



# THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2012

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

### What a summer, what a great city

Since the AGM we have enjoyed the wonders of London. We have celebrated with the Queen her Diamond Jubilee. The Olympics were a shock to us all. We were all amazed and thrilled at how London, the nation, the armies of volunteers and the Army enabled the world to see what a great city this is...and we were all so proud. Kensington



*Chelsea Pensioners welcome the flame in the Olympic Torch Relay*

played its part throughout with volleyball in Earl's Court (we shall miss that facility), the torch passed thorough and our roads were the scene of the cycling road race events... and we all turned out to applaud. Our roads were clear and everywhere people were cheering, talking to total strangers and smiling. When I was in the USA recently everyone stopped me to say what a great job GB did and how fantastic London looked.

The Matt cartoon following the Paralympics said... "back to business as usual". Oh no it's not! There is a

## SAVE THE DATE!

The Annual General Meeting of The Kensington Society will be held on Monday, 29th April 2013 in the Great Hall of the Kensington Town Hall at 6.30pm for 7.00pm.

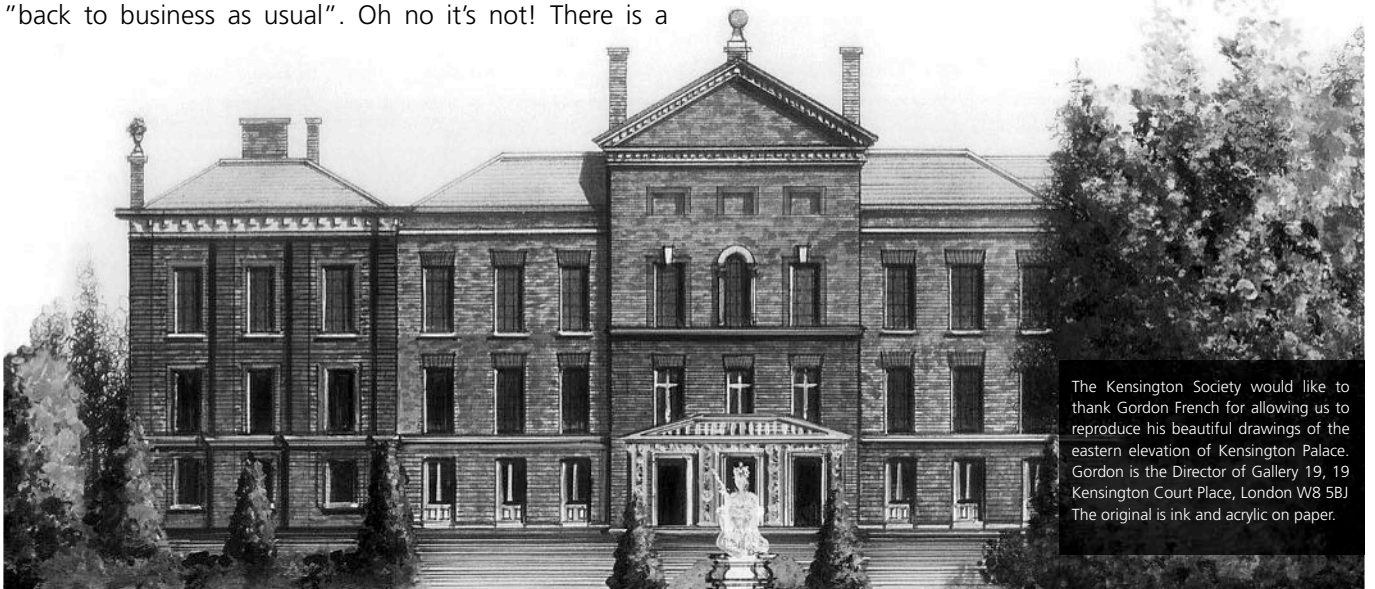
The speaker will be Sir Simon Jenkins, British newspaper columnist, editor, author and resident of Kensington and since November 2008, chairman of the National Trust. The Mayor, Councillor Christopher Buckmaster has invited us to join him afterwards in the Mayor's Parlour for a glass of wine.



change in London. The roads certainly are at a standstill in some places. Road works are back. There appears to be no change in our politicians. However, there is a change in the people and a perceived change in the atmosphere. I hope it will last...I think it will.

