister aware of the opposition and concern felt, by no less than 16 amenity Societies, about the manner in which the Department of Transport proposes to take over London's main roads on the abolition of the G.L.C. The meeting was inconclusive, but the Minister did give an assurance that there was no intention to up-grade any roads without prior consultation with local interests.

Introduction of New Inter-City Services Kensington Olympia

British Rail have announced the introduction of a new Inter-City Service from May 1986, which will provide a cross-London Service from the South Coast and Channel Ports via Olympia, to the Midlands and North-West.

The Service will operate for a two-year experimental period, with seven trains per day in each direction, stopping at Olympia. British Rail at present own and operate a car park for 350 cars, a further 100 spaces are to be provided.

The Society's particular concern is the traffic-wise effect it may have on Russell Road residential area, and Kensington High Street.

A letter has been sent to British Rail supporting the Borough Council's comment to them that relocation of the car park access should be undertaken to minimise the use of Russell Road.

Strong reservations have been expressed, should any intensification of the service be connected with any plans which may be approved for the cross-Channel rail link.

The Property Advisory Group review of the Use Classes Order 1972

The Society is gravely concerned about the recommendations contained in the report to the Secretary of State for the Environment regarding changes in the present use classes (Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order 1972).

This 1972 Order, based as it is on current planning needs, has enabled the Council to preserve and enhance the attractive townscape, distinctive of the Royal Borough, and to follow planning policies which have ensured that the Borough remains largely residential in character.

The recommendations in the report ignore the special and differing nature and requirements of local authorities. It is a blanket approach to planning matters, largely inspired by a 'free for all', designed to maximise economic activity, ignoring the quality of 'Life Aspect', which current legislation has painfully built up over the years.

The White Paper *Lifting the Burden* indicating that a review of the Use Classes Order would be published in late 1985, was apparently considered by the Borough's Planning Committee last September. So fundamental are the recommendations made to the Secretary of State and so far reaching and adverse their effect in the Royal Borough, if accepted, that the Society was very surprised and concerned that the Council did not consider it of sufficient importance to include the matter on the Agenda of the January meeting of the Town Planning (Development Plans) Advisory Sub-Committee, when the leading environmental Groups in the Royal Borough, including a representative of this Society, would have been informed of the recommendations, and have had an opportunity of making known their views and objections.

Comments on the Report have been sent to the Secretary of State for the Environment by the Society.

Kensington Square

The Society received a Draft Conservation Area Policy Statement for Kensington Square, from the Borough Council, inviting comments by the Society. The Statement is considered to have too few proposals for it to be called a Proposal Statement. The main issues which affect the character and appearance of a conservation area are:

1. Traffic and parking.
2. Possible unsympathetic alteration to buildings.
3. Changes of use which affect the character of the area.

Traffic and Parking

Contrary to what is said on page 3 of the Statement, there is a need to cover this issue, and there are ways in which the existing situation can be improved.

Derry Street

The ideal solution would be to close Derry Street, even if by an iron arm, which in certain emergencies could be released. This would enable the Square to become a quiet cul-de-sac, with only those requiring access to the houses coming into it.

Traffic from Thackeray Street would be guided up the eastern side of the Square. Cars coming out of Young Street car park would be obliged to turn right. There would be a cul-de-sac sign at the entrances of both Young Street and Derry Street at the High Street. The southern end of Derry Street and the rear yard of Marks & Spencer would need to be organised for vehicles to turn. The length of Young Street would require a No Parking notice, this would be essential to avoid car parking restricting the flow of traffic.

Thackeray Street/Kensington Square Junction

This junction needs to have a realignment of the kerbs to make the 'no entry' from the Square more effective. This proposal would provide the opportunity for landscaping, and for a more sensitive repositioning of the traffic signs.

An enhancement scheme for Thackeray Street local shopping centre should be included in a policy proposal.

The Society has also asked the Council for a planning brief for the P.S.A. site in South End, and Barkers Building Yard.

7/17 Ansdell Street, W.8

An application to the Planning Department of the Borough Council was made for the change of use from garage and offices to art studios, offices, three classrooms, basement computer room, print shop, maintenance department, lounge and coffee shop.

This application by the Richmond College, St. Albans Grove, was strongly opposed by residents and the Society, it was subsequently refused planning permission.

In July a further application was made, which appeared to be almost identical with the previous application, with the addition of glossy artist misleading impressions of the forecourt landscaping. The plan was opposed by the Society and residents, the Chairman representing the Society and Mr. Sheldon representing residents, attended the Borough Planning Committee.

The general objections were:

1. The change of use would generate and greatly increase the pedestrian and vehicle activity in a residential area, already saturated in educational usage.
2. Between 40 and 50 small children in crocodile move from St. Thomas's school in Cottesmore Gardens—through South End to the back entrance of the Convent of the Assumption—several times a day.
3. The Richmond College students use the tennis courts in the Convent Grounds. Lady Eden's School, Victoria Road, also presents traffic problems in the area.

During 1985 a Kindergarten School has opened at 19 South End, and a Cookery School at 21 St. Albans Grove.

In spite of much opposition the Council gave permission for the development, with a condition that a maximum of 376 students are to be allowed between both properties.

Aerosol paint markings on footways in residential areas

Following a member's complaint, a letter was sent to the Director of Engineering and Works Services, complaining about the marks on the edge of footways which were made prior to resurfacing works to show the location of carriageway lines and marking, e.g., No Entry, etc. The reply was that where markings were particularly obtrusive an attempt would be made to remove them. Seven months later some of the markings are still obvious.

188 Brompton Road, S.W.3

The Society supported the Council's refusal for the erection of an office and residential building, the proposed design was considered to be unsympathetic with the character of this part of the Knightsbridge Conservation Area. The Society regrets that the appeal was allowed.

1A Palace Gate, W.8

The Society supported the Council's refusal for planning consent for alteration to the premises, change of third floor from residential to part residential and part ancillary to casino use. This appeal was dismissed.

Palace Place Mansions

Application for an additional storey was opposed by the Society. Planning permission has been refused.

33, 35 and 37 Palace Gate

Planning application for the demolition of existing buildings, and the erection of a six-storey residential building of 12 flats and two basement levels of car parking for 12 cars, was opposed by the Society. It was considered an overdevelopment of the site, with loss of

a Victorian town house. The design was out of scale and character of the surrounding area, particularly Canning Place. The application was refused planning consent in September. Appeal to be heard on May 21st, Kensington Town Hall.

Golley's Garage Site

The plans for the development of this site have been studied by the Society. The planning application for the development of the site comprises of 2,785 sq. m. of offices, including a banking hall, with 8,930 sq. m. of residential development, providing 81 flats and 10 town houses, 772 sq. m. of retail in five shop units. There would be basement car parking for 87 cars. The scheme also involves the reconstruction and improvement to Redfield Lane, with landscaping and planting to the deck and surrounding areas. No action has so far been taken, and we have not been approached by the local amenity group. Conditional planning consent has been given.

55/57 Melbury Road

An application for the conversion and enlargement of the premises as a private art gallery and staff rooms, as an ancillary extension to 59 Melbury Road. This application was opposed by the Society and subsequently refused planning permission. A new application was made, this is the third application made during 1985. The Society considers that these houses should remain as individual properties, and that the link should be refused planning permission. Planning permission has been refused.

Roland Way and Thistle Grove

This site forms the old Brew Brothers Repair Garage, and comprises of a two-storey industrial building on the eastern boundary of the Boltons Conservation area. Planning application was made for the demolition of the existing buildings, and change of use from light industrial, with the erection of 25 single family dwellings and integral garages, in three blocks.

The Society supported the Boltons Association objections to the scale and density, and to the northern end of Thistle Grove being used by motor traffic. It was also thought that a small light industry element in the form of working studios, should be incorporated in the scheme. The scheme has been considerably amended, and now accords with the scale and character of the area, with the erection of 19 single family dwellings on Block A and B. The amendments have been supported by the Boltons Association and the Kensington Society, and planning consent has been conditionally granted.

8 Addison Road

The property is within a conservation area and has recently been upgraded from a Grade III listed building to a Grade I listed building, in recognition of its unique quality and interest.

This property was designed by the Italian architect, Halsey Ricardo, as the family home of Sir Ernest Debenham. It was completed in 1906 on the site of three previous properties. The house remained in use as a single family residence until 1949. In 1954 planning permission was granted for use as a residential training college for ballet dancing.

In 1965 planning permission was granted for the use of the premises as a residential home for the mentally disturbed.

In 1984 a planning application was made to provide a College Annexe and rear extension to the dwelling house. The proposed development involved building over part of the rear garden area, the proposed College Annexe would be on three floors and provide four lecture rooms, a community hall, four offices, 10 bedrooms and would be linked to the main building by a colonnaded covered way.

The Society strongly opposed this application. Planning consent was subsequently refused. The appellants appealed to the Department of the Environment. A public inquiry was held on October 15th.

Mr. George Pole, a member of the Executive Committee of the Society, represented the Society, and gave evidence supporting the Borough Council's refusal of planning consent. The result of the appeal is still awaited.

Kensington Barrack Site, Kensington Church Street

Listed building consent for the demolition of the existing building has been given by the Borough Council. The consent is subject to conditions which will ensure the retention of items of local interest, such as the Barracks Clock, the Edwardian wall letter-box, boundary stones and gate piers.

The original 1985 planning application was opposed by the Society as an overdevelopment of the site. It consisted of 101,000 sq. ft. of shopping space in 44 units. The Society considered that the shopping centre was too extensive, and was likely to aggravate to an unacceptable extent the pedestrian and vehicular congestion in Kensington Church Street. Concern was also felt about the height and overlooking of the residential block in relation to Kensington Palace.

A letter was received from the Borough Planning Officer stating that the Crown Estate had been asked by the Council to review their scheme, so as to reduce the shopping content.

The amended scheme reduces the shopping space to 81,311 sq. ft., offices to 28,000 sq. ft. and residential to 80,244 sq. ft. The residential block has a maximum height of nine floors, providing 41 flats. The design of the flats has been amended, the block will be cut back at the top, and the windows angled away from Kensington Palace, with obscure glass in particular windows on the upper floors. This block will have vehicle access solely from Kensington Palace

Gardens. Servicing of the development will take place from an adequate servicing bay, from a widened Old Court Place.

