



THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2010

The Kensington Society continues to be active. Our proposed new constitution is included within this posting. The annual report is underway. The AGM date and speaker is confirmed. Representation was made at every one of the public meetings for the Local Development Framework. Since Michael Bach expresses our concerns regarding our future relationship with the Council, I will report on a few planning issues we have addressed since the AGM.

DELEGATED DECISIONS...

As I write we have learned that delegated planning permission has been granted for a large hoarding fully covering the front of a listed building on a residential street

SAVE THE DATE!

A General Meeting of The Kensington Society will be held on Thursday, 11th November 2010 in the ground floor meeting room of the St. Mary Abbots Centre, Vicarage Gate, LONDON W8 4HN at 6.30pm. The agenda is the review of the draft updated constitution and vote.



SAVE THE DATE!

The Annual General Meeting of The Kensington Society will be held on Monday, 11th April 2011 in Christ Church, Victoria Road, W8 5RQ, entrance off Eldon Road, at 6.30pm for 7.00pm. The speaker will be Dr Paul Thompson, Rector and Vice-Provost of the Royal College of Art.



in the heart of a conservation area with an advertisement for the building company. Hoardings are for the protection of the public from construction site, security, and to contain site dust and debris. The signage should be restricted to a site notice for the public in case of a disturbance or a safety issue. Instead, the Borough Development and Planning department has approved for a limited time...one year...a large advertisement with photographs of the amazing work by this one contractor. We opposed the application but it was approved without the planning committee even seeing it.

The next time you are on Kensington High Street have a look at the signage for Bank Santander. It is the first time signage has been allowed on the stone fascia of the building. Again this was approved by delegated decision without planning committee review. ►



The Kensington Society would like to thank Gordon French for allowing us to reproduce his beautiful drawings of the eastern elevation of Kensington Palace. Gordon is the Director of Gallery 19, 19 Kensington Court Place, London W8 5BJ

The original is ink and acrylic on paper.

PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT...

There is hope that Coalition will review the permitted development rights and we will be actively lobbying for change. These allow building without planning permission. What might be correct for some parts of the country, does not work in RBKC. Recently an application was refused for a large garden room in a conservation area. The applicant appealed and the Inspector dismissed the appeal on the ground that the structure would damage the area. The applicant is now building the garden room under permitted development rights. Though allowed it is contrary to the whole reason we have planning.

ONE VICTORY...

You also may have noticed, as many of our members have, the profusion of estates' signs. In some instances there are many as four signs on one property. The Council unfortunately allowed the Direction which restricts boards to lapse and there was a period when there was no means to control the erection of estate agent boards. The good news is that a new Direction restricting the estate agents' boards without the express permission in some parts of RBKC has been confirmed. Any new boards in the controlled areas can have enforcement action taken for their removal. The Kensington Society and other local amenity societies have pressed hard for the reinstatement of the ban.

The Mayor's new bike scheme has also engendered comments. A few have enjoyed the bikes especially on days of the Underground strikes. However, there have been many complaints about the inappropriate locations and the advertisements on the cycles. We have asked the Council to monitor the location and uses of the docking stations and will press for the removal or reduction of stations which are under utilised.

EARLS COURT AND BEYOND...

We met with the new owners of Earls Court, Capital and Counties (Capco), to discuss their proposals for the redevelopment of the site. They are negotiating with Transport for London and the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham to expand the site. With the addition of 50% ownership of the Empress State building the development will be one of the largest since Canary Wharf. The Empress State will certainly form a major emphasis in the master planning. Our fear is that the tower will set the height for the other proposed buildings. Capco has retained the architectural firm, Farrells, responsible for Vauxhall Cross, the M16 building, as the master-planner.

CONCERNS AND SUPPORT NEEDED...

The Sheppard Trust is a charitable housing trust which provides warden-assisted sheltered housing for 29 elderly

ladies on small fixed incomes on Lansdowne Walk. The Trust has applied for the 'de-conversion' of the six buildings it owns. In other words the Trust wants to remove the ladies and redevelop the six houses as large private residences. We understand that the ladies do not wish to relocate from Kensington to a new facility, which may not even be in London. There are planning policies in place which restrict the loss of residential units. We have opposed the applications and have the support of many of our Councillors, however, we fear the planning department may not find the teeth to oppose the change despite their policies in the Council's new plan.