## Planning changes in the Borough

So back to business...at the AGM I spoke of the new cooperation with the Council as well as concerns over the changes proposed by the Government. We continue to work with the Council to improve both our working relationship as well as participation in changes in polices which reflect the specific needs of Kensington and Chelsea. I cannot say that it has progressed as quickly as we had hoped and some of the progress appears to be stalling. Michael Bach outlines some of the work within the Council in his planning report. Please, if you have not already,



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.

register on the RBKC website for MyRBKC bulletins. Many of my own alerts are repeated there, but it is the best way for all of you to keep up and participate in the changes in the Borough. It is an action by the Council that should be applauded. The link is: [www.rbkc.gov.uk/MyRBKC/Login.aspx](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/MyRBKC/Login.aspx)

### Government wants to dismantle planning safeguards

The most worrying is the planning changes coming from the Government. There are real fears that in the name of economic growth we, and in particular London, will suffer. We have been concerned for many years about rising house prices coupled with planning permissions increasing for change of use from offices, shops, hotels, post offices and pubs to high-priced housing. I remember Ethne Rudd speaking of how proud she was that all of her children lived in Kensington. I fear my son will never be able to afford to live here. With the average price quoted from some source increasing as much as 16.1% to £2m in March of this year and 58% of the buyers from overseas, no wonder many developers are pushing every opportunity to change a use to residential. The changes proposed by the Government



*The development of the former Commonwealth Institute*

will open the flood gates. Over 70% of RBKC is within conservation areas. The proposed extension of permitted development rights will threaten the remaining areas, which, though not within a conservation area lend much to our character and architectural interest. In addition, we fear that the consultation on Listed Buildings (held in the middle of the summer for only 4 weeks) is an indication of the possible removal of the protection our over 3,800 listed buildings in RBKC.

### New lecture series

At the end of the summer we sent out an email alert with a questionnaire concerning a possibility of a lecture series. The response was very positive. Everyone who responded said it was a good idea. So we are progressing with a programme which hopefully includes:

Ian Blatchford, Director of the Science Museum, has agreed to speak. The talk will be held at the Museum lecture



*Permitted residential development*

hall followed by drinks hopefully in the Director's room..

Todd Longstaffe-Gowan, the landscape gardener of the new garden at Kensington Palace and author of a new book on London garden squares. We plan to have a late summer walk through the Palace Garden and a glass of wine afterwards in the Orangery.

Nick Ross is organising a lecture with Peter Bazalgette, new chairman of the Arts Council. His lecture will be about his great- great- grandfather Sir Joseph Bazalgette who designed and laid down London's sewers. We anticipate the lecture to be held in the Royal College of Arts lecture hall.

There are several more interesting people with whom we are in contact. The plan is to send out a schedule of the lectures by the end of the year. We shall both post and send the announcement via email. Dale Ingram, an expert on listed public houses, will speak at a local pub followed by a walk around the corner to another one...the first Kensington Society pub crawl.

### Email communication

Speaking of email, it has been suggested that we should send to you an update on the alerts we have sent and the results of meetings and consultations. This is an excellent idea and we shall try to provide an email alert update occasionally. Please send your email address to Martin Frame at [Martinframe@bauencorp.com](mailto:Martinframe@bauencorp.com)

### Please Save the Date!

We are very excited that Sir Simon Jenkins has agreed to be our speaker at our 2013 AGM. Since November 2008, Sir Simon has been chairman of the National Trust. He is a resident of Kensington. We are assured of an interesting evening. The AGM will be held on Monday 29th April 2013 in the Great Hall, Kensington Town Hall, Hornton Street, W8 7NX - 6.30pm for 7.00pm. The Mayor, Christopher Buckmaster, has kindly offered the Mayor's parlour for wine afterwards.

A final note to thank you all for your support. Challenges continue but with your support we are making a difference ■

**Amanda Frame**, Chairman

## PLANNING REPORT

### Planning under pressure

The Council's development plan – the Core Strategy now renamed as the Local Plan – was adopted in December 2010. Within a year it was showing signs of "stress" – especially its lack of a policy to resist the loss of pubs, the continuing pressure for basements and the overemphasis on tourism in South Kensington.