Planning consent has been given.

9, 11 and 13 Melbury Road

As members will have noted from previous Annual Reports the Society has been much concerned about these houses for a very long time. Many letters have been sent to the Borough Planning Officer by this Society, the Abbotsbury Residents' Association, Victorian Society and residents in the area since 1983.

Nos. 9 and 11 are listed buildings. The Society has asked the Department of the Environment to spot list No. 13, this house has been empty for a very long time. Although No. 13 cannot be considered a building of great architectural merit, it is a house in character with the neighbourhood, and occupies an important corner site. The increasing dilapidation of this house seems to point to demolition rather than restoration, as the likely ultimate aim of the freeholder.

A letter was sent to the Council on December 13th, 1984, reminding the Planning Department that under Section 114-117 of the 1971 Act, the Council had powers to serve a repairs order, or a compulsory purchase order on listed buildings in a conservation area in need of repair. At the meeting of the Town Planning Advisory Sub-Committee on January 13th, 1986, the Honorary Secretary asked the Chairman of the Committee if some effort could be made—to spot list No. 13 and to serve either of the above orders.

Shopping Trends in Kensington High Street

A Report by the Borough Planning Officer entitled 'Shopping Trends in Kensington High Street, and the impact of New Shopping Development', was sent to the Society for comments. An agreed paper commenting on the Report was sent to the Council. We understand that the Council is preparing a work programme for the convening of a forum to meet during the Spring of 1986, in order to assist in the preparation of an action plan for the Kensington High Street area. The Society will be represented on the forum.

Annual Monitoring Report

The Inspector for the District Plan, reporting on objections made by the public to the Council's Statutory District Plan, recommended that an Annual Monitoring Report be made available to the public and comments invited. This Report forms the basis for consideration of all planning applications.

A Report by the Borough Planning Officer was received by the Society.

General comments sent to the Council by the Society were very similar to our comments in 1985. It is now five years since the District Plan was written, and the Society thinks that the Council should be bringing forward alterations to the Plan, to keep its policies up to

date, as has been done by other Inner London Boroughs, e.g., Hammersmith, Fulham, Camden, Islington, etc.

Closure of Young Street Post Office

The Society has been very concerned about the closure of Young Street Post Office. Letters were sent earlier in the year to the District Postmaster, asking for the retention of this busy post office.

Letters were also sent to the Borough Council, and to the Member of Parliament asking for their support. The reply from the District Postmaster stated that the alternative offices available were, in his view, both adequate to meet the needs of the area, and are within the guidelines for the provision of Post Offices in urban areas.

The Society deplores the closure of this busy Post Office, which has caused considerable hardship in the area. Following a recent letter to the District Postmaster complaining about the counter service at Kensington High Street, and Kensington Church Street Branch Offices, where long queues, even into the street, are common, we have been told that some improvements are to be made for a better service at these branches.

Other Cases

5 Chepstow Crescent; 36 Phillimore Gardens; 1 Upper Phillimore Gardens; Ailanthus Trees, 35 Hyde Park Gate; 11 Launceston Place; 46 Kensington Court; Palace Place Mansions; Neville Street/Neville Terrace; 1-8 and 12 Pembroke Mews; Amusement Arcade, Young Street; Royal Garden Hotel Hostel; Russian Orthodox Church, Emperors Gate; John Barker's car park and subdivision of store; Albert Lodge; 6 Kensington Square; Derry Street Exhibition Centre enforcement notice.

The Cleaner Borough Council Group

Members may remember that this Group was initiated by the Society in 1984, following the large number of complaints received from members of the Society.

The Group was formally founded with representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, business community and other amenity organisation. Mr. George Pole, a member of the Executive Committee of the Society, was elected Chairman of the Group. Mr. Jabez-Smith, Chairman of the Executive Committee, also represents the Society.

Meetings have been held by the Group with the Leader of the Council, and with the Chairman of the Borough Council's Works Committee.

Some progress has been made, for instance, the Borough Council has designated the eight most frequented shopping areas as requiring an increased cleansing service, in these areas new free-standing litter-bins have been installed. The Kensington Society has agreed to sponsor one of the new bins.

Tribute to Alec Clifton-Taylor

by Ian Grant

It is a sad task to speak about a dear friend whom one has recently lost, although in the case of Alec Clifton-Taylor his passing was so rapid that I hope he may never have realised what was happening.

Nevertheless, reading the dry-as-dust obituaries brought home to me most strongly that although the facts that they listed were undoubtedly correct, they told one absolutely nothing about the charm of the man himself, and I felt I wanted to just take a few moments in trying to give some idea as to what Alec was actually like.

I had known him for some 30 years, and our friendship, though not extremely close, was constant and consistent over the whole of this period. Latterly, the claims made upon his time by his success on television made our meetings rather less frequent though no less enjoyable, and I continued to find just as much pleasure in his company as I hope he did in mine.

Looking back over those last 30 years, I think that one of Alec's most outstanding characteristics was that he never seemed to change. He was completely white-haired when I first knew him in the mid-1950s, and I was told by someone who had known him as a student that even this had made virtually no difference to his appearance as he had pale ash-blond hair as a young man.

In conjunction with his unchanging appearance went a delightful youthfulness of spirit, which was never ousted by the pomposity and sourness that overtakes some people in later middle-age; although his views on the arts were extremely firmly held, and his preferences deeply felt, he was always willing and indeed anxious to indulge in endless discussions with anyone who had anything to say, and he and I kept up a bantering dialogue about my passion for the 19th century and his dislike of it over the whole time that we knew each other.

He didn't suffer fools gladly, yet it was a measure of the man's niceness that I never knew him to be rude or dismissive to any of those that sometimes approached him, although he was most likely to complain hilariously about them in private.

He loved gossip, slightly schoolboyish jokes, limericks and comic poetry, and I always tried to save something to tell him when we met. His appreciation of anything that amused him was instant and most rewarding—bending down, he would slap his thighs delightedly, whilst emitting gusts of hoarse, barking laughter, and if he thought the tale was exceptional he would note down the salient points in his

miniature handwriting in a tiny diary. Indeed it was, I think, this very habit of diligent note-taking that stood him in such good stead in his work, and it remained with him all through his life. I never travelled on any journey with him but that he did not follow the itinerary on a map, and make constant reference to a relevant guidebook; all his collection of guidebooks was covered in notes in his tiny handwriting in the margins, and he was always instantly able to refer to his past impressions of journeys that he had made at any time over the previous 50 years.

His enduring youthfulness also expressed itself in other ways, and he always suffered from a strangely adolescent clumsiness. The sound of breaking crockery or smashing glass at a party could nearly always be traced to Alec, the result of one of his rather jerky movements or sweeping gestures. On one memorable occasion at a New Year's Eve party, in order to emphasise a point in his argument, he struck his knee with such violence that the leg of the Regency sofa on which he was sitting collapsed, throwing him and two elderly lady companions into a struggling heap on the floor.

He never married, not that I think that he disapproved of the institution, but rather that through his single-minded self-sufficiency he never really felt the need; he certainly disapproved strongly of large families, however, further populating an already over-populated world. In any case, it was his work that gave him all the satisfaction that he required, together with enough family money to relieve him of financial worries.

I suppose the real pleasure of his home life was his garden, generous for central London, and subsequently enlarged by a judicious purchase, and in which latterly he used to hold a once-yearly party for various favoured friends.

I do not propose to dwell on his literary works, since you will all know of them, except to state that I believe that his first book, *The Pattern of English Building*, is of great importance, and I am sure that it remained his own especially favoured brainchild. His television success, which came almost as the climax of his long career, gave him enormous satisfaction and pleasure, and I think that there are few carping critics who would have wished to deny him this.

Looking back over these scanty notes though, I realise that if you did not know the man, there is nothing in them that could bring him to life, and perhaps I have merely been rather self-indulgent in my reminiscences.

I can only say that Alec Clifton-Taylor was a delightful and enjoyable man, and I for one will miss him deeply.

The English Heritage Carvers at Vauxhall

Only a few weathered fragments of stonecarving and a begrimed statue of Queen Anne in the yard of 110 Vauxhall Walk give the passer-by a clue that work of a very specialist nature is being carried out behind the rather forbidding dark brown doors which lead into the studio. For this workshop houses the London Area Carvers of English Heritage (The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England).

Its origins go back to the 1930s when it was set up for restoration work on the Houses of Parliament and was initially housed there. Moving just after the last war to 'temporary' premises near Vincent Square, Westminster, it remained there for 17 years administered by the Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings section of the Department of the Environment. Another, this time genuine, temporary move for a couple of years had to be borne before the present purpose-built and hopefully permanent premises were provided. In the meantime the studio had left the care of the D.O.E. and was set up as part of H.B.M.C. under the chairmanship of Lord Montague of Beaulieu, with H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester (The Patron of the Kensington Society) as his Deputy.

Throughout all this period with its upheavals and changes in management the studio's work, until very recently, has remained basically the same. That is to say, the restoration and replacement of worn sculptural features in wood, stone, etc., on the buildings in its care. Recent examples of this kind of restoration include several new and almost lifesize figures of the Kings and Queens of England above the colonnade in New Palace Yard at the Houses of Parliament, carved in Clipsham limestone, a large military trophy group in Portland limestone for the Royal Naval College at Greenwich, a Charles II coat of arms for the Watergate at Tilbury Fort in Lepine, a French limestone, and work of a freer more imaginative nature, gargoyles for Windsor Castle, also in Clipsham limestone. Work in progress now includes full-size Corinthian capitals in Richemont limestone to replace worn ones on Apsley House, Hyde Park Corner, and projected items of interest to the Society include carved wooden brackets for Kensington Palace, and repairs to Queen Victoria's statue in Kensington Gardens.

