

NORLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

1969 - 2009

NORLAND - A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



Print of St James's Gardens c. 1850, showing the church with its intended spire, which was never added.

THE Norland Estate, as it was first known, was built over a comparatively short time starting in the 1840s, and after only fifteen years the area passed from green fields into suburbia. The development was prompted by large-scale drainage works for the new railway, but the estate was premature as it was too near the notorious potteries. The freehold owner of the estate, Charles Richardson, was bankrupted by the scheme, but only after he had been instrumental in creating an area of grand proportions with the help of his architect, Robert Cantwell. At the heart of his design were the 'set pieces' of Royal Crescent, Norland Square and St James's Gardens and a number of listed buildings. In 1969 Norland was designated a Conservation Area by the Council - the first to achieve this status in the Royal Borough. The Department of the Environment went further, and confirmed Norland as an 'outstanding Conservation Area'. The Norland Conservation Society was setup the same year to preserve and enhance this valuable heritage.

However, by 1969 many of the grand houses in Royal Crescent were in multi-occupation and Rachman-like speculators were extending their rented accommodation by building out over open spaces, raising rooflines and adding extra floors; there was no control over window and façade design; cars were parked in front gardens and 600 vehicles an hour thundered through Clarendon Cross. So there was much to be done and the 1970s proved

to be a decade of major change. The number of planning applications rose rapidly over the years, and inspecting them formed the basis of much of the Society's work, and has done so to this day. From this time, too, with the rise of the supermarket, the number of small shops in the area decreased markedly leading to it becoming primarily residential and much sought after with easy access to the West End and the City. With the ever-increasing rise in car ownership in the 1980s, car parking became a serious problem and the pressure to use front gardens for off-street parking with its consequential damage to the environment was successfully resisted by the Society. Because of its geographical position Norland's residential streets also became a rat-run for cars and heavy vehicles attempting to avoid the congestion of St Ann's Road and Holland Park Avenue and this has been, and continues to be, a major focus for action.

Today there are even more challenges with the incentive to increase property values by subterranean development, and the impending threat to the environment of a third runway at Heathrow. Norland has seen many changes over the past 40 years and has successfully adapted to them while maintaining its integrity and the quality of life of its residents. With the help of the **Norland Conservation Society** it will continue to do so.

Kathleen Hall

NORLAND - THEN AND NOW WAYS IN WHICH NCS HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE

ADDISON AVENUE



Above
In the 1970s the view down Addison Avenue towards St James Norlands' Church was marred by uncontrolled car parking.



Left
Addison Avenue as it is today.

POTTERY LANE



The garage of the local rag & bone man in the 1970s. The sign on the door says 'Rags Bought'.



Pottery lane today on a quiet sunny day, with beautifully spruced-up houses.