The Government, however, has created huge uncertainty, not only through its new National Planning Policy Framework finally issued in late March, but through a succession of half-baked, top-down imposed change initiatives. All these changes are in the name of "economic growth" though more likely to achieve the opposite – offering a free-for-all for developers to turn anything, but especially offices and hotels, into housing, wiping out economic activities in the Borough.

### Death of localism?

The Government's much-heralded new era of localism was supposed to enable local people to help shape the placeliving where they live. Instead the Government is reducing the powers of the Council to manage the forces of change. Recent proposals to remove planning controls – some of which are still to be consulted upon – include:

- changing any commercial building, such as offices, to housing;
  - changing any hotel to housing;
  - building conservatories up to 6 metres (20 feet) into the garden outside conservation areas; and
  - allowing broadband companies to install very large cabinets (1.5m/5 foot high by 1.6m/5 foot 8 long) on our pavements
- all without the need for planning permission.

The Society has been pressing for the means to give the Council more powers to retain pubs and post offices. We support the Council's policies to retain office uses, especially small offices, and hotels – both very important to our local economy. Yet the Government's proposals would not only change the character and appearance of this Borough, with the housing market juggernaut sweeping everything else out, it would also damage our local economy.

### Listed building protection

During the summer between 26 July and 23 August, the Government consulted on reducing the scrutiny of listed building applications. Apart from timing, when we were all watching the Olympic Games, it gave only 4 weeks to respond. With 3,800 listed buildings and nearly three-quarters of the Borough covered by conservation areas, this was important for this Borough. We responded in time and we are pleased to say that the Council's response was very robust.

There is a clear tension between the top-down, one-size-fits-all, Government-imposed policies from the Treasury and the promise of devolving power to local people to shape their own area. We have responded to all the Government consultations telling them that they are ill-conceived and totally unsuited to London, let alone Kensington, but we are concerned that no one within Government seems to be listening. We do wonder who they do listen to.

The Society is still very anxious about the really major developments on our doorstep – largely in Hammersmith and Fulham – at White City, Westfield, Warwick Road and Earl's Court/West Kensington. Hammersmith and Fulham, supported by the Mayor of London, are proposing massive developments at very high densities and with unnecessarily tall buildings. (see Henry Peterson's report) All of these developments are at considerably higher densities than the Mayor's London Plan would allow.

### Changing the Local Plan

We do strongly support the Council's proposed changes to the Local Plan. The 2010 plan failed to provide protection for pubs to resist their being turned into housing, and the lack of a policy has brought a flood of applications. With all-party support the Council decided to review their policy last December and has proceeded quickly to change the policy, which is now on the final round of consultation. We applaud the Council's determination to draw the line and this is already reaping results in winning a planning appeal in Chelsea.

The basement issue remains highly controversial and the Council is now reviewing ways to improve the policy



*Kensington Palace Gardens in need of TLC!*

in the Local Plan and to tighten up the management of such projects. This is being supported by a survey of neighbours affected by basement projects. The Society strongly supports this review, however considers that many of the management issues need clearer, tougher guidelines that secure a step change in construction practices – a “contract”, rather than rely on several Council departments to tackle the problems.

### **Involving people in planning**

One area where we found ourselves going backwards, however, was the consultation on how the Council should involve people in planning. The first draft focused on cost savings from reducing the notification of local residents and near neighbours and to even refusing to notify residents’ associations and amenity societies about major applications in their area. There also seemed to be some reluctance to engage with the public early when new policies are being developed. We are pleased to say that, following strong feedback from residents, the Council has recognised the benefits of “asking the audience” early in the process and that this approach – to capture people’s views early rather than wait for objections – seems to have been adopted this in their most recent consultations.

### **City Living Local Life**

A year ago the Council announced an initiative whereby each ward could receive £20,000 a year for up to three years to spend on locally-identified projects. This exercise was to be part of devolving decisions to local communities led by a local councillor. So far several wards have run surveys to establish local priorities however the key test will come when decisions are made to spend their money.