The Natural History Museum continues with their plans for the redevelopment of the south side along Cromwell Road. The Museum acknowledges that the East Lawn is used 95% of the year and now proposes including the West Lawn. The proposal includes hard surface for both areas with temporary structures...no longer 'lawns' in the Museum's mind but an opportunity for money-generating activities. We have joined with the Knightsbridge Association, the Brompton Association, the Victorian Society and the Earl's Court Society in opposing the loss of this open green space. We understand the need for more ways to generate revenue but this must not be at the cost of loss of green spaces and the damage to one of the nation's finest grade I listed buildings.

Post offices remain a concern and we keep a close watch on the Kensington High Street and the need for a replacement if it were to close for development.

Amanda Frame

PLANNING REPORT

WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED?

Every now and then, particularly when you have put in a lot of effort, you have to stand back and ask what have we achieved? And have we made a difference?

ALWAYS OBJECTING...

Those who know the Society often associate us with objecting to planning applications, indeed from a survey we did last year of key decision makers that was their primary impression. Yes, we do object to about 120 applications a year out of more than 2,750 by September this year

for Kensington, and, of these, nearly 40% were refused. More than 90% of planning applications are decided under delegated powers – only if they are proposed to be granted and there are three or more objections do they go to Committee for decision.

Applications that do go to the Planning Applications Committee or the Major Planning Development Committee are the most controversial – either because they have attracted a lot of objections or are a very large development. Almost all those going to Committee come with a recommendation to grant permission. Since the Society has objected to a large number of these we are seen as objectors and, if we consider it important, we address the Committee to persuade them to refuse the case. There is, therefore, a strong perception among Councillors that we are always objecting! If we did not, many more cases that residents are concerned about might be allowed.

OBSESSED ABOUT...

Over the last few years we have taken up some issues with more determination than some Councillors and planning officers are used to. Some of the issues come as threats that have built up, like subterranean development, sustainability, problems related to major construction projects, or as crises, such as flooding or post office closures. Others have arisen due to misinterpretation of planning policies, such as the loss of small offices and the location of large offices.

Rather than be cast in the role of objectors, we would prefer the Council change its policies. The opportunity to do this comes early interactions in the form of new policy documents – supplement planning documents (SPDs) and the new-style local plan, the Local Development Framework (LDF).

We have used SPDs as an opportunity to strengthen or change the Council's policy. The SPD on Subterranean Development came out of a campaign to get greater control over such developments, and the SPD has helped shape the LDF policy. We objected strongly to the draft SPD on tall buildings and, in part due to that, the final version has just been issued with a new title: Height of Buildings. The Council has agreed with our view that there is no justification for allowing tall buildings in this Borough.

POSITIVE PLANNING – ENGAGE WITH US EARLY

We are, however, still unhappy that the Council is not willing to engage us earlier in the process. We have tried to explain that a discussion in the initial stages of preparing a document can gain another perspective and enrich the process, but the Council still insists on not consulting until

they have a final, polished draft signed off by the Cabinet Member. To secure changes or improvements at that stage cast us in the role of "objector" – we would like to see a change in approach.

A recent example is the new draft SPD on Shopfronts. Shopfronts are a very visible part of our townscape. The quality of our shopfront is often poor, in part due to tradition that if it isn't worse than what is already there, it is good enough. In the past the Council only succeeded in changing or refusing the very worst designs, but they never refused an application just because it was merely not good enough. After a campaign over the last few years we have persuaded the Council that this approach is no longer acceptable and that the overriding aim should be to drive up the quality of shopfronts and thereby improve the attractiveness and competitiveness of our town centres. The new draft SPD lacks this fundamental thrust and, while it may be excellent at preserving and enhancing traditional shopfronts, it has missed the opportunity to deliver the central message – we want the best!

THE NEW PLAN – NEARLY THERE

The new-style plan – the LDF – has nearly completed its process to adoption. Unlike the process for the SPDs described above, the Society has been involved from the start, through several opportunities for consultation and, most recently this July, the Examination in Public, where outstanding objections were debated.

This has been a real opportunity to shape the plan and its policies, to develop a vision and strategy and to get a better set of policies. It has been an opportunity to make a positive contribution. The ideas that we fed into the early part of the process, such as building on the principle of walkable neighbourhoods, have helped shape the vision. The concerns we raised about issues, such as the loss of a whole range of community facilities and small offices to housing, the need to locate large office developments close to public transport, the height of buildings and the need for affordable housing, have encouraged the Council to strengthen or, in some cases, reverse their policy.