Over the past five or six years a change in philosophy has led the studio's work more in the direction of conservation—preserving and repairing rather than replacing with new work. A good example of

this can be seen on the walls of the chapel at Cowdray House ruins near Midhurst, where a holding operation has been mounted to prevent further deterioration of the remains of the fine early 18th-century Italian plasterwork. Experimental work has also been carried out at Woburn Abbey on the badly weathered Clunch limestone exterior of the stable block. Original work is also occasionally undertaken, such as the spiralling Portland stone fountain in Kensington Gardens, or the Polish Memorial at Audley End House, in Ketton stone.

The traditional tools of the craft, mallet, hammer and chisels, have changed little in design over many hundreds of years, but craftsmen with the necessary knowledge and skill to carry out the work are not easy to find. The old carver/apprentice tradition by which the accumulated wisdom of the years was handed down suffered badly from the closure of many London carving firms soon after the last war. Repair of the bomb damage on the Wren churches for instance, was completed, and the new architecture did not provide enough decorative carved work to keep them going. With the revival of interest in preserving the nation's heritage it is slowly recovering, but although the studio has two good and promising apprentices in Simon Brown and David Baker, the four qualified carvers who form its nucleus come from very different backgrounds to the old-style craftsmen. Neil Simmons, the Chief Carver, Philip Murdin, David Edwick and Gwyn Watkins have come together via The Cathedral Works Organisation at Chichester, St. Paul's Cathedral, The South Dorset Technical College at Weymouth, and Wolverhampton College of Art, but all were fortunate enough to have had contact, for however short a time, with some of the craftsmen in the old tradition. Hopefully, their apprentices will be able to avail themselves of the knowledge so gained and help to re-establish the tradition once more—the survival of the studio depends on it.

P. MURDIN.

The stonecarvers were responsible for the Memorial Tablet and the restoration of it when it was vandalised.



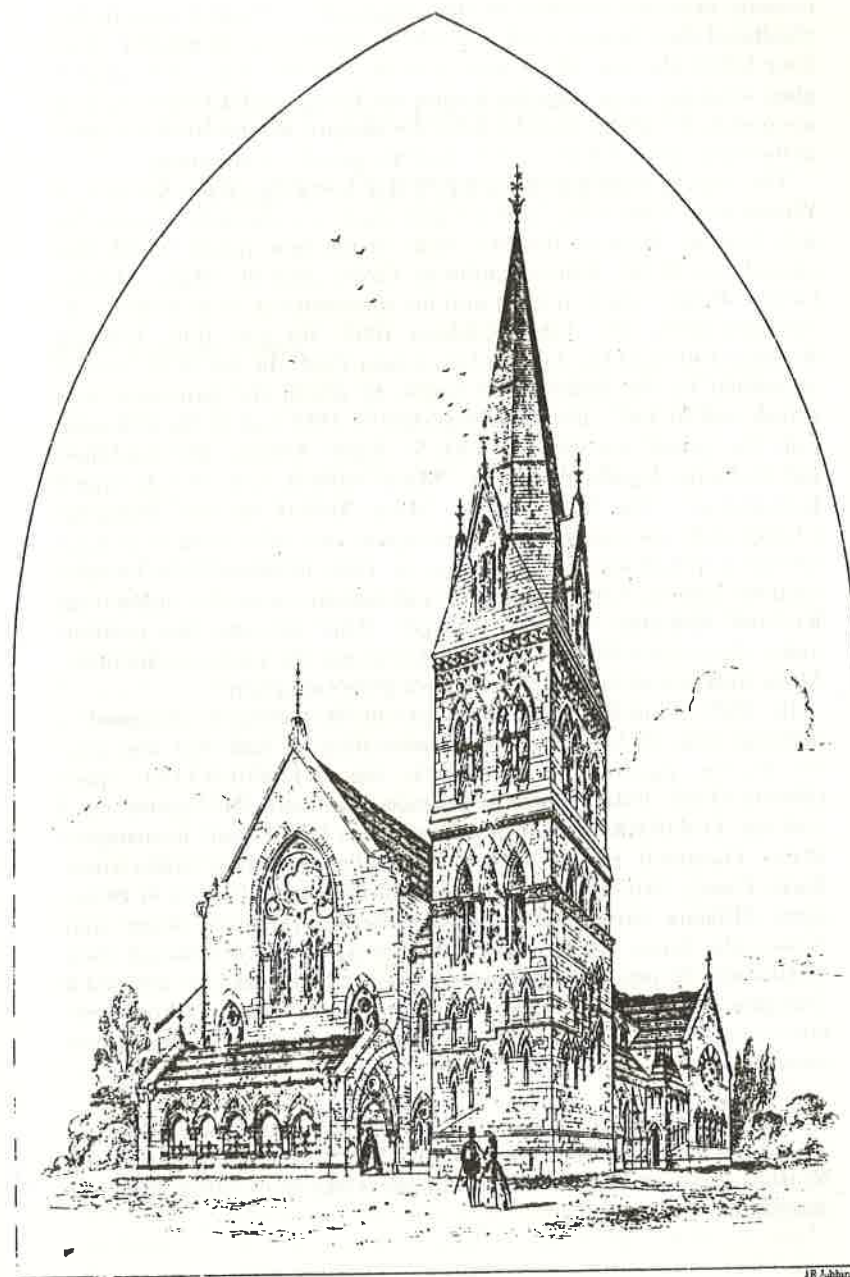
Carving replacement statue of Charles II for Houses of Parliament, 1981

St. George's Church Campden Hill

This church in Aubrey Walk, at the summit of Campden Hill, was built on the site of the kitchen garden of Wycombe House which stood on land now covered by the houses of Campden Hill Gardens. The site cost £1,022 in 1864, the building £7,500 and the organ, bell, stained glass, vestments and other ancillary items £742, so that the total cost 120 years ago was under £10,000. The architect was E. Bassett Keeling and the *Building News* of July 22nd, 1864, searching for a complimentary description of his undeniably eccentric style, hit upon the following felicitous phrases, 'We shall content ourselves by saying that it strikes us as one of the most successful attempts of the modern school of Eclectic Gothic, and though perhaps a little free in treatment, evidences an appreciation of the picturesque and a study of continental Gothic which is not too common.' One cannot disagree with any of that, criticism disarmed by the descriptions 'Eclectic Gothic' and 'a little free in treatment'.

But, alas, the alterations and restorations, necessary and unnecessary, of the past 100 years have, in the words of Sir John Betjeman, 'left for contemplation not what there used to be'. Gone is the tall spire, illustrated on the dust cover of early editions of *Peter Pan*, round which he and Wendy flew on their flight from Wendy's home in Campden Hill Square. The spire was found to be unsafe in 1951 and was taken down. Gone is the apse at the 'east' end with its four stained-glass evangelists by Lavers and Barraud; in 1953 a large crack appeared down the length of the apse which had to be demolished; the present windowless 'east' wall replaces it. Gone are the galleries along the 'north' and 'south' walls; they were removed in the 1890s. Bassett Keeling's interior relied for effect on multi-coloured brickwork and richly moulded cast-iron columns decorated in strong polychromy. It is greatly to be regretted that the coloured brickwork has been whitewashed and the cast-iron columns boxed in. Until it became structurally unsafe in the 1970s and consequently closed, St. Mark's Notting Hill afforded an unspoiled example of Bassett Keeling's polychrome church interiors, and a coloured illustration of a church of his at Penge, Holy Trinity, was included in a publication in celebration of the 1975 European Architectural Year. It has been said of Bassett Keeling that he belonged to no school and founded no school.

The pews and the gallery at the 'west' end are original. Each of the pews is fitted with a sliding seat, or shelf, which can be pulled out to form an uncomfortable and backless perch. It is difficult to believe that these 'overflow' seats were ever occupied except by top-hats, but a



The Building News, July 22nd, 1864

CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE, CAMPDEN HILL, NOTTING HILL

E. Bassett Keeling, Architect

recently deceased member of the congregation recalled that in her childhood days before 1914 you had to arrive a good quarter of an hour before the start of the service to be sure of a seat. The stained-glass windows were inserted during the first years of the century as memorials to various parishioners; the two pre-Raphaelitish windows at the transept end of the 'north' wall are worthy of attention.

The cost of building the church was borne by John Bennett of Westbourne Park Villas and the patronage was assigned to him; his son, George, became the first vicar of the new parish which was carved out of St. John's Ladbroke Grove and St. Mary Abbots. George Bennett died in 1873 and his successors as vicar were C. A. Leveson 1873, Dr. John Robbins 1892, his son John William Robbins 1900 and Dr. Leonard Patterson 1934, the last of whom was appointed by the Bishop of London to whom the patronage was transferred in 1907. Dr. Patterson died in 1952 and in the following year the parish was merged with St. Mary Abbots, the combined parish being legally titled 'St. Mary Abbots with St. George's Kensington'. The Vicar of St. Mary Abbots became Priest-in-Charge of St. George's but used to depute one of his curates to have special responsibility for it. When in 1960 Lorimer Rees became vicar he gave St. George's a more independent status by appointing Richard Moberly 'Priest-in-Charge'. This remains the position today, the present Priest-in-Charge being also the senior curate of St. Mary Abbots and the Bishop of Kensington's chaplain.

In 1929 John Robbins, the vicar of St George's, designed a pictorial map of his parish; it is interesting to find that this map divides the parish into two parts, the 'RESIDENTIAL' part (Holland Park, Palace Gardens Terrace, Campden Hill Square, etc.) and the 'POORER' part (Campden Street, Peel Street, Kensington Place, Dartmoor Street (now Hillgate Place), Ernest Street (now Farm Place), William Street (now Callcott Street), Johnson Street (now Hillgate Street) and Farmer Street, Jameson Street and Newcombe Street which with Uxbridge Street have retained their 'baptismal' names. Now, of course, the estate agents have created a 'Hillgate Village' to embrace all these 'poorer streets' whose little houses are offered for sale at £100,000 a piece, plus or minus a fiver or so!

A.R. J.-S.

Note. The points of the compass are given in parentheses to avoid repetition of the epithet 'liturgical', the church being orientated North and South and not East and West like most other Anglican churches.