### **Avondale - a new conservation area**

We are very pleased that the Council has decided to propose a new conservation area in Avondale – something that local Councillors and the Society have been pressing for several years. Following a walkabout in late August the consultation was announced in early September. Please lend your support by 24 October.

<http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/planningandconservation/planningpolicy/avondaleconservationarea.aspx>

### **Conservation Area Proposals Statements (CAPS)**

Since the early 1970s the Council has produced a CAPS for each conservation area, however very few have been refreshed and the vast majority are over 25-30 years old. The idea was to elaborate the policies in the Borough’s development plan to show how they should operate in a particular conservation area. Much has changed since the 1970s and many amenity societies felt that their CAPS needed revision.

The Norland Society has revised their document and is seeking to turn it into a neighbourhood plan (see below). The Council has now decided to review its conservation policies in the Local Plan, ensuring that it picks up the key issues from CAPS and then asking local groups to help

update a slimmed down CAPS. We have been told this process will start with a public workshop in October.

### **Neighbourhood planning**

Neighbourhood forums and plans are under way. The forum for Norland has been approved and the plan is well advanced and out to consultation. The proposed St Quintin and Woodland Forum is awaiting a decision on designation from the Council, who appear satisfied, and LBHF who are still prevaricating. The proposed area of the neighbourhood plan straddles the border between the two boroughs ■

Michael Bach, Chairman: Planning Committee

## **WHITE CITY**

### **The White City Opportunity Area Planning**

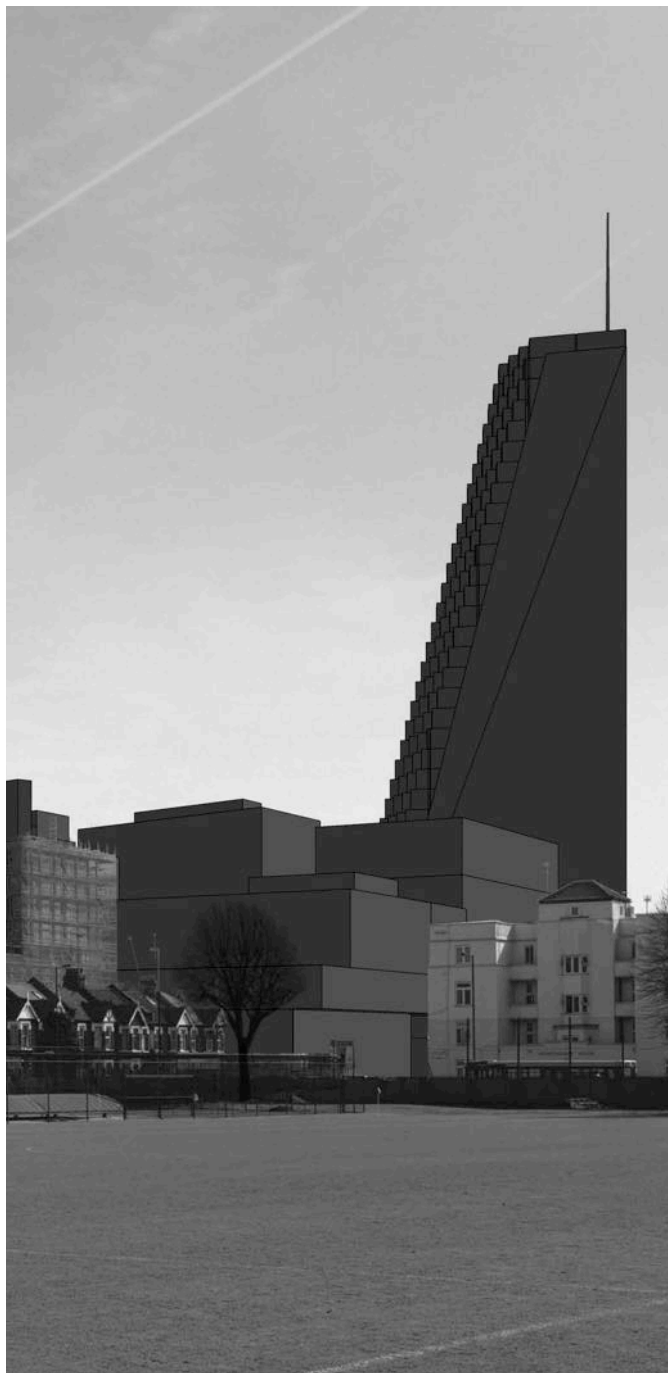
#### **Framework – So Much For ‘Strategic’ Planning....**

The ambitions of Hammersmith and Fulham Council for the White City area will have a major impact on those living along the western border of North Kensington. No one could deny that this series of underused brownfield sites, sandwiched between Wood Lane and the motorway, need development. However the way in which LBHF Council has gone about the planning process has led to widespread opposition from local amenity societies and residents groups, as well as formal objections from the Royal Borough.

