

# NCS NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter of the Norland Conservation Society

June 2003



**The Norland Conservation Area** is designated by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea under the Civic Amenities Act of 1967 as being an area particularly worthy of preservation or enhancement.

Many of the buildings within the area are officially listed as being of special architectural or historic interest. Others are not listed but are an important part in maintaining the visual and architectural quality of the area as a whole.

Founded in 1969, much of the success of the Norland Conservation Society has become invisible. Gone are the dilapidated homes, fences and street furniture, replaced by a neighbourhood whose architectural and cultural charm has been very much enhanced.

The key to the effectiveness of the Society in the community is a solid core of membership.

The Society needs members to continue its work and to maintain the integrity of the area.

## **What is the role of the Society?**

It encourages and supports the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area, it represents the views of members and presents a concerted force for them in dealings with the local authority, government departments, other bodies and applicants for planning permission.

Examples of matters on which the Society regularly makes representations on behalf of members include:

○ Planning, including unauthorised developments or use of premises and detrimental planning applications. The NCS receives from the Council early and direct notification of all planning applications affecting the area.

○ Tree applications

○ Planning Enforcement matters

○ Grants towards restoration and improvement.

○ Traffic routes and flows, including rat-run problems.

○ Repairs to roads and pavement.

○ Design and siting of street furniture.

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and SUMMER PARTY 2003**

Tuesday 24 June 2003  
at 7.30 pm in  
St James's Norlands  
Church  
St. James's Gardens,  
W11

All Norland residents are  
welcome

Please join us, after the  
meeting, for food and wine  
There is no charge!  
Come and meet your neighbours

## **AGENDA**

1. Apologies
2. Chairman's Report
3. Treasurer's Report  
and Adoption of Annual  
Accounts
4. Membership
5. Election of Executive  
Committee
6. Guest Speaker:  
**Cllr Daniel Moylan**  
(Deputy Leader of the  
Council)

*The photograph shows the south-east side of St James's Gardens*

To join the Society please send your subscription to the Membership Secretary at 10 Penzance Place, London W11 using the form on the back page of this Newsletter.

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Your Executive Committee has had another busy and productive year though I must highlight an area of concern.

We have a problem with membership numbers again this year to date. As our Membership Secretary notes, renewals are well down. If you have not renewed, for any reason, but intended to do so, please take time to do so now. You can use the form on the last page of this Newsletter.

A broad and substantial membership establishes our credibility with local authorities, a situation we have rightly been proud of in the past, and one we do not want to lose.

Planning applications have been regularly reviewed and appropriate comments made in an endeavor to uphold and preserve the unique character of our Conservation Area. In all, some fifty applications were considered during the year, demonstrating the considerable activity in our small area.

The Annual Lecture "The Restoration of Aubrey House and Garden" was a great success. was interesting, well illustrated and delivered with great enthusiasm by Dr Todd Longstaffe-Gowan, a landscape designer, and Robin Dhar RIBA and we thank them for their efforts.

I wish to draw your attention to our website which is at:

[www.norlandsociety.org.uk](http://www.norlandsociety.org.uk)

as this still appears to be under utilised.

Please take the time to log on, offer input if you can and let us have comments regarding its format and utility.

My thanks to all the members of the Executive Committee for

their time and efforts in guiding the Society during the year and in particular for their support to me.

My appreciation to all the contributors and particularly to Councillor David Campion for undertaking its production in his usual dedicated manner.

**Anthony Perry**  
Chairman

## PLANNING 2002-2003

Some 50 planning applications have been reviewed since May 2002, and objections made where necessary.

The figure for 2002-3 represents a considerable drop in

we are grateful, and we would like to record our thanks to the Royal Borough's Planning and Conservation Department, to architects and owners for their understanding.

There are of course always the exceptions, mostly in terms of overdevelopment, coarseness of detail, downright bad taste, or total insensitivity to the demands of a highly sensitive streetscape. As those aware of the finesse required in this Conservation Area will know, we have in particular objected to the numerous proposals related to 18 Addison Avenue, not the least of which is a double garage in Queensdale Walk, whose appeal awaits decision.

We also objected (with numerous residents) to the proposals



*Prince of Wales Pub in Princedale Road*

relation to the 70 reviewed for 2001 -2, and may represent the effect of the economic downturn.

