

THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

www.kensingtonsociety.org.uk

AUTUMN 2008



Kensington Palace from the Round Pond (Circa 1851)

Chairman's Report

We have had a very active six months since the successful AGM in April. However, before reporting on the general activities I must report a few changes.

Many of you will know of the sad and sudden death of Ethne Rudd. Robin Price gives his heartfelt feelings further in this report. The other is to note a change within the Executive Committee.

Changes to the Committee

In May the Executive Committee elected me as the Chairman of the Society. Robin Price was proposed and duly elected as Vice-Chairman. The Committee warmly thanked Robin for his work in steering the Society into the new century and for his seven years of dedication and hard work as Chairman. He will be a very hard act to follow. It is encouraging that he will be by my side as Vice-President and an active and sensible participant on the Planning Committee.

The Executive Committee and Robin, in particular, gratefully thank Celia Rees-Jenkins for her work as Vice-Chairman. Celia stays on the committee and will continue with her excellent work on the Kensington Partnership.

Michael Bach is the new Planning

Chairman. His expertise continues to prove invaluable in these trying times.

I will report fully within the AGM Report on the activities for the year, nevertheless, there are a few important issues to cover you may find important to know now.

Boris Johnson – NEW MAYOR

Boris Johnson's manifesto dealt with many issues which are outside this Society's remit but there are a few issues to watch with interest. One of the first things the Mayor stopped was the extension of the £25 Congestion Charge levy for high-emission vehicles; he has not removed the Congestion Charge fully. In September he opened a five-week consultation concerning the western extension. This Society sent email alerts to all members asking for their participation. The Executive Committee was divided on their opinion and decided to abstain from voting.

The Mayor's manifesto also promised to halt the construction of tall buildings, yet recently his actions call into question this promise. In August, the Mayor did not support the 2,700 objectors who opposed the 31-storey tower within the redevelopment of Queens Market in the London

Borough of Newham. This may be a worrying signal to those opposed to a tall building on the West Cromwell Road site beside Tesco.

The Mayor indicated that he was focusing more on affordable housing, rather than requiring 50% affordable housing on all sites above 10 units. This society will watch with interest how this will affect the sites along Warwick Road.

An area affecting Kensington has been the Government's encouragement of small-scale residential development in domestic gardens. The Mayor proposes to make it harder to achieve planning permission for the loss of green spaces.

The Mayor, along with this Society and many of its members, strongly oppose the third runway at Heathrow. We can only hope that the Government will listen to the growing opposition from all quarters to this disastrous scheme.

The Mayor announced that the forgotten tributaries of the Thames, buried centuries ago under London's concrete, should be reopened. He proposed the use of the old tributaries as a way to revitalise the city with more water features and open spaces. This will be of interest to all those who live along Counter's Creek.

Amanda Frame, Chairman

AGM

A date to put in your diary

The Annual General Meeting of The Kensington Society will be held on Tuesday, 28th April 2009 at 6.30 for 7.00, at the Maria Assumpta Centre, 23 Kensington Square, London W8 5HN.

We are pleased to announce that The Rt. Hon. Lord Hurd of Westwell, CH, CBE, PC will be our speaker.

An agenda will be available at the meeting and it will also be posted on our website in advance of the meeting.

Planning Report

New Plan for the Borough

The Council is writing a new plan for the Borough. It will be a very different plan to the current one, which is essentially a list of policies for assessing individual applications. Useful though these are – and they will mostly remain – the big difference is that the new document asks what sort of place do we want the Borough to be and how do we want to harness or control the pressures we face.

The Society welcomes this – it is planning for a change, with agreement about where we want to go. Case-by-case regulation is not planning ahead and it has not served us well. It cannot deal with the pressures and scale of change we are likely to face. The pressures of the last 10 years illustrate this – we have been driven by applications rather than being able to manage our own future.

The new Local Development Framework seeks consensus about where we want to go and how we manage change. The current consultation on the vision and strategy is just the start.