A masterplan for the White City Opportunity Area was put together by the Dutch firm OMA in 2005/6, with funds from major commercial land-holders in the area. LBHF Council jointly with the GLA then published in early 2011 a draft Supplementary Planning Document, the White City Opportunity Area Planning Framework. This was consulted on and prompted many objections from the public, particularly the idea of a cluster of very tall towers (30 storeys plus) alongside the Westway. These were portrayed in the draft plan as a ‘Gateway to London’, and as necessary landmark buildings to greet motorists approaching the city.

Subsequently, individual landowners and developers have come forward with planning applications for all but one of the major sites in the Opportunity Area. In chronological order, these have been:

- Imperial West, the 7.5 acre development on land purchased from the BBC. While this scheme has been promoted by Imperial College as a ‘second campus’, much of the content is commercial rather than academic. It includes a 35-storey residential tower, christened by locals as ‘Imperial Folly’ and by the Evening Standard as the ‘Poor Man’s Shard’. After an extended battle with residents in the neighbouring Oxford Gardens/St Quintins Conservation area in RBKC, the application was approved in July 2012 and subsequently been approved by Boris Johnson, Mayor of London.
- Westfield 2, with its 55,000 sqm (592,000 sqft) of additional retail floorspace and tall buildings alongside the motorway, confronting the Norland area.



*CGI of the Imperial West development, viewed from Latimer fields*

- The Helical Bar/Aviva development, proposed for the 10 acre former Dairy Crest site off Wood Lane, opposite the BBC. Outline approval is currently being sought to a mainly residential development of 1,150 housing units, with a further tower of 32 storeys just south of the Westway.

The one remaining undeveloped site is owned by Marks & Spencer. The planners at the LBHF Town Hall have much of this site earmarked in their masterplan for a linear park. Whether M&S will wish to forgo the value of intensive commercial development on the site, with additional very tall buildings, remains to be seen.

While all these development proposals have been going through the system (pushed along by a council and London

Mayor keen to promote a 'Borough of Opportunity') the supposed strategic planning framework for the area has languished. Originally due for publication in revised form in late 2011, the revised White City OAPF was deferred first to early 2012, then July, then September and is now promised 'in the autumn' of this year. By then, the developments on all the key sites will already have been decided. Statutory consultation on the new document will be a meaningless exercise and the future of this key slice of inner West London will be sealed for decades.

The dangers of this piecemeal approach to the planning process, with a strategic plan retro-fitted to accommodate the aspirations of commercial developers, are self-evident. All the local amenity bodies have been pointing out that the cumulative impact of this series of developments is not being adequately addressed.

Each developer argues that the traffic impact of their own proposals will be 'marginal'. Each will send extra traffic onto Wood Lane, already at a standstill in peak hours. Each developer claims to be addressing surface water issues, but will they do enough? Thames Water is all too aware that the major Counters Creek flood prevention scheme may never secure Government funding.

Meanwhile the Hammersmith and Fulham planning juggernaut rolls on. Public opinion has had one success, in stopping the original proposals for the King Street riverside development (after intervention by Boris Johnson). Decisions of the courts seem to be the only other thing the Council will listen to. The shop-keepers in Goldhawk Road succeeded in having the Shepherds Bush Supplementary Planning Document struck down by the High Court. The campaigners on the West Kensington and Gibbs Green Estates are pursuing the same tactic, on the massive Earl's Court development.