Most applications are entirely acceptable - usually indeed admirable - and continue to reflect an awareness of the unique architectural value of this area. In fact, they often do much to enhance it, with renewed balcony and area railings, wooden sash replacements and the like. For this sensitivity

to add benches and planters to the west elevation of the Prince of Wales public house in Princedale Road. This application has since been withdrawn.

We objected to an excessive number of tables and chairs outside Chambéry at 108 Holland Park Avenue (see over), a number consequently reduced to an acceptable number by the Royal Borough. We have objected also to the continued



108 Holland Park Avenue

permission for an excessive and obstructive number of tables and chairs outside Starbuck's at 76 Holland Park Avenue (see below), a decision on which is awaited



Starbucks, 76 Holland Park Avenue

We have also objected with (surprisingly) no success to an elaborate and unprecedented erection of decking, screens, planters and awning at 148 Holland Park Avenue (formerly Raccolto, now Edera).

We objected, with success, to the substitution of a traditional "butterfly" roof in Norland Square by a transverse pitched roof with rooflights front and rear. As members may recall from last year's planning re-

port we consulted with the developers of Rose house (1-12 Penzance Street), and were assured of some modifications to its insipid façade. Only minimal ameliorations are discernible, and the building remains one of 1970s suburban banality, bulky and taking the light from its neighbours. We should regret extremely that a developer of the name of Octavia Housing and Care has not taken on board this Society's stated request for excellence in architecture, particularly when the project was carried out in partnership with the Royal Borough. No prizes to either. A great opportunity wantonly discarded.

Norland Place is a deepening object of concern. Through piecemeal development in recent

years it has gradually acquired that unidentifiable appearance of the merely transitory, when it was, and not long ago, a charming re-developed mews, with many of its original characteristics. The latest development bids fair to complete the process, since it is radically re-building its elevation, a disaster which cannot be prevented - for while the mews is within the Norland Conservation Area, it is not itself listed. Our best recourse against future such developments, in what



148 Holland Park Avenue

was once a real Place, is to seek an Article 4 Direction, discussions on which are in process.

The conclusion must remain that even in a time of low economic activity there is no substitute for regular review of planning proposals, for instant report of suspect activities or proposals to the Planning Secretary by you, our members; for constant vigilance, and for instant objection where the integrity of an individual building or the Conservation Area itself are at risk.

**Robin Price**  
Planning Secretary

### PLANNING DECISIONS ON THE INTERNET

The Council has recently implemented an additional facility to the planning information available on its Internet site by enabling users to select by Ward not only planning applications but also planning decisions back to 2000.

It will shortly also be possible to make this selection by Conservation Area; this will help all the conservation societies in the Borough more conveniently to view and print out just that planning information relevant to their own areas of interest. Following this the Council will similarly make available details of tree applications and decisions also by Ward and Conservation Area. At a later date it is intended also to add information about planning enforcement.

## SOLVING LONDON'S TRAFFIC PROBLEMS

(With apologies to Richard Mant 1776-1848)

Bright the vision that delighted  
Once the sight of London's mayor,  
Countless tongues were not united  
Congestion charge is most unfair.

Round the Mayor they all were seated  
Transport boffins, Councillors too  
Filled his mind and oft repeated,  
"Listen to what we're going to do".

City's traffic's full to bursting  
The Central Line's been on the blink,  
Cars for petrol still are thirsting  
Horses only water drink!

"Mayor, thy traffic fills the city  
streets; so vehicles all must go,  
Horses would look much more pretty,  
So clear the roads for a new 'go-slow'."

Take a Hansom Cab for shopping,  
Perhaps a Phaeton's more your style,  
A Sluggy when you're nearly dropping,  
A Brougham might take quite a while.

And when in no great a hurry,  
And several times you need to stop  
You should really take a Surrey  
Always with a fringe on top!

When the winter snows are falling,  
A sleigh is there to hop on board,  
If horse drawn vehicles aren't your liking  
Come and live in Norland Ward!

**Veronica Scott**  
Executive Committee Member

## TRAFFIC

The Society continues to monitor the effect of traffic conditions that are affecting the area and, in particular, the rat run from Holland Park Avenue, through Norland Square, along Queensdale Road and into St Ann's Villas.