Other Activities and Future Arrangements

Other Activities 1985

Visits were made to Savill Garden; Weald and Downland Open Air Museum; Dorney Court; Broadlands, Romsey; Lambeth Palace; Public Library; 22 Arlington Street; 44 Berkeley Square; Leith's School of Food and Wine; Battersea Dogs Home; House of Lords Record Office; Coutts Bank.

Future Arrangements

April 8th, 2.30 p.m., a visit to *Ismaili Centre*, Cromwell Gardens, SW7 (opposite the V. & A.). Tickets required, numbers are limited.

April 29th, 2.30 p.m., a visit to *English Heritage Stone Carvers' Studio*. From Albert Embankment, Glasshouse Walk, leading into Vauxhall Walk, No. 110. Short distance from Vauxhall Bridge Tube Station. Tickets required.

May 14th, 6.30 p.m. *Annual General Meeting* to be held in the Assembly Hall, Convent of the Assumption, Kensington Square, W.8. Mr. John Drummond, Controller of Music B.B.C., recently elected President of the Society, will be in the Chair. Miss Hermione Hobhouse, General Editor of the Survey of London, will give a talk.

May 28th, a visit to the *Royal Horticultural Gardens*. Wisley coach leaves Kensington Square at 1.30 p.m. Tickets for coach and entrance £5.

June 10th, a visit to *Clandon Park* near Guildford. Palladian house built 1730s for the Onslow family. Contents include Mrs. Gubbay's famous collection of furniture and porcelain. Coach leaves Kensington Square 1.30 p.m. Entrance and coach £8.

July 15th, a visit to *Stratfield Saye House, Hampshire*. Originally built in the reign of Charles I. House has been the home of the Dukes of Wellington since it was presented to the Great Duke in 1817. Contains unique collection of paintings, prints and furniture. Coach leaves Kensington Square at 1 o'clock. Entrance fee and coach £8.

September 17th, visit to *Claydon House, Buckinghamshire*. Built mid-18th century as an addition to an earlier house. The stone-faced

west front contains magnificent and unique Rococo State Rooms. Coach leaves Kensington Square at 1 o'clock. Coach and entrance fee £8.

October 21st, a visit to *The College of Arms*. Mansion built in 1670s to house the English Officers of Arms and their records. On the north side of Queen Victoria Street (south St. Paul's Cathedral). No. 9 bus stops nearby. Tickets required.

Coach visits cannot wait for late-comers. Money cannot be refunded, but tickets can be passed to non-members.

Non-coach visits. A charge of 50p is made to cover expenses incurred.

A stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed when applying for tickets.



Frog Hollow

15 Victoria Grove, London W8 5RW Telephone: 01 581 5493

A TREASURE TROVE FOR ALL AGES

Reports from Local Societies

ABBOTSBURY RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Although the Borough Council has accepted in principle the case for the restoration of control humps in Abbotsbury Road as a means of moderating the speed of through traffic, enabling regulations under the Traffic Act 1981 are still pending. The Association hopes that the successive procedural and other difficulties that have so far prevented action in this matter will soon be resolved.

After long years of opposition by the G.L.C., there is new hope of a relief road along the route of the West London railway from Shepherds Bush to the Embankment. The Association is strongly supporting this proposal, which could result in a dramatic improvement in the quality of the environment by removing much heavy traffic from local roads.

8 Addison Road is a Grade I Listed Building generally regarded as an outstanding example of the work of the distinguished Victorian architect Halsey Ricardo. The Association joined with many other residents' associations and local and national amenity bodies in opposing plans to 'extend' the house by building, in the garden, an arcade and a three-storey block to house offices, student accommodation, a conference hall and related facilities. Planning consent was refused by the Borough Council. The promoters appealed to the Secretary of State for the Environment and a public inquiry was held last October at which all possible support was given to the Council in seeking to have the appeal rejected. The decision of the Secretary of State is awaited.

Equally objectionable in terms of the general amenity of the area was a proposal to build what was, in effect, a hotel in the grounds of Holland House. Representations in conjunction with other amenity bodies helped to secure refusal of planning consent by the Borough Council and a subsequent appeal by the promoters was later abandoned, no doubt in recognition of the volume and strength of local opposition.

Concern about the poor condition and increasing dilapidation of 9, 11 and 13 Melbury Road has been expressed to the Borough Council, who are as a result actively considering ways and means of safeguarding the future of these interesting Victorian houses.

Chairman: Professor R. J. L. Allen, O.B.E., 63 Abbotsbury Close, W14.

Hon. Secretary: Mrs. F. G. Levitt, 123 Abbotsbury Road, W14.

THE BOLTONS ASSOCIATION

The Association opposed a number of undesirable planning applications, with varying degrees of success. Overrunning from last year, the appeal against the erection of side extensions at 35/37 Gilston Road was upheld and a strong protest was addressed to the Department of the Environment, through Nicholas Scott, MP, for disrupting the Council's declared policy. On the credit side, 1985's largest planning application, the redevelopment of Brew's Garage site, Roland Way, proceeded with the developers in consultation with the Association and a satisfactory scheme has been achieved. Another crucial application concerned the proposal to demolish 30 The Boltons (a small infill building of the 1950s) and replace it with a more suitable building. Although the applicant's architect met the Association's stylistic criticisms with a revised scheme, this was still felt to be unacceptable and that any proposal to build on such an important site should be referred to the Fine Arts Commission. However, Council found it expedient to allow the plan because of a highly undesirable three-year-old permission (granted on appeal) to which the developer might have reverted in the event of refusal.

Co-operation with W.L.T.R. continued in opposing Department of Transport control of designated roads and evidence was given to the West London Assessment Study Team for improving transport and environmental conditions in the area. A G.L.C. suggestion for a counterflow cycle lane along Gilston Road between the Boltons and Priory Walk was opposed but the institution of the G.L.C.'s London-wide night and weekend lorry ban is warmly welcomed.

Chairman and Planning Controller: Mr. Philip English, 14 Milborne Grove, London SW10. *Secretary:* Miss Elizabeth Lowry-Corry, Flat 3, 60 Redcliffe Gardens, London SW10.

THE CAMPDEN STREET PRESERVATION SOCIETY

This has been a fairly quiet year for us. On the Planning side we have objected to the addition of yet another flatlet to an already overcrowded little house, and to the over-development of another house in a neighbouring street. Both applications have been refused. We are also trying to get rid of unauthorised business use of residential houses, with its accompanying nuisance of noise and congestion.

We attach great importance to the protection of rear garden space, including patios and paved areas. As regards the possibility of recreating open space at a higher level by the use of terrace or balcony, we fear that this will result in the destruction of rear gardens, the erection of high-level fencing, the blocking of light, air and outlook, and the invasion of privacy—all greatly to be deplored.

Chairman: Patrick Ronaldson. *Secretary:* Mrs. Clarice Gurney.

EARLS COURT GARDENS AND MORTON MEWS RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

We are glad that Earls Court Gardens and Morton Mews are now part of the Courtfield Conservation Area and are pleased to have been represented on the Residents' Steering Group.

Our Association strongly supported the Council in their successful prosecution of the owner of a mulberry tree which was illegally felled in Earls Court Gardens despite the efforts of several residents to prevent this sadly destructive act.

Our Neighbourhood Watch Scheme continues and we now have enough members to be entitled to a street sign!

Chairman: Lady Farnham, 11 Earls Court Gardens, London SW5.

Hon. Secretary: Mrs Martin Hunter, 12 Morton Mews, London SW5.

THE EARLS COURT SQUARE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

The Association's Committee actively continued its perennial struggles in support of our amenities against rubbish, noise nuisance and graffiti—which is a growing outrage. We co-operated with Neighbourhood Watch and we defended our Conservation Area against infringements such as non-conforming colour schemes and the erosion by neglect of the number of our unique heritage of Victorian Coal Hole Covers.

Other environmental problems tackled included the application for an extended late night licence by La Vie en Rose II, the forthcoming opening of St. George's Hostel for single men and, of course, traffic.

The first of these we lost at the Court hearing although backed by the Royal Borough; in the second we won representation on the Committee and achieved assurances about future conduct; lastly we hope 1986 will see the 'sleeping policemen' we want to thwart the short-cut racers and perhaps some 'herring-bone' parking to alleviate congestion.

We have continued to publish the June and December Newsletters but our subscription remains at £2. Two major events were held: in July a 'Bazamble' which raised over £100 for charities and £350 for the Association, part of which went to promote, in August, a Barbecue with music provided by a steel band. Thank you, Royal Navy, for the marquee!

We always trying to get our residents more involved with the efforts of their neighbours in the Association

Chairman: Mrs. Marianne Dawoodbhai, 67 Earls Court Square, SW5. *Secretary:* Mrs. May Holt, 35 Wetherby Mansions, SW5.

KENSINGTON COURT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Major building works at the northern and southern extremities of the area covered by the Association have affected the domestic calm and car parking spaces of all the residents. Pile driving on the site of the 'protected exterior' of the historic electricity sub-station has been followed by intensive work on the new office block with access only from Kensington Court Passage. We still look forward to early refurbishment of this much-used footway from the High Street; views are divided on the desirability of restoring the public telephones.

The new educational establishments in St. Alban's Grove and Ansdell Street (not in our Association area) have added to noise levels and current work continues to cause concern to those on the West side of Kensington Court Place. A great plus for all in the Southern part of the Association has been the establishment of a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme through the splendid initiative of Mr. Ray Wurtzburg and the inspiration and guidance of Victoria Road Residents' Association. Richmond College in St. Albans Grove kindly provided the police with a venue and hospitality to meet us to launch the scheme, which is being enthusiastically supported by surrounding shopkeepers.

Long overdue resurfacing of the many pot-holes in all the Association roads, disturbed by the continual excavations by various domestic services, may have resulted from a strong letter to the Borough Engineer following our AGM last March. There we missed the presence of our retiring Honorary Secretary, Mrs. Marjorie Wills, who has contributed so much to the success of the Association's work in the past. No replacement for this vital role has been found and volunteers would be warmly welcomed by the Executive members and the Chairman, Anne Sieve, 7 Hamilton House, Kensington Court Place.