The 2011 draft White City Planning Framework was published as a SPD. The courts have since decided that SPDs are not the appropriate or lawful planning process in 'areas of significant change'. It remains to be seen whether the White City document will resurface as a SPD, or as an Area Action Plan (with a more rigorous adoption process). In July, LBHF Council was forced to concede that the 2011 draft carries 'very limited material weight' in planning decisions. Yet this has not stopped the flow of planning approvals, based on this same masterplan.

Vigorous local opposition to commercial over-development, excessive densities, and very tall buildings could still carry the day in relation to the current Helical Bar/Aviva proposals.

The contest between commercial developers and local amenity groups remains a very uneven one, especially with a council seemingly willing to set aside local and London Plan policies in their rush to see major developments built. Kensington residents need to make their voice heard if they do not want to see the Wood Lane area become another Paddington Basin ■

**Henry Peterson**, Chair St Helens Residents Association and Kensington Society trustee

## FLOODING

*The following is an article written by Tony Shearer at our request concerning surface/sewer flooding and the actions taken or not taken to protect RBKC from future floods. What little action we have seen is thanks largely to Tony's constant pressure:*

Thames Water has installed FLIPs ("Flooding Local Improvement Projects") in about 700 properties in Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham (where about 10,000 properties are at risk of flooding). These are welcome temporary solutions to the flooding problem though they do not address the real issue; which is that the main sewer in the area (Counters Creek) is about 150 years old, is far too small for the current crowded area, and needs to be redeveloped. Thames Water is submitting a formal proposal to Ofwat; when Ofwat receive it they have three months to deal with it.

After some difficult times following the July 2007 flood, Thames Water and the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea are now working well to resolve the flooding issue. However, both are restricted by regulations, laws and practices that mean that the current proposal will provide scant comfort to residents. Thames Water and RBKC acknowledge this, and say they are "doing the best that they can".

### Who is responsible?

Those of us, who, since the floods of 20th July 2007, have put a great deal of time into the matter of our flood risk, have been continually bounced from one organisation and politician to another. They all say they do not have the mandate to act.

### Well, who is responsible?

Who is the person who can say "Yes, you should direct your question to me. If your property floods in the future because we have got the criteria wrong for the Counter Creek re-development, then it is to me you should look."

Who is the decision-taker that can not only discuss these issues but can actually act to solve the problems?

### The 1 in 30 year standard

My first concern is that Thames Water's proposal to Ofwat is for the redevelopment of a sewer that will not flood properties as a result of a storm that is of a lower intensity than "1 in 30 years". 1 in 30 years has become accepted as the criterion for such developments, but it is not a "standard". For coastal flooding the criterion is 1 in 100 years. The difference is floods from sewers, in theory, affect individual houses, whereas coastal floods affect whole areas. This cannot be right in areas such as Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham where the properties are close together, and a flood from a sewer in any one part will inevitably flood many properties.

Protection against a storm of a 1 in 30 year frequency does not seem to provide much comfort as:

1. My property was flooded on 20th July 2007 by a storm classified as a 1 in 120 years storm; as it was also flooded in 2005 by a storm that was also classified as a 1 in 120 years storm. There were also storms that caused flooding in 1981 and 2004.
2. I have grave suspicions that the assessments of storm intensity and meteorological projections are inaccurate. So I doubt that we can rely on them.
3. Why is the criterion 1 in 30 years? What would the cost be of a 1 in 50 year solution, or a 1 in 100 year solution?
4. If approved it will take 11 years from the 20th July 2007 flood to complete this redevelopment.

It might be argued that the cost of the proposed scheme is all that residents will pay; but there will also be massive disruption during the construction process over the next 4 years or so. A more ambitious solution is needed to justify this disruption.

When Joseph Bazalgette built the London sewers in the 1860s he apparently calculated the diameter of pipe needed based on generous allowances of the amount of sewage production and then doubled that on the basis that they were only going to build the sewers once and there was always the unforeseen. Why is it that 150 years later our present criteria have been set with so little foresight?

If this Government wants to get the economy moving through public sector type programmes, isn't this exactly the sort of programme that they should be encouraging?

### Climate change

My second concern is that even the 1 in 30 year standard will not stand the test of time. I have been told that Thames Water has made their assessment including the impact of the Climate Change Review in 2009. But what does this mean?