There continues to be a dialogue between the Society and the Council's Department of Transportation and Highways on this

matter albeit that there are currently no proposals to deal with the matter on the part of the Council.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member, Councillor Daniel Moylan, has been invited to attend the AGM so that he can answer questions on this and other related environmental matters that Members may wish to raise.

**Martin Short**  
Executive Committee Member

## TRAMS IN HOLLAND PARK AVENUE

A West London tram route from Uxbridge to Shepherds Bush is being considered by the Mayor for London. A decision will be made in July.

If it goes ahead and is successful, then there is always the possibility, albeit that this is currently denied, that the Mayor might consider that the route could beneficially be extended through Holland Park Avenue to Oxford Street even though Holland Park Avenue is not a road currently under the control of the Mayor.

The route to Shepherds Bush would be due for completion in 2009, and no formal proposals for an extension are likely to be made for some time. The implications for us of an extension are in terms of rails, overhead power-lines and traffic obstructions in a road already crowded to maximum capacity.

We shall therefore keep the project under close scrutiny, and we shall comment as appropriate, taking into account your views when the time is ripe. Meantime, please keep us informed of anything you may hear on the grapevine.

**Robin Price**

## ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The annual accounts for 2002/2003 show that the Norland Conservation Society continues to maintain a healthy balance that is considered to be sufficient to mount a challenge to any proposals by the authorities that might inflict environmental damage to the fabric of its conservation area.

**Martin Short**  
Hon Treasurer

## The Kensington Society

The Kensington Society is the over-arching Amenity Society which in its 50 years has campaigned vigorously and frequently to preserve and improve Kensington as a predominantly residential area of outstanding quality.

We regularly review major planning applications. All other matters relating to the amenities of Kensington are part of our concern. They include streetscape, traffic, licensing and such large issues as the third runway for Heathrow, the Mayor's Plan for London, and the Kensington and Chelsea Strategic Partnership on which, with the Chelsea Society, we are represented.

We work closely with the local amenity societies in Kensington,

and we encourage them to call on us for support on major amenity matters and on all matters of planning principle. We also work closely with adjacent societies, and especially the Chelsea Society, on matters of common concern.

Our events programme, usually with eight events each year, are very varied, from winter lectures to visits within London, and an annual country visit. We occasionally hold a dinner with another society.

We have organized more events than usual in this our Golden Jubilee Year, not forgetting the small special exhibition "Towers Traumas and Triumphs: 50 years of Vigilance" in the Kensington Central Library for six weeks from 12<sup>th</sup> June.

If you join in good time you could

come to our opening Mayoral Reception at 6:30pm for 7:00pm on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> June at the Kensington Central Library.

You will be fascinated to discover how many and how awful are the planning horrors that we have succeeded in preventing over the years.

To join the Kensington Society please apply to the Membership Secretary, c/o 2 Campden Hill Court, Observatory Gardens, London W8 7HX, enclosing your cheque for £10 made out to the Kensington Society. It would help considerably if you were to write first to ask for a Bankers Order form. Do join us. We look forward to meeting you.

**Robin Price**  
Chairman  
Kensington Society

## Addison Avenue Trees

What butchery has been inflicted on the trees in Addison Avenue?

The photograph on the left below was taken at the beginning of May 2002; this appeared on the front page of the Newsletter last year. The photograph on the right below was taken at the same time in 2003.

Why cannot the Council properly control its subcontractors to en-

sure that some greenery is left on trees so that they continue to provide the visual amenity that residents expect. While it may be more economic for the subcontractors to remove all the growth, so that there is a longer time before the work needs to be carried out again, this is must be considered against the loss of amenity that results.

While there are some situations where the roots of street trees affect the foundations of adjoining buildings, and the Council may be faced with claims

for damages if it does not either remove the offending trees or keep their growth under control, it is surely not necessary to be quite so brutal during regular tree works maintenance?

There is even variability between these trees and those in the section of Abbotsbury Road adjacent to Holland Park Avenue where an acceptable amount of growth has been left. Does this perhaps mean that the subcontractor is unable properly to control the labour that is taken on to undertake the work?