THE LADBROKE ASSOCIATION

The year has been eventful and a number of important things have happened. Most important of all was the amendment to the '10 per cent permitted development' legislation so far as it applied to blocks of flats and houses converted into flats. The Association has joined with many other bodies in the campaign to bring this change.

Another campaign we have supported is concerned to limit the proliferation of Estate Agents boards, which have become a form of 'visual pollution'.

The long-awaited revised schedule of 'listed' buildings proved to be something of an anti-climax, for it omitted many buildings which seemed worthy of 'listing'. However, the extended schedule was welcomed, as far as it goes.

We have formed closer links with our neighbouring Conservation bodies—the Pembroke Association and the Norland Society. We had a meeting of representatives of all three bodies to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern. This was followed by a similar meeting with the Chairman of the Town Planning Committee and the Borough Planning Officer. It was felt that both these meetings were useful and should become annual events.

There is a lot of building activity, especially in converting some of the larger houses into 'up market' flats and maisonettes. This tends to exacerbate the car-parking problem. There is also continued pressure to build roof extensions, and there is increasing need for a clear policy on this matter.

Things sometimes happen apparently by stealth! The extra storey added to the Ladbroke Grove Police Station is a case in point, where the statutory consultation procedures were flouted.

We have looked beyond our boundaries and expressed concern over the effect of the proposed Hypermarket at the North end of Ladbroke Grove, and over the future of the much valued Holland Park following the demise of the Greater London Council.

Chairman: Robert Meadows.

NORLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

After years of effort successfully persuading the G.L.C. of the need for a slip road on to the M1 Motorway spur to relieve the pressure of increasing traffic on Royal Crescent and St. Ann's Villas it seems that our efforts will have to be repeated due to the impending demise of the G.L.C. This time with the Department of Transport from whom signals have been received that they are not sympathetic. We can only hope that the Department will prove more imaginative and innovative and less obstructive than usual. What is sure though is that the fight will have to go on, expensive as it will be on time and funds. It seems the demise of the G.L.C. has dealt us and the project a grievous blow.

Plans are still under discussion for the renovation of St James' Church Norlands and its revitalisation incorporating a Community Hall and ancillary accommodation. What is certain is that as it stands it falls far short of the needs of the congregation and the community at large. It is to be hoped the efforts of all involved will be met with success. The site does not lend itself readily to change which will have to be limited to the interior. The building is a focal point within this Society's area and it is desirable it should become a focal point of the community as well. It is hoped the plans will include the revitalisation of the clock!

The D.O.E. Historic Buildings Survey has recently been updated. In the area a number of properties have been upgraded from Grade II

to II* including the whole of Royal Crescent as well as Nos. 170 to 178 (even), 1-6 Darnley Terrace and the row of cottages Nos. 14 to 22 Addison Place. It is disappointing and surprising that despite our efforts none of the properties in the southern half of Addison Avenue have yet been listed.

With so many properties divided into flats the rate of change of occupation is increasing. The membership promotion campaign has yielded excellent results. A Twelfth Night drinks party at Leighton House was well attended but possible plans for a Grand Ball in St. James Gardens have been shelved as being rather over-ambitious.

Hon. Treasurer: P. L. G. Gurney.

ONSLow NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

This has been a quiet year for the Association. Our two most contentious sites of recent years, St. Paul's Church and the garages between Neville Street and Neville Terrace, remain untouched. With the former we understand that all will be well and the church fabric saved, but while we wait dilapidation increases. With the latter we had hoped that a revised scheme, warmly supported by the Association and receiving planning permission, would result in a speedy start, but no. . . .

In the meantime, the main development change in the area has been the continued regeneration of the Onslow, Cranley and Evelyn Gardens terraces by their steady conversion into so-called luxury and extremely expensive flats. While the Association has not welcomed the changes in social terms we had approved the renovation of often crumbling façades which the old lessees had not kept in decorative repair. Unfortunately in several instances the workmanship used in these renovations has been poor and in the past year paintwork has peeled and stucco cornices broken away so that again the scaffolders and builders are amongst us and have been causing their usual nuisance and obstruction on roads and pavements.

However, we have one important environmental gain to report, the steady replacement of the stone curbs and fine cast-iron railings at the north end of Sumner Place. These properties, the majority occupied as small exclusive hotels, whose infiltration this Association has deplored in the past, are kept well painted and with the addition of carefully maintained window boxes and flower-filled urns give the street a prosperous and cheerful appearance. We applaud your efforts!

We started our year with a well-attended A.G.M. We thank Councillor Mrs. Ian Hanham for her support and for addressing the meeting, also Mr. Ian Grant who entertained us with an enthralling illustrated talk '60 Glorious Buildings', one for each year of Queen Victoria's reign. We continued with a most successful garden party

when we were blessed by what must have been the only warm dry evening in a cold wet summer. This attracted a large number of new residents, many of whom have become members of the Association. We hope to reach more newcomers and encourage a pride in this beautiful district of London.

Chairman: Hugh Brady, 16 Selwood Terrace, London SW7 3QG.

PEMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Six meetings of the Executive Committee were held during the year under the chairmanship of Mr. John Croft, C.B.E. The Executive Officers also held a meeting at the Town Hall with Mr. Sanders, the Borough Planning Officer, at which a number of points of dissatisfaction about planning and enforcement matters were raised.

Following that meeting, on July 2nd the Chairman and Hon. Secretary (Planning) met with Councillor Mrs. Ian Hanham, Chairman of the Planning Committee at the Town Hall. Representatives of Norland and Ladbroke Associations were also present. The Associations all made the point that they felt the Borough Planning Committee was too lenient on planning contraventions and that there should be no amendments or alterations allowed that did not conform to the published policy documents. A wide range of other topics was discussed including street lighting, refuse collection, tree care, etc.

The bottle baluster walls which contribute so much to the visual charm of the Conservation Area are still being demolished and in many cases we are legally powerless to prevent it. The most contentious planning issues were 2/4/6 Chepstow Crescent where we are closely monitoring the development into flats; 42/44 Pembroke Villas, where permission for a four-storey extension was granted in spite of the strongest objections from the Association and local residents, and 17 Dawson Place, where the developer was granted permission for a rear extension and extra storey for this ugly block of flats in an otherwise beautiful street. Nos. 227/229 Westbourne Grove, where we fought long and hard, is now completed and makes a positive contribution to this pleasing terrace of antique shops.

Proposals were submitted in October by the Westminster Director of Planning and Transportation for a new traffic scheme at the Westbourne Grove/Chepstow Road/Chepstow Place junction. This envisaged a compulsory left turn into Pembroke Villas for all traffic proceeding north along Chepstow Place and would have serious implications for most residential streets in the Conservation Area. No action has yet been taken pending consultation between planning departments of Westminster and the R.B.K. & C.

Chairman: Mr. John Croft, C.B.E., Flat 2, 35 Chepstow Villas, W11.

Secretary: Mrs. J. Nielsen, 3 Portobello Mews, W11.

VICTORIA ROAD AREA RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

This was to have been the year we got our Conservation Area Policy Statement—an agreed set of policies that the Council would implement. Unfortunately a year after the public meeting we still have no policy statement and are far from happy with some of the planning decisions.

The one good thing to materialise from our proposals for enhancing the area is the reinstatement of Victorian street lighting in Launceston Place, Victoria Grove and Canning Place. We are now looking for a further project in Kelso Place. This has been achieved by residents paying a large share of the cost, but it is hoped that in future the Council will, like Westminster City Council, use the Parking Places Reserve Account to pay for such improvements.

The traffic problem in Victoria Grove continues, as the Council's proposal for making both Victoria Grove and Launceston Place one-way got a mixed response. The Council deferred doing anything, but we are convinced that there is scope for improvement without diverting traffic from one street to another.

The most controversial matter of the year was the Council's decision to allow Richmond College to take over additional premises in Ansdell Street. Despite the Council's policy and the Association's resolution, that there should be no more educational uses in the area, the Town Planning Committee mysteriously reversed an earlier decision for an almost identical proposal to one they refused earlier in the year. The Association is extremely disappointed by the decision, in addition to a number of other decisions at variance with the 'agreed' policy statement.

We are hoping that soon we will have clear policies for our area—but we still have the uphill task of getting both the development control officers and the Town Planning Committee familiar with them.

Chairman: Oliver Lebus, 25 Victoria Road, W8.

Secretary: Anne Woodward-Fisher, 14 Albert Place, W8.

The ownership and development of fifteen acres at Kensington Gravel Pits

By IRENE SCOULUDI, M.Sc.(Econ.), F.S.A.
and A. P. HANDS, M.A.(Oxon and Melbourne)

By kind permission of the London Topographical Society
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1848-64

The 15 acres and the Victorian development

An examination of leases in the Middlesex Deeds Registry has brought to light only the two Cullingford leases granted by Robert Hall himself, and a very few granted by his trustees during Sarah Hall's life. Fortunately the development of the 12 acres composing plots 49 and 52 is not within the scope of this paper, for no coherent account could be given of what took place. Such leases as exist indicate spasmodic building with no guiding plan. Our sole interest here is that a small portion of plot 52, where it touched the north-west corner of the 15 acres, formed part of the very first block of land leased by the trustees to William Radford, builder, in May 1849. Consequently some of the earliest houses, at the western end of Dawson Place and, later, on the north-west corner of Pembridge Square, are outside the boundary of the 15 acres.

Procedure on the 15 acres was orderly: both ground landlord and builders were business-like and every site and house was at some stage registered. Very occasionally, as in the transaction just noted, a deed set out the lease of a larger piece of land before it had been divided into building blocks. Leases granted for individual sites often had an inset sketch of the site with a plan of the intended house superimposed. So that the builder might recoup himself, the trustees usually leased him the nearly completed house on favourable terms in consideration of the building costs incurred. Most of the leases examined were granted to the Radford family on slightly varied terms for 99 years from Lady Day 1854; but by mid-1860 Robert Hall's trustees had begun to sell the freeholds of some plots.