We know that at the beginning of this summer the Meteorological Office was forecasting drought for the summer, and instead we had one of the wettest on record. I understand that the Meteorological Office use the same techniques and methodology for their climate change projections to the end of the century. How reliable are these? What are the sensitivities? If their assessments are wrong, what will be the impact?

### Urban creep

The 1 in 30 years standard will not stand the test of time because as well as the conjectures of the impact of climate change, there are the certainties of "urban creep". Kensington & Chelsea is today nothing like it was in 1860.

Thames Water has mapped the changes to the Borough. Over the 40 years between 1970 and 2010 over 17% of the permeable land was lost. So if it was 50/50 between impermeable and permeable land in 2007 (it wasn't, that is just to make the maths easy) then by 2010 the permeable land would have been 41.5% and the impermeable land would have been 58.5%.

Thames Water has calculated that if that same rate of loss continues for the next 40 years, then a Counters Creek sewer that could withstand a 1 in 30 year storm in 2010 would have the effect of only being able to withstand a 1

in 25 year storm in 2050. Modelling could demonstrate whether loss of permeable land is accelerating or reducing. If it is accelerating then the 1 in 25 years point will be reached sooner than 2050.

Thames Water's proposal for a 1 in 30 year solution effectively assumes that the loss of permeable land (that has been a fact over the last 40 years) ceased in 2010. It is true that Thames Water and RBK now understand the interaction between the loss of permeable land and the increased risk of flooding, but as it stands now there are no legal means for RBKC to reverse or even prevent the historical trend, even though they are willing. Thames Water and RBKC are discussing the impact of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems ("SUDS") and the extent to which they are able through planning and other regulations to control the loss of permeable land. But there is no evidence yet that Councils will be able to reduce or eliminate urban creep, and therefore there are many reasons to believe that the assumptions that Thames Water have used are not appropriate or realistic at the moment. Indeed both RBKC and Ofwat acknowledge that, in practice, councils have little ability to control urban creep other than through persuasion.

Ofwat has told me that "Urban creep is a planning matter" and that it is therefore "a matter for Government". Though Ofwat have had discussions with the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs ("DEFRA") about this on a number of occasions, the opportunity to do something about it was lost when the relevant provisions were removed from the Floods and Water Management Act just before the 2010 election.

Whilst the Counters Creek sewer produces flooding in Hammersmith & Fulham as well as in RBKC, other councils such as Camden and Brent show no sign of reducing the flow of water and sewage that drain from their area into the Counters Creek sewer, because their area is not flooded from that sewer. Some body needs to make them co-operate.

All the evidence to me is that Thames Water has been required to propose a solution based on a false standard of 1 in 30 years, on unreliable guesses of the impact of climate change, and on false assumptions that urban creep will be reversed.

It seems to me that:

- Ofwat's position is that they believe that customers will only bear a certain amount of increases in their water charges; since the Ofwat formula that allows water charges to rise includes an element of "allowable" capital expenditure. They will only "allow" Thames Water to spend a certain amount on re-developing the Counters Creek sewer;
- Thames Water will spend on Counters Creek only what Ofwat deems is allowable, as this will increase their profits to the benefit of their shareholders. They will not spend any more as that would come out of their profits and be a loss to their shareholders. They point out that it is the Councils' responsibility to prevent flooding;
- RBKC say that though they are responsible for the

prevention of flooding (as are Hammersmith & Fulham) DEFRA has not given them the powers they need;

- Councils such as Camden and Brent that do not flood from Counters Creek do not consider that flooding in Kensington, Chelsea, Hammersmith or Fulham is a priority for them; and
- DEFRA say that the councils are responsible for preventing flooding and it is up to them to resolve the issues.

## Conclusion

I believe that one person needs to be identified as the person who is responsible for flooding in RBKC with the powers to control the impact of urban creep and allow for the effect of climate change, to ensure that they cannot increase the risk of flooding. In the absence of anyone else it would seem that this person should be the Secretary of State for DEFRA (currently Owen Paterson) as he is responsible for the Environment Agency, Ofwat and the Consumer Council for Water.

Who is the person responsible? Will Ofwat or some other Government Agency identify this person?