## ANNUAL LECTURE 2003

### The Restoration of Aubrey House and Garden

This year's lecture was given by two speakers, Dr Todd Longstaffe-Gowan, a landscape designer, and Robin Dhar RIBA, of Donald Insall Associates, historic building and Planning Associates.

The talk attracted a capacity audience of about a hundred on 18 March at the Ukrainian Social Club.

Dr Longstaffe-Gowan set the scene by describing briefly the early history of the house. First known as Notting Hill House, it was built in 1698 as the spa house of Kensington Wells, a medicinal watering place using the waters of a medieval well discovered among the nearby gravel pits. It probably became a private residence in the 1730s and in 1744 the lease was purchased by Edward Lloyd, a minister of George II. At that time it was a relatively modest low-built villa, but after acquiring the freehold in 1750, the new owner set about extending the house and embellishing its surroundings.

This was the property which Lady Mary Coke, an enthusiastic gardener, purchased in 1767. She was a diarist and prolific letter writer, and these provide a fascinating insight into life at that time, but, above all, she recorded the work she did to enhance the views from the house to both north and south together with meticulous information on planting, which was to provide the basis for the restoration of the garden.

The property at this time, although reduced in extent from its original area, was nevertheless large enough to support animals, including chickens, turkeys and ducks. There were also kitchen gardens full of fruit and



vegetables which, she writes, had to be protected from vandals entering from Holland Walk, which bordered the west side of the property. Amongst the trees she planted were holm oaks and cedars of Lebanon, and an ecological survey carried out before restoration work began revealed grass in the lawn of a type which dated back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In the centre of the lawn there still remains a one hundred and fifty year old mulberry tree.

To enable the garden to remain in keeping with the character of the house, that of a country rectory, a low-key approach

was adopted in the restoration of the garden, which remains much as it was in Lady Coke's day. The unusual gardener's yard was reconstructed, but since the garden now covers an area of about two acres, there are no longer any farm animals. However, wildlife of all kinds is encouraged and the fruit is grown largely for the benefit of the birds.

Robin Dhar then took up the story and explained the considerable problems of restoring a house which over the centuries had gone through many changes of use - from public spa house, to private residence, to girls'



school in the early nineteenth century, and back to a private residence in 1851; it was now renamed Aubrey House, because of the unfortunate association of the name "Notting Hill" with slums and gravel pits. Later still, the north wing was divided into flats. Finally, the house was badly damaged during the Second World War when the east wing was destroyed and was rebuilt in 1958.

This was the background to the work of restoration, which needed to take into account how the house had been built, what belonged to a past way of life, what could be retained and what was needed to make it relevant to life in the twenty-first century.

In 1998, when the work of restoration began, it was clear that it was inappropriate to return the house to the original villa, but that all periods of its life were important and many of its features were significant. As many as possible of the historic elements were reinstated, such as the matching bay windows in the south elevation and the cupola which had been lost when the house was Victorianised; the colonnade on the site of the winery was also reinstated. Worn out materials such as bricks and timbers had to be replaced and this was done with either reclaimed materials or materials which blended with the original.

Internally, the house was restored to a single family house, old partitions removed and rooms reconnected; and here some of the delightful water-colour paintings of the interior dating back to when the building was used as a school provided valuable details. Aubrey House has now been returned to what Lady Coke had intended it should be - a secluded country house in the middle of the metropolis.

**Kathleen E Hall**  
Executive Committee Member

## THE NORLAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY WEB SITE

A large number of local societies across the country now have their own websites which are used as a means for providing information both for their own members and also anyone else who may wish to find out about their roles in society.

The Norland Society is no exception and has attempted to follow this trend.