- What kind of place do we want to live in? Do we want a wide range of local facilities rather than nothing but housing?
- How do we manage the future of our shopping centres to withstand competition from White City rather than just drift?
- Do we agree that there should be widespread redevelopment in North Kensington. The key questions are: do we want it and, if so, is it deliverable?
- Do we want more tall buildings?
- If the Earl's Court Exhibition Centres should be redeveloped, what should take their place?

The Council's policy will be elaborated in new Supplementary Planning Documents, such as tall buildings and subterranean development, on which there will be separate consultation.

The Society will be playing an active role in trying to shape this vision and strategy and to get the details right.

Supplementary Planning Document on Subterranean Development

As most of you know, there have been an unprecedented number of planning applications for subterranean development over the last few years. These 'developments' range from minor to large basement extensions up to 18 metres in depth to accommodate swimming pools, car parks, cinemas and gymnasia. The Kensington Society, Chelsea Society, and many local amenity societies asked for clear guidelines for these 'developments'.

The Subterranean Development (ARUP) Phase1 Scoping Study Report was issued by the Planning Department on 30th June 2008. We responded fully and thoroughly to what we considered a poorly constructed report. The Subterranean Development Scoping Study Schedule was issued in August. We again responded re-stating our disappointment with the review. The Council will issue draft Supplementary Planning Guideline soon. We are not encouraged by the Council's response to our comments and are currently reviewing how to tackle the issue.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

In February, the Council issued the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). This informed us of the Borough's policies which will be part of the Preferred Options stage of the Core Strategy, to which we responded. While flooding from the Thames was properly addressed, there was scant mention and no action noted with regards to surface water flooding. We have expressed our concerns to both the Council and HMG. There is no central coordinating body empowered to produce a strategy. If surface water problems are not addressed properly and soon it is highly probable that there will be a repeat of the July 2007 event.

Warwick Road Sites and Tesco Tower

The Council produced a masterplan for four sites along Warwick Road north of Cromwell Road to ensure that together they produce a higher quality development with open space and social facilities. The Society was, and still is, concerned that the planning brief encouraged very high densities and taller buildings, which will result in tall bland blocks which fill the "permitted" envelopes. The Tesco site, which involved a 300-foot tower above the carpark, was refused and the Council has proposed a new brief. The Society is concerned that the Council is still encouraging a very high density development with very tall buildings.

Offices

Offices, especially for small businesses, are essential to the economy of the Borough and need to be spread throughout the Borough, whereas large-scale office developments need to be very close to tube stations. The Society is concerned about the loss of small offices to housing and the development of large office developments in areas with poor public transport. The new plan needs to address this urgently.

Social and Community Uses

With all the pressure from housing, there is real concern that sites no longer needed for a particular social or community use should be available for other much-needed community uses rather than released for yet more housing. The Society is, therefore, concerned about the proposals for Princess Louise Hospital site.

Central Library Refurbishment

We, along with several other amenity organisations and our members, have expressed concerns over the refurbishment of the Central Library. As the schedule currently stands the Central Library on Horton Street will close July 2009 and reopen in November 2010. We have met with the Head of Library Service and the librarian for the Local Studies and Library Service. The Local Studies section will be in a dedicated space located on the lower level immediately below the new south entrance. We have been reassured that after the refurbishment all existing local studies material will be reinstated. Access to key materials will be available during the refurbishment at the Chelsea Library. If you are aware of any information that may be required within the next two years please contact the Local Studies Librarian.

Estate Agent Boards

The Society has supported RBKC's decision to write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government seeking an Article 7 Direction to restrict estate agents' boards. The restriction will be for all conservation areas north of Holland Park Avenue/Notting Hill Gate and in all areas south of Holland Park Avenue/Notting Hill Gate for the next ten years. We await the Secretary of State's decision.

Michael Bach

*Chairman
Kensington Society
Planning Committee*

The Commonwealth Institute site in Kensington High Street awaiting a new use.



The Commonwealth Institute (now The Parabola)

Chelsfield Partners and Ilchester Estate have appointed international architects OMA – the Office of Metropolitan Architects – to design residential replacements for the 1970's administration buildings secondary to The Parabola. We would all welcome distinguished modern replacements competent in design and height with their unusual context.