If that is not done, then the proposal from Thames Water needs to use both a criterion of 1 in 100 years, and assumptions that urban creep will continue at a rate at least as fast as recent historical trends ■

*On 24th September I discussed the above issues with Sir Merrick Cockell, Leader of RBK&C, and I am due to see Sir Malcolm Rifkind, our MP, on 6th November. I suspect it will take energy and commitment from both of them for us to see any satisfactory progress. If residents are concerned about the above issues, then they need to make their views very clear to both Sir Merrick and Sir Malcolm.*

Tony Shearer, 3rd October 2012

## MEMBERSHIP

### Membership of the Kensington Society

The annual individual subscription of £15 is due on 1 January 2013. Those of you paying by cheque are asked to send your subscription to:

**The Kensington Society, 23 St James's Gardens,  
LONDON, W11 4RE.**

*It would substantially reduce administration if you paid by Bank Standing Order.*

If you are not receiving emails from us and you would like to be informed of forthcoming events, Kensington Society alerts and the autumn newsletter, please email me at [martinframe@bauencorp.com](mailto:martinframe@bauencorp.com) with your email address. The Annual Report will continue to be sent by post.

If you are a life member, can you please confirm your details, particularly your email address?

Thank you, **Martin Frame** Membership Secretary

## SHAPING A HEALTHIER FUTURE

Residents are being consulted about which local A&E unit should close, Charing Cross or Westminster and Chelsea. Canvassing voters on the issue might seem like asking turkeys to vote for Christmas since on the face of it either result would mean people driving further to be seen at a more crowded and overworked clinic. Actually rationalisation could make sense, and we should pause to reflect before we all reflexively campaign against closures. There are good clinical grounds for concentrating acute care on centres of excellence. It could result in better and faster treatment. It might be worth longer journeys to the emergency centre if when we get there the patient pathway is kinder and more efficient and if the medical outcomes are better. In any case we all have a responsibility to help the NHS use its limited resources most cost effectively.

But the devil is in the detail. Merging any two huge organisations is always fraught with problems, often unforeseen, and it is a giant mission to amalgamate the

most demanding of hospital units, with all their complex equipment and backup facilities including radiology and path labs. There is also, inevitably, staff resistance and a clash of different procedures and customs. How will the chosen hospital cope? What will it stop doing in order to make room for all this extra work? Where will it find the space and resources for double the number of people who attend, who need x-rays or other tests, and for those who need to be admitted? What facilities will we lose and where will they go? How can we be guaranteed that waiting times will be reduced, that triage will be as good or better, that pain relief will be properly prioritised, that A&E staff will be sensitive to our hopes and expectations and not regard most of us as a nuisance who shouldn't be there and, above all, that human decency from nurses, doctors, radiologists, and all the other staff won't get crushed by the colossal machine?

We have been offered a meeting with the medical director to discuss some of these issues. Watch this space ■

Nick Ross, President



# THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

Charity No. 267778

Please join or renew your subscription. 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.

Annual individual subscription due 1 January £ 15  
Donation £ \_\_\_\_\_  
Total £ \_\_\_\_\_

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Please return this membership form with your standing order instruction above or your cheque to: **The Kensington Society, 23 St James's Gardens, LONDON W11 4RE**  
If you have any queries please email: [martinfo@bauencorp.com](mailto:martinfo@bauencorp.com). Thank you.

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money to The Kensington Society made today or in the past four years or in the future

*giftaid it*

I confirm that I have paid or shall pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the Charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 28p of tax on every £1 that I gave up to 5 April 2008 and will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008. You can cancel your Gift Aid declaration at any time. Please let us know if you change your name or address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HMRC to adjust your tax code.

X Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Bank Standing Order Instructions

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Bank address \_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Bank sort code \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_  
Account number \_\_\_\_\_  
Account name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Please pay Barclays Bank Notting Hill Gate sort code **20-47-34** for the credit of **The Kensington Society** Account **70519138**:

Reference (Bank use) \_\_\_\_\_

the amount of **first payment** £ \_\_\_\_\_

**commencing date of first payment** \_\_\_\_\_

and **annual payment** of £ \_\_\_\_\_ on **1 January annually** until

further notice. This cancels any other previous standing order to the Kensington Society.

X Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_