The 15 acres were not developed on a grandiose scale, but what the designs of streets and individual houses lacked in imagination they gained in homogenous and restful solidity. If one may judge by the speed with which the leases were sold and by the type of purchaser, these houses satisfied a genuine demand and suited the taste as well as the pockets of a section of middle-class Victorian society. The trustees

were fortunate in having the Messrs Radford as builders. However uninspired, they built soundly and well, and in their initial enterprise, Dawson Place, they had the good sense not to erect disparate premises but to visualise the area as a whole. Pembridge Gardens and Pembridge Square also present themselves as harmonious units, the one leading into and, architecturally speaking, up to the other. Pembridge Gardens begins at the highroad with a set of eight detached comparatively modest single-fronted houses on either side, followed by a series similar in style but double-fronted and more ornate. The façade of the last of these, no. 34 on the west side, was given special decorative treatment, perhaps to make it a connecting link with its even more impressive neighbours in the Square beyond.

A photograph of no. 29 taken in 1912 shows a typical double-fronted Pembridge Gardens house as originally built. The Radfords sought to enhance the frontages with paths of patterned tiles and narrow flower-beds, the latter set with shrubs and separated from the footpath by a low wall with a stucco balustrade. Between heavy piers swung a high central gate of wood with openwork cast-iron panels. The proportions of the windows varied from storey to storey, and great care was exercised to give the elevation a balanced effect. Decorations were symmetrical and took the form of stucco columns and Corinthian pilasters, a pediment, keystones, lattice panels, and light ironwork guards for all windowsills. Emphasis was concentrated on the centre, on the front door and its projecting pillared porch, from which the eye was drawn upwards to the tall window above with its pilasters and pediment, and then past the unarresting window of the second floor to the decorative arched feature at roof-level, where a stucco urn at either end of the parapet completed the design.

Most of the houses on the east side of the street were later 'embellished' at the rear with 'pleasure gardens', in which no building was to be set up 'other than summer houses or alcoves or structures of a light and ornamental character and in no case exceeding in extreme height twelve feet'. In Pembridge Square the central garden was the compensation for cramped backyards. As was pointed out in a Radford lease of 1860, the householder had 'the right to use in common with the owners and occupiers of the other houses . . . the ornamental enclosure and pleasure garden in the centre thereon, subject only to such contributions towards the expense of maintaining the said enclosure and the road and footway round the same'.

It has not been possible to disentangle which of the various members of the Radford family built particular houses. There were two Williams; and a Francis, senior, and a Francis, junior. Up to the middle of 1854 deeds now and then indicate the younger Francis but after that date no distinction was made.

The Radfords were responsible for building over the entire 15 acres, with the following exceptions. The present nos. 28-34

Pembridge Road (then 14-17 Devonshire Terrace), completed in February 1854, were built by Henry Gilbert. Nos. 36-48 (18-24 Devonshire Terrace), completed in December of the same year, were built by William Yeo, who lived on the opposite side of the road in Albert Terrace. About 70 years later a pair of small houses, nos. 54 and 56 Pembridge Road, were erected by builders unknown; and recently a light two-storey structure has sprung up alongside no. 56. Shortly before May 1861 James Herd built nos. 2 and 4 of the then Dawson Place East; and also, between March and September of that year, the somewhat insignificant houses at the south-east end of Chepstow Place, now nos. 51-69 but formerly 1-10 Sundridge Terrace.

The Radfords, as we know, were granted their first lease on 31 May 1849 and started on Dawson Place. Working from west to east, they had completed the whole of the north side by the end of 1850. By July 1853 the south side of Dawson Place and the contiguous sections of Pembridge Place, Chepstow Place and Pembridge Villas were finished. Next came the series of undertakings which spelt destruction for Elm Lodge and the garden so much enjoyed by Frederick Grace in the 1820s. In July 1853, plot 62 of the Tithe Map was still garden and grassland, save for Elm Lodge with its outhouses, Meredith's livery stables, and Joseph Cook's hairdressing business on the highroad. Also, on the Portobello (Pembridge) Road frontage, Henry Gilbert may by then have begun building nos. 14-17 Devonshire Terrace. Plans were soon made for a street to run the length of plot 62 from south to north, roughly midway between the backs of the Devonshire Terrace houses on the west and the boundary of Thomson's land (plot 61) on the east. Inevitably, this street was to be named Hall Street.

From late in 1853 until April 1854 the Radfords were busy on the high-street frontage of plot 62, working from the west corner of Hall Street to the corner of Portobello Road. There they built the Devonshire Arms, a public house which has kept its name, its original shape and distinctive rounded corner, but has been refaced to conform more nearly to the 'new look' of the remodelled Notting Hill Gate of 1963. Continuing from the Devonshire Arms along Portobello Road, the Radfords built a row of 13 houses, nos. 1-13 Devonshire Terrace (now 2-26 Pembridge Road), and by the end of July 1854 had reached no. 14, the first of Gilbert's four houses.

The gap in Devonshire Terrace having been filled, the builders returned to the high street, at that period usually called the Uxbridge Road, to erect three 'tenements including shops' on the frontage from the east corner of Hall Street to the narrow alleyway which marked the boundary between Hall's plot 62 and Thomson's plot 61. By, or soon after, December 1854 these shop premises were finished and the Radfords were ready for the task of converting the last remaining open space on the 15 acres into what became Pembridge Gardens and Pembridge Square.

How or by whom the new streets were named, or renamed, is open to conjecture. As the tradition that no. 28 Dawson Place was the site of Dawson's Farm seems to lack support, Dawson Place could owe its name to the John Silvester Dawson who was rated for a house on the highroad from 1786-9, and in 1787 also leased the land a little farther to the east, on the Paddington boundary, administered by the Charity Commissioners. Elsewhere, on and adjacent to the 15 acres, most of the streets are named after Pembridge and Chepstow, and some after other places in Herefordshire and the neighbouring counties. The choice of these names may be due to William Kinnaird Jenkins, a lawyer living in Westbourne Grove, who was much interested in local developments and had property in Hereford.

Early in 1855 progress on the 15 acres was delayed because the executor, Benjamin Hall, 'being in bad health [was] desirous of retiring and being discharged from the trusts of [Robert Hall's] will'. On 13 April another trustee was appointed, his cousin James Lock, eldest son of old George James Lock and Caroline Hall. Lock was a good choice, a man of great ability and intelligence, head of the firm of hatters whose unmodernised shop-front is such a pleasing feature of St. James's Street.

Shortly after Lock's appointment he and Garrard obtained a legal ruling on their powers to dispose of the property within the terms of the will. The Court of Chancery in July 1855 ordered that the trustees 'be at liberty to postpone the sale of . . . real estate . . . until the further order of this Court and that . . . the trustees be at liberty to grant building and other leases of the property in the mean time'. Thereupon Lock and Garrard went ahead. They began with Hall Street, where the building programme was carried out in stages by the Radfords between 1855 and 1858. During those years the street name was changed twice: from Hall Street to Hall Road, and by November 1858 to Pembridge Gardens. First, two detached single-fronted houses were erected on the west side behind the premises built the year before on the high-road corner; then, the two opposite houses on the east side. By the time there were eight on either side, the Radfords seem to have enlarged their ideas. They were becoming ambitious and had evidently begun to envisage the rest of Pembridge Gardens and Pembridge Square as two related units, with houses similar in style to the others but wider and more handsome, especially in the Square; and all with ornamentation superior to those in Dawson Place. The heart of the 15 acres was to be kept 'a desirable residential quarter' closed to all trade and business.

By the end of 1858 all the houses in Pembridge Gardens had been built and many were let. In April 1859 the Radfords, anxious to increase even more the desirability of the residences on the east side of the street, leased from Dr. Henry Urmston Thomson the elm-shaded piece of land (part of plot 61) lying behind nos. 15-31, which until then had had only the shallowest of backyards. Each house was now given the kind of pleasure garden described above. A few months

later more of Dr. Thomson's land was leased in order similarly to improve nos. 5-13.

The development of Pembridge Square—really an oblong—was begun in conjunction with the north end of Pembridge Gardens and took from 1857 to 1864. The houses on the short west side, nos. 1-3, were completed by February 1857; those on the north side by mid-1861; and the four on the short east side by February 1863. The south side was not finished until July 1864 although the first lease is dated 27 December 1860, when work seems to have commenced at the west corner on the site today covered by part of Vincent House.

The 15 acres were now wholly built over and had assumed much the appearance they still have in 1963, almost a century later. There are a few noticeable minor changes: most of the high wooden gates and the stucco balustrades have gone from beside the footpaths, and the urns from the parapets; some of the stucco arches have been taken down, others are incorporated in utilitarian additions to upper storeys; and in places the unison of subdued paint is more or less stridently disturbed. In Pembridge Road the ground-floor rooms of many of the Devonshire Terrace houses have long been shops, while the high street, deprived of its old character, is now a thoroughfare no more individual nor pleasing than most of the concrete-flanked channels leading into and out of any big city. But these last are changes on the perimeter only. Within the area the gently curved streets and the Radford houses, sound though a little pompous, offer the eye a restful continuity and a dignity of mien which further gain by comparison with their less well-proportioned neighbours.

Apart from the drastic modernisation along the highroad, few new buildings have intruded harshly on the 15 acres since the Radford's time. A short distance beyond the shops in Pembridge Road there are two small dwellings, nos. 54 and 56, built in 1925, and the recent erection on their north side. There is also Vincent House, a residential club for professional people, which in 1938 replaced no. 31 Pembridge Gardens and nos. 4 and 5 Pembridge Square. At the other end of Pembridge Gardens are the premises built on the south-east corner in 1935-36 by Messrs Montague Burton, tailors. This intruder is numbered 72-74 Notting Hill Gate, but looks sideways on to Pembridge Gardens. Opposite, on the west corner, no. 78 Notting Hill Gate is now a four-storeyed structure, a branch of the National Bank. This site was that of Notting Hill Gate tube station, opened in 1900 and demolished in 1961 for reconstruction work linking the Metropolitan Railway with the Central London Tube.

The interiors of most of the houses in the Pembridges and Dawson Place were comfortable and commodious but unimaginative and wasteful of space, and required much domestic help. When no. 29 Pembridge Gardens was bought for £5,000 in 1910, it was classed as a modest family residence, but in 1954 it was considered too large for private occupation. It was therefore advertised on the institutional

list, and was sold for £14,000: a succinct commentary on social and economic changes during the past 40 years.