We note that a trawl for the future occupants of The Parabola has been initiated with the issue of a well-designed and attractive descriptive brochure by Chelsfield and that interest is being displayed by at least one body

whom we would all welcome on this sensitive site.

We share the reservations of the Friends of Holland Park over the preference for permeability between Holland Park and The Parabola as stated in the LDF Planning Brief. Permeability of sight-lines, yes. But permeability to access, no. Sensitivity for the Park at times of closure must be paramount and we doubt the practicality of access at other times from The Parabola giving into the highly active sports ground of the South Lawn. Some limited access may be possible, dependent on good design and agreement with all the stakeholders.

We continue to watch this space.

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR 2008 and 2009

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.

Tuesday, 4th November 08 Draper's Hall, Throgmorton Ave, EC2N 2DQ

This Livery Company has an unbroken history of over 600 years of existence. We shall see a fine Collection of works of art and visit the silver vaults during our tour of the building.

Meet at the above address at 10.50am for 11am tour. £10 per person

Tuesday, 20th January 2009 Houses of Parliament, SW1

Join our Society's Vice President, General, the Lord Ramsbotham, for a tour of the key areas including The Chambers of the Lords and Commons, The Queen's Robing Room and Westminster Hall.

Meet at the Peer's Entrance at 10.30am £15 per person

Tuesday, 17th March 2009 Linley, 60 Pimlico Road, SW1

Lord Linley is a designer and manufacturer of bespoke furniture with dramatic use of inlaid woods. Also, upholstery and interior design products known for their neoclassical appearance. We shall visit the studio and shop followed by tea.

Meet at above address at 3pm £15 per person

Wednesday, 13th May, 2009 Eton College and Savill Garden, Windsor

Eton was founded by Henry VI in 1440. There will be a tour of the historic buildings including School Yard, Lower & Upper Schools, College Hall, Cloisters, and Museum of Eton Life.

Followed by a visit to the Savill Garden for lunch at the Garden Café (at own expense), and a guided tour of the fine woodland & ornamental garden. A riot of colour from Azaleas, Rhododendrons, Camellias & Magnolias, plus formal gardens of long herbaceous borders.

Depart by coach 9.45am Kensington Square W8 £37 per person

Monday 15th December 2008 at 7pm The Carmelite Church The Mayor's Charity Christmas Carols Kensington Church Street W8

followed by wine and mince pies in the Mayor's Parlour.

Tickets £20, all welcome - for tickets call 020 7361 2431 or mayor@rbkc.gov.uk
Celebrity readers include - Betty Boothroyd, Joanna David, Sebastian Faulks, Jeremy Paxman, Ruth Rendell, Diana Rigg, Colin Salmon & Carol Thatcher
All proceeds to the Multiple Sclerosis Trust.

For details of the Mayor's fundraising events in 2008/09 for the Multiple Sclerosis Trust go to www.mstrust.org.uk/rbkc mayor

Vicarage Gate Care Home saga

The seven-year saga of court action, counter action, and hearings before H.M. Planning Inspectors continues.

Members may recall that the High Court Judge, while curiously failing to comment on change of use (the nub of the matter), ordered a new hearing before H.M. Planning Inspector. That was due to start on 9 September 2008 but, due to the illness of the inspector, it is now delayed until 25 November.

The Royal Borough will again be represented by Senior Counsel, with representations from Cllr. Christopher Buckmaster for the Vicarage Gate Action Group, residents of his Ward, and indeed all of us, from the Council, and from others, including the Kensington Society. We are all firm in our view that change of use should not be granted, and we believe that we have a solid basis for the hope that justice will finally be done. We remain extremely grateful to the Council for taking up the case, by no means inexpensively, on behalf of residents, and Cllr. Buckmaster for representing our case throughout in a masterly, persuasive, and comprehensive manner.

Robin Price

Ethne Rudd

Members will already have heard with great sadness and with a personal sense of loss of Ethne Rudd's death in early July, at the age of 79.