LOOKING AHEAD

The new Coalition Government has raised expectations with regard to devolving power, championing "localism" and the Big Society. This should enable us all to have more influence in shaping our future. This is an opportunity and an invitation to get stuck in! We believe this is a time for a change in style and substance. We can do it.

Michael Bach

EVENTS FOR 2011

Leighton House, 12 Holland Park Road, W14 8LZ

Wednesday, 10th November 2010 at 11 am.

This was the home of Fredric, Lord Leighton (1830-96), the classical painter and President of the Royal Academy. The house was built 1864-1879 and is the expression of Leighton's vision of a private palace devoted to art. We shall be shown round the newly refurbished house.

Meet at the above address Tickets: £12 (a few places available)

Royal Opera House, Convent Garden

Backstage visit Wednesday, 12th January 2011 at 2.30pm

The tour will include an introduction to the history of one of the busiest international opera houses in the world. Depending on the House's schedule we may have a chance to see the Royal Ballet in class and the splendid new backstage technology.

Meet at the above address Tickets: £14

Vintners' Hall, Upper Thames Street EC4V 3BG

Thursday, 10th March 2011 at 11am

This is a fine example of a 17th century hall, with its wealth of treasures and stylish additional rooms. The Company's first Charter was granted in 1363 and is one of the 12 Great Livery Companies.

Meet at the above address Tickets: £15

London Wetland Centre SW13 9WT

Tuesday, 3rd May 2011 at 10.45am

Leave London behind and enjoy a guided walking tour, which includes rare and beautiful wildlife and spring displays of flowering wild plants. After, you will be at leisure to explore the 42 hectares site or indoor discovery centre. Refreshments available.

Meet at above address Tickets: £15
-take the Duck bus from Hammersmith tube station or by car

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Amanda Frame	Chairman
Celia Rees-Jenkins OBE	Vice-Chairman, K&C Partnership
Richard Chaplin	Hon Secretary
Anthony Lee	Hon Treasurer & Licensing
Michael Bach	Chairman, Planning, Environment & Transport
Angela Darwin	Membership Secretary
Gill Foley	Events
Dianne Gabitass	AGM coordination
Charles Lutyens	Gambling Policy
Charles Booth-Clibborn	
Philip Roberts	
Holly Smith	

RESERVATIONS

To reserve a place, please send cheques for each event to:

**The Kensington Society, c/o Mrs G Foley, 34 Kelso Place,
LONDON W8 5QP**

Cheques are to be payable to The Kensington Society. Please enclose a self addressed envelope and give your contact telephone number.

Tickets will be sent giving full instructions.

Guests are always welcome at any of these events.

- The views expressed in this Newsletter are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Kensington Society -

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

Date _____ Charity No. 267778

Title _____ Name _____ Surname _____

Address _____

Post code _____

Telephone _____ Mobile _____

Email _____

Annual individual subscription £15 £ _____

Donation £ _____

Total £ _____

Banker's order

Please pay immediately £ _____ to Barclays Kensington sort code 20-47-34 for the credit of The Kensington Society account 70519138 my annual individual subscription and donation as above and continue the same on 1 January until further notice.

Bank name _____ Branch _____

Bank address _____

Bank town _____ Bank post code _____

Name(s) of account holder's _____

Branch sort code - -

Account number _____

Signature _____

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Please tick the appropriate box below:

Please treat:

- ☐ The enclosed gift of £ _____ as a Gift Aid donation; OR
- ☐ All gifts of money that I make today and in the future as Gift Aid donations; OR
- ☐ All gifts of money that I have made in the past 6 years and all future gifts of money that I make from the date of this declaration as Gift Aid donations.

You must pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April one year to 5 April the next) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that the charity will reclaim on your gifts for that tax year.

Please notify the charity if you:

1. Want to cancel this declaration.
2. Change your name or home address.
3. No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

Tax claimed by the charity

The charity will reclaim 28p of tax on every £1 you gave up to 5 April 2008. The charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 you give on or after 6 April 2008. The Government will pay to the charity an additional 3p on every £1 you give between 6 April 2008 and 5 April 2011. This transitional relief for the charity does not affect your personal tax position. If you pay income tax at the higher rate, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return if you want to receive the additional tax relief due to you.

The objectives of The Kensington Society are to preserve and improve the amenities of Kensington for the public benefit by stimulating interest in its history and records, promoting good architecture and planning in its future development and by protecting, preserving and improving its buildings, open spaces and other features of beauty or historic or public interest.

Please return the application form to:

The Membership Secretary, The Kensington Society, 2 Campden Hill Court, Observatory Gardens, LONDON W8 7HX