A characteristic Radford house of the larger type was described in 1902 in a survey of no. 16 Dawson Place for probate:

... the property stands in a good piece of ground forming a forecourt and in an open situation having a pleasant aspect and contains on the upper floors nine bed-rooms, dressing-room, a boudoir, bath-room fitted with hot and cold water, box and linen rooms with two W.C.'s. On the ground floor an entrance hall with vestibule, the floor laid in tiles, and a staircase and a W.C. A capital dining-room with bay-window, the floor being laid with parquet boards. A double-drawing-room, fitted with two statuary marble chimney pieces and tiled hearth, and a library at back.

A light basement, containing kitchen, scullery, tradesman's entrance, housekeeper's room, servants' hall, butler's pantry, larder, wine and coal cellar and W.C. . . .

It is a very plain and ordinary type of house with plenty of light and accommodation for a family, but devoid of all elegance both in construction and furnishings and requires considerable outlay to put the place into ordinary decorative repair necessary for occupation.

From these Victorian houses to the lands granted by the de Veres to the monks of Abingdon early in the 12th century is a far cry; yet the houses are incontrovertibly built on an outlying 15-acre piece of those lands, taken by the Crown in 1538 and sold into private ownership in 1599, from which date the property becomes traceable, step by step, to the present day. It was a piece of good fortune to come upon evidence that enabled a built-up area of 15 acres of no historical or architectural significance, embedded in the vast extent of metropolitan London, to be detached from its surroundings, defined with precision, identified with two agrarian closes of more than 350 years ago, and related finally to an entry in Domesday Book.

APPENDIX I

Ownership of the 15 acres

1. Domesday Book to 1599

The land as an unspecified part of the manor of Kensington, and later of Abbot's Kensington

Domesday Book	The manor of Kensington was held, pre-Conquest, by Edwin, a thane of King Edward; post-Conquest, by Aubrey de Vere, under the bishop of Coutances.
Reign of Henry I	c. 1100, the above Aubrey de Vere granted the church of Kensington and its lands to the abbot and monastery of Abingdon, Berks. This property became the manor of Abbot's Kensington.

1538 Thomas Rowland, abbot of Abingdon, surrendered all the abbey's possessions to Henry VIII.

1599 Elizabeth I sold the manor of [Abbot's] Kensington to (Sir) Walter Cope.

2. 1599-1848

The property as a mainly agrarian entity

- 1599 Walter Cope sold part of his manorial lands to Robert Horseman. The only property north of the highroad at Kensington Gravel Pits was described as 'two closes called North-Crofts'.
- 1600 Robert Horseman's only son, Robert, a minor, succeeded to the property.
- 1618 This Robert Horseman sold part of his inheritance to Robert Gynne. The property north of the highroad was now described as the Talbot and the 13 acres adjoining.
- 1630 June, Sir William Blake, kt., agreed to buy from Robert Gynne the Talbot and the 13 acres.
November, power of administration was granted to William Blake, son of Sir William Blake, deceased.
- 1631 Robert Gynne and William Blake sold the Talbot and the 13 acres to John Marsh.
- 1631-1741 The property descended in the Marsh family.
- 1741 Henry Marsh bequeathed the Talbot and the 13 acres to his grandson, Henry Thomas Greening (later Sir Henry Thomas Gott).
- 1806 Sir Henry Thomas Gott sold the Talbot and the 13 acres to John Hall, the leaseholder. In a deed of recovery the property was described as 'one messuage and fifteen acres of land'.
- 1816 Robert Hall, brother of John, inherited the 15 acres and the house.
- 1817 Robert Hall handed over the property to his brother, Christopher.
- 1820 Robert Hall inherited the property from his brother Christopher.
- 1847 Robert Hall died.

3. 1848-64

The Victorian development

- 1848 Robert Hall left the house and the 15 acres to be administered by trustees.
- 1852-63 Leases for building sites were granted in rapid succession. In 1860 the trustees began to sell freeholds.
- 1864 By December the entire area was built over.

APPENDIX II

No. 29 Pembridge Gardens, 1858-1963

The site for this house was leased to the builders by Robert Hall's executors. Francis Radford evidently built the house for when it was nearing completion the trustees, at the request of William Radford and in consideration of building costs, on 30 November 1858 granted Francis a lease of the premises for 99 years from Lady Day 1854. Francis was to pay the rates and taxes, and a rent of £2 a year. Next day Francis Radford mortgaged the property for £1,750 to Robert Cuff of Cockspur Street, saddler. He undertook to put the finishing touches to the house and its surroundings by September 1859, and agreed that if extra land had by then been leased at the rear, it was to be kept solely as a pleasure garden and was to be regarded as part of the premises mortgaged. In April 1859 William and Francis Radford together leased the desired strip from Dr. Henry Urnston Thomson, who held the ground east of Pembridge Gardens by copyhold of the manor of Abbot's Kensington.

In June 1860 the trustees, Lock and Garrard, auctioned the freehold of no. 29 (with others). It was bought by Frederick Green of Angel Court, Throgmorton Street, gentleman, for £85. In July the fee-simple was therefore conveyed to Green; and in August, Francis Radford and Robert Cuff assigned to Green the remainder of their 99-year lease for £3,850, of which Cuff received £1,771 12s. 0d. and Radford £1,808 8s. 0d. The house and its immediate site, 44 ft. 6 in. × 65 ft. 6 in., were now Green's freehold possession, but not so the land, 44 ft. 6 in. × 109 ft., forming the garden. Green was, however, able to lease this from Dr. Thomson, with the consent of the two Radfords, for 99 years from Lady Day 1854, for £25 and a yearly rent of £7.

In September 1860 Green mortgaged his freehold estate and leasehold garden for £2,000. Five years later he and his mortgagees sold the freehold, for £5,000, to James Charles Marshall of Vere Street, silk mercer, and assigned to him the residue of the 99-year lease of the garden.

In 1868 the leases of the gardens behind no. 29 and its neighbours were all granted by Dr. Thomson's executors to the Metropolitan Railway Company, for the underground line between Notting Hill Gate and Queen's Road (now Queensway), Bayswater. In 1872 the company obtained outright this garden land, free of copyhold restrictions, from the Rt. Hon. Mary Augusta, Lady Holland, lady of the manor. Consequently, when the company was later empowered to sell the property near or over the railway, Marshall had the opportunity of buying the freehold of his garden. He paid £280 for it on 14 March 1876 and so, at last, the whole of no. 29 was freehold.

Marshall in 1882 leased the premises to the Rev. John Filmer Sullivan for 21 years at an annual rental of £370. The lease was broken at the end of seven years, but a City banker about to be married had meanwhile become interested, and in April 1889 the 'freehold messuage and garden ground in rear' were sold for £6,500 to Arthur Ellis Franklin and his bride Caroline, who lived there for over 20 years.



No. 29 Pembridge Gardens in 1912: front elevation
believed to be built in 1858.

In December 1910 the Franklins sold to Frank Scouloudi, whose family made no. 29 their home until June 1954. Then the house changed its function, for the property was acquired by the Territorial and Auxiliary Forces Association of the County of Middlesex to provide town headquarters for No. 604 (County of Middlesex) Squadron of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force. With the famous red scimitar painted on the clear glass of the fanlight over the front door, the Squadron remained in occupation until disbanded four years later. In September 1958 the premises were transferred, as Crown property, to the Air Ministry for conversion into a W.R.A.F. hostel. Internal alterations were made, and a fire-escape added at the rear, but the front elevation only suffered a change of colour. Since May 1959 the hostel has afforded convenient living quarters for approximately 40 members of the Women's Royal Air Force employed in service departments in the London area.

It forms a curiously neat pendant to the long chain of ownership that, within the 15 acres, the 44 ft. 6 in. × 65 ft. 6 in. rectangle of land which holds the foundations of no. 29 Pembridge Gardens and was a minute part of the manor lands sold by Elizabeth I in 1599 should, after more than 350 years of private possession, return to the Crown in the person of Elizabeth II.

Schedule of fixtures, 1882

When Mr. James Charles Marshall, on 24 June 1882, let no. 29 Pembridge Gardens to the new vicar of St. Matthew's, Bayswater, the Rev. John Filmer Sullivan from Frant, near Tunbridge Wells, a schedule of fixtures was incorporated in the lease. This schedule is most informative as to the equipment proper to a private dwelling house 80 years ago.

The schedule begins at the top of the house, works down through five storeys, and then takes a glimpse outdoors. Room by room it lists every key, lock, latch (pulpit or Norfolk), bolt, knob, peg (brass or japanned iron), pulley, sash-fastener (ordinary or Meakin's patent), shutter and shutter-bar; notes every water-tap, shelf, built-in cupboard, mantel, register stove, bell-pull or lever, and the colour of every door-knob and finger-plate.

In this five-storey house hot and cold water were laid on at five points; the housemaid's sink and the bathroom on the second floor, the wash-bowl in the ground-floor cloakroom, the wash-bowl in the basement passage, and the stone sink in the scullery. A cold water tap only seems to have been fitted to the lead-lined sink in the butler's pantry. There was another cold tap outside the back (garden) door, and a 'brass lever for water tap' in the wall near the cistern on the top floor. That no water was piped to the first floor, which had the three 'best' bedrooms and two dressing-rooms, is a reminder that it was customary to have ewers and basins for a housemaid to bring cans of hot water at stated hours and when rung for. The bathroom, on the second floor, had a 'japanned body bath fitted in grained deal case with fall-down flap, three lever taps hot and cold supply and waste &c', a 'mahogany lath and 6 double brass hooks', a register stove, stone mantel and jambs. This was the only bathroom in the house. However, every floor but the top had a W.C., with 'apparatus in mahogany case' except in the basement, where the casing was of deal.

All bed- and dressing-rooms had white door furniture, a register stove and a mantel. This last was of stone on the top and second floors, and of white

marble in the three bedrooms on the first floor. Three top-floor rooms had a brass ring in the ceiling, possibly for a hanging lamp.