As the ever-cheerful, ebullient, and wonderfully active Honorary Secretary of the Kensington Society 1995 - 2007, she was very much its public face, a role which she hugely enjoyed.

Ethne described herself as a 'doer', and she gave herself unselfishly and unstintingly to her many tasks, of which the Kensington Society was only one. She was great to work with, warm, cheerful, fun, practical, with a splendid sense of the ridiculous, and in her own inimitable, generous, and sometimes formidable way, a tremendous successor to the redoubtable Gay Christiansen.

We have already received donations in her memory, and in due course the Executive Committee will decide where best to direct them.

This is necessarily a brief and personal notice. A full appreciation will appear in the Kensington Society's Annual Report for 2008. Meanwhile we register and share our loss with the Society, with Kensington at large, and of course with her family.

Robin Price

TO JOIN

Please return this membership application form, with your Banker's Order or cheque, to:

The Membership Secretary, The Kensington Society,
c/o 2 Campden Hill Court, Observatory Gardens, London W8 7HX

Annual individual subscription (minimum £15.00)	£
Donation	£
Total	£

Name & Title (Mr, Mrs, Ms, Title)

Address

Postcode:

Telephone:

Mobile:

My E-mail address is:

I agree to be contacted by E-mail Yes / No (*Circle choice*)

Banker's Order

Please immediately pay Barclays Bank plc, Kensington (20-47-34) to the credit of The Kensington Society (70519138) my individual subscription, as above, and continue the same on 1st January annually until further notice.

Bank Name:

Bank Address:

Bank Postcode:

Account holder(s) Name(s):

Account Number: Sortcode - -

Signature:

Date:

Gift Aid

I am a UK tax payer and I would like the Kensington Society to reclaim the tax on any qualifying subscriptions and/or donations made by me since 6th April 2000 or for six years, until further notice. I confirm that I have paid an amount of UK income or capital gains tax equal to any tax re-claimed.

Signature:

Date:

Executive Committee

Amanda Frame	<i>Chairman</i>
Robin Price	<i>Vice-Chairman</i>
Anthony Lee	<i>Hon Treasurer & Licensing</i>
Loveday Waymouth	<i>Hon Secretary</i>
Michael Bach	<i>Chairman, Planning, Environment & Traffic</i>
Angela Darwin	<i>Membership Secretary</i>
Gill Foley	<i>Events</i>
Charles Lutyens	<i>Gambling Policy</i>
Celia Rees-Jenkins OBE	<i>K&C Partnership</i>
George Wightman	
Dianne Gabbitass	
Emma Juhasz	<i>Editor, Annual Report</i>

Membership Subscriptions Increase

The Executive Committee voted in July 2008 to increase the annual membership subscription to £15.00, effective immediately, with all annual renewals to be increased as from 1st January 2009.

Within this newsletter is a separate notice to enable you to make the change in good time, if you pay by Banker's Order, because you will need to ask your Bank to amend the amount currently paid by your existing Standing Order from £10 to £15.

If you now pay by cheque and would prefer to pay by Banker's Order, the Society's Membership Application Form (which should be returned to the Membership Secretary when completed) provides for this and is enclosed for your convenience.

If you wish to pay your subscription of £15 by cheque, please send the cheque to the Membership Secretary with the enclosed form, having filled in your name and address.

If you have not already signed the Gift Aid form, we would greatly appreciate it if you would take this opportunity to do so.

Angela Darwin,
Membership Secretary

Please help us to keep in touch with you

We often find that there are times when we would like to consult with you or advise you on public consultations, such the recent Congestion Charge consultation by the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson.

If you have access to email, please send an email to:

Emails@kensingtonsociety.com

stating 'this is my address' and giving your name; we do not divulge personal E-mail addresses and they will only be used for keeping you informed.

Our website, containing much information about the Society, and enabling us to give you up to date information between issues of this Newsletter, is at:

www.kensingtonsociety.org.uk

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david.campion@kensingtonsociety.com

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