Built on to the back of the ground floor, after the Radford's day, was a morning room with a bay-window overlooking the garden. The mantel here was of polished black slate with carved trusses; the door-knob and finger-plate were also black, as were all those on the ground floor, save on the two doors of the double drawing-room, which were lightened by 'black white and gilt furniture'. For the rest, the drawing room was made splendid by two fire-places, 'part-polished steel register stoves with two ormolu rims each' and 'marble mantels with carved piers and trusses'. The dining room on the opposite side of the hall was sombre, with black door-knob and finger-plate, and black slate mantel flanked by two black-mounted lever bell-pulls. A brass gas pipe and tap were fitted in one corner. Gas was laid on in the house but the only internal light-fitting noted was 'a gas lantern and globe' by the fanlight over the front door. Outside there was a gas lamp above the tradesmen's entrance at the side of the house.

Over the morning room, at first-level and taking in part of the back landing, was a billiard room. This had a mantel of carved oak but was otherwise almost gay, with silvered glass over the door, two coloured glass panels in the windows and a skylight worked by cords. Moreover, there was an up-to-date speaking-tube and whistle communicating with the staff day-quarters in the basement. Servants were summoned to other parts of the house by means of bell-pulls of various designs, each connected by wire to one of a row of no less than 17 bells ranged high along the passage wall outside the kitchen door. When a bell jangled on its curved hoop-iron spring, the appropriate tablet, one of a set on the wall, would indicate whence came the summons, and whether a visitor or a servant was at the front door.

All ground floor and basement windows had on the inside stout folding shutters of wood or metal, secured by flat iron bars and fasteners. The basement windows were further protected by 'iron guard bars' on the outside. This basement was airy and dry. An adequate larder, with north-facing window covered by panels of perforated zinc, had shelves of deal and slat. The wine cellar had stone shelving and a patent lock and key. The spacious kitchen easily accommodated a '5 feet open fire range with open, high pressure boiler [the sole supplier of hot water], fall down bar and draw out. . . . Hot plate at side in recess'. There was a supplementary '2 feet 9 open range with crane over' in the scullery, together with a big stone sink, seven shelves, a dresser with pot board under, and a gas meter shelf.

By present-day standards the amount of storage space provided was staggering. In the basement passage were two tall store cupboards and a smaller one under the fitted wash-bowl; and in the kitchen were two more (one of the walk-in type) with shelves, and also a sizeable dresser with four drawers, three shelves and a pot board. The butler's pantry had a 9 ft. 6 in. run of painted deal cupboards with shelves, a 3 ft. 9 in. ditto, a 6 ft. deal dresser with drawers and cupboards, and a two-door cupboard under the sink; while the housekeeper's room had a 10 ft., a 7 ft. 9 in. and a 4 ft. run of painted deal cupboards, the last with two drawers; and there was also a 4 ft. dresser with cupboards. On the top floor a box room was fitted with sets of wide 2½ in. return shelves well calculated to hold the cumbersome trunks, weighty hide dressing-cases, portmanteaux, hampers and other Victorian travel necessities. The linen room offered a 13 ft. 6 in. run of grained

cupboards with 15 shelves. A grained cupboard filled a recess on the top landing, and the landing below had a grained corner cupboard.

More cupboards were distributed among the bedrooms on the top and second floors: three 4 ft. 6 in. dwarf cupboards, a 4 ft. and two 4 ft. 6 in. full-length ones, also a 6 ft. wardrobe lined with holland and fitted with 13 pegs, two brass rails, four brass hangers and two curtains. These items were all grained, except for one of the dwarfs.

'Graining' was plainly in vogue, perhaps because it was durable. Several doors on the upper landings had been so treated, as well as the surfaces already noted. In addition, the lower panels of the pair of embossed glass doors in the front hall were grained; and the ground floor cloakroom, which was entered through a 'crimson baize door with . . . black furniture and brass bolt, embossed fanlight over', had a wash-bowl encased in grained deal, and two mahogany-topped cupboards of grained deal.

References to exterior fixtures are few and brief. The wooden front gate had '2 ornamental iron panels'; and the 'dustbin' was an immovable brick structure with a wooden lid at the bottom of the garden.

For these premises the Rev. Filmer Sullivan paid £370 rent per annum, and also land tax, 'sewers rate', and all other existing or future rates, taxes, etc., excepting only the landlord's property tax. Mr. Sullivan agreed to paint, with two coats of best oil paint and colours, all outside wood, stucco and ironwork every third year; to whitewash or colour anew all parts so treated; from time to time to cleanse and keep in substantial and decorative repair all mouldings, cornices and architectural decorations both inside and outside, those of stucco to receive attention once in every third year between May and September. He agreed, every seventh year, to paint all outside wood, iron or other work; to paper all parts then papered, using 'other good new paper or the same quality' and 'of appropriate and proper tints and colour', and to varnish where necessary. He agreed also, in the 15th year, to grain properly all parts then grained; throughout to keep in good order all paths, pavements, drains, sewers, etc; and to keep the garden well stocked, manured and cultivated. The lease, which was for 21 years, with power to sublet or terminate at the end of seven or 14 years, contained the usual clauses concerning insurance with a reputable company, and forbade the use of the premises for any kind of trade or business.

Not very surprisingly, Mr. Sullivan desired to terminate the lease at the end of seven years. His letter of 19 November 1888 gave the required six months' notice to the agents, C. G. Coles and Co., 133a Queen's Road, Bayswater, and at the same time suggested 'some abatement of rent' if a fresh tenant were to be attracted. Three days later Mr. Marshall himself sent a very civil reply. He would not, he said, 'stand out for the present rent' provided he secured a good tenant quickly to follow Mr. Sullivan in June next; and ended, 'I am under the impression that Pembridge Gardens still holds its good name and value'. In the event his impression was justified: before the six months were up he had sold the property for £6,500.

For the full reference to the sources upon which this article is based, please see the annotated copy from the above *London Topographical Record*, in the Reference Library, Kensington Main Public Library, Hornton Street, W.8.



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Statement of Accounts for the year 1985-86

1984		£	£
£			
	Assets		
	Office Equipment at cost,		
29	less depreciation		25
	Balance at Bank		
3,056	Deposit Account	4,213	
2,116	Current Account	1,404	5,617
<u>5,201</u>			<u>5,642</u>
	Liabilities		
173	Creditors for Expenses		201
<u>£5,028</u>	Net Assets		<u>£5,441</u>
	Accumulated Fund		
3,030	Balance at January 1st, 1985	2,829	
	Add: Surplus from Income and		
(201)	Expenditure Account	796	
<u>2,829</u>			<u>3,625</u>
	Princess Alice Memorial Fund		
934	Balance at January 1st, 1985	2,199	
	Less: Deficiency from Income and		
1,265	Expenditure Account	(383)	
<u>2,199</u>			<u>1,816</u>
	KEON HUGHES, Hon. Treasurer		
	G. CHRISTIANSEN, Hon. Secretary		
<u>£5,028</u>			<u>£5,441</u>

In accordance with instructions given to us, we have prepared the foregoing accounts from the accounting records of the Kensington Society and from information and explanations supplied to us.

33 Marloes Road
Kensington
London W8 6LG
February 10th, 1986

CROFT, MAY & CO.
Chartered Accountants.

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for the year ended December 31st, 1985

1984		£	£
£			
1,854	Subscriptions		2,185
	Other Receipts		
42	Profit on Sale		580
182	Bank Deposit Interest		252
630	Receipts for Visits		560
580	Advertising in Annual Report		670
<u>1,000</u>	Donations		<u>540</u>
4,288			4,787
	Expenditure		
869	Printing, Typing and Stationery	1,002	
1,033	Postage and Telephone	971	
1,355	Producing Annual Report	1,332	
173	Professional Charges	201	
15	Advertising	—	
160	Sundry Expenses	43	
73	Reception and Meeting Expenses	—	
728	Coach Visits, etc.	380	
66	Subscriptions and Donations	58	
12	Photographic Records	—	
5	Depreciation of Office Equipment	4	
<u>4,489</u>			<u>3,991</u>
	Surplus (Deficiency)		
<u>(£201)</u>	Transferred to Accumulated Fund		<u>£796</u>

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY
PRINCESS ALICE MEMORIAL FUND
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
For the year ended December 31st, 1985

1984		£	£
	Income		
605	Donations Received		532
1,270	Profit on Sale		—
8	Bank Deposit Interest		141
1,883			673
	Expenditure		
460	Cost of Memorial Garden	1,009	
9	Postage and Telephone	—	
99	Memorial Tablet	—	
50	Sundry Expenses	47	
618			1,056
	Balance		
<u>£1,265</u>	Transferred to Balance Sheet		<u>(£383)</u>

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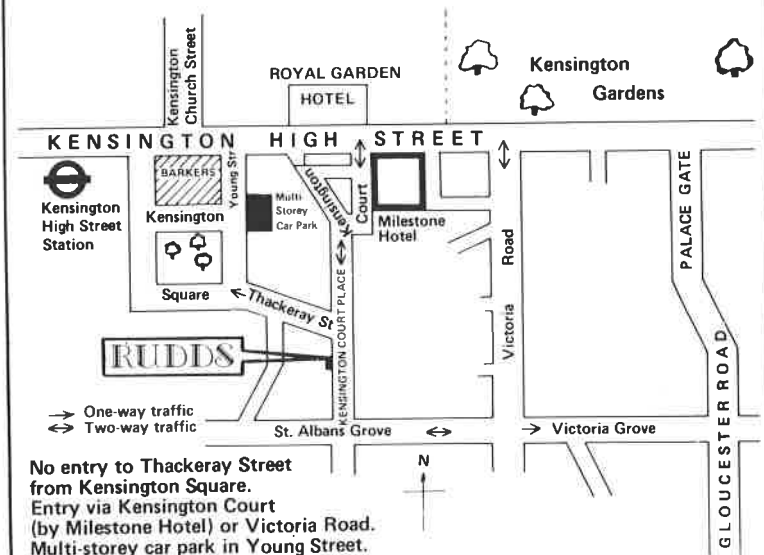
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