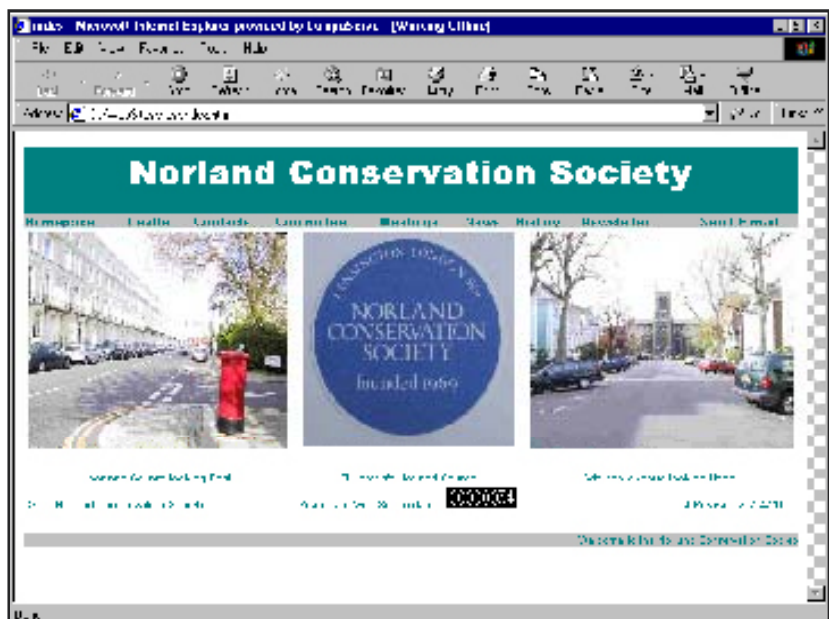
The advantages of a website are that it can be updated with new content as required so that members do not have to wait for the next formal issue of a Newsletter which may only come quarterly or annually.

Perhaps, more importantly, a website provides a useful means for recording information for historical purposes which is readily available and perhaps more so than within the filed archives of an organisation.

Those with an interest in obtaining further information about the Norland Conservation Society, and who have access to the Internet, can have a look at our website at:

**[www.norlandsociety.org.uk](http://www.norlandsociety.org.uk)**

This contains copies of the current and previous Newsletters as a source of historical information. You will need a copy of the Adobe Acrobat Reader software on your computer to display the latest Newsletters.



## THE COUNCIL'S E-MAIL NOTIFICATION SERVICE

The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Council now enables those interested to subscribe freely to its new E-mail Notification Service to be sent weekly selected details of all planning applications within a Ward or in up to ten individual streets. Anyone with access to the Internet can sign up to this service using the url:

**[www.rbkc.gov.uk/emailnotification](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/emailnotification)**

While only planning applications are initially available, this service will be expanded progressively to include other areas of interest.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2002 - 2003

Chairman:	Anthony Perry	10 Penzance Place
HonTreasurer:	Martin Short	27 Norland Square
HonSecretary:	Amanda Frame	23 St James's Gardens
Membership:	Anthony Perry	10 Penzance Place
Planning:	Robin Price	Flat 2, 5/7 Princedale Road
Environment:	Martin Short	27 Norland Square
Annual Lecture:	Kathleen Hall	6 Taverners Close
Members:	Marie-Lou Bakker	54 Princedale Road
	Rosemary Bauccio	20 St Ann's Villas
	David Campion	12/13 Pembridge Crescent
	Kate Dobbs	13 Portland Road
	Andrew Lamont	Swanscombe Road
	Julie Mills	42 Portland Road
	John Murlis	41 Royal Crescent
	Michael/Lisa Newsom Davis	11c Queensdale Road
	Simon Orr-Ewing	5/29 St James's Gardens
	Veronica Scott	24 Addison Avenue
Catherine Wilson	52 St James's Gardens	

## MEMBERSHIP

Since January, when we sent out our annual membership renewal slips and our invitation for new members to join the Society, there has been a stream of responses.

The net result is that many of our regular members have renewed their subscriptions and a few new members have joined. Thank you all for your support.

It is most important that we seek as broad a membership as possible so that our dealings with local authorities can be truly effective.

Our credibility is at stake and our voice becomes weaker without your support through membership of the Society.

Notwithstanding the responses we have received, our membership is far below that of previous years and that which we feel is optimal. And we're not sure why. Maybe some of our old customers have upped-sticks and moved; maybe you are a new resident and missed our membership letters in January; maybe the renewal slip is buried under a pile of paper waiting for attention. Whatever the reason, it is not too late.

The Gift Aid Declaration introduced this year, which allows a tax return to the Society on subscriptions, has been reasonably well taken up by members. We would like to encourage all our Members to subscribe in this way.

Just complete the form on this page (or a copy of it if you wish to retain this Newsletter intact) and either forward it to the Membership Secretary or bring it with you to the AGM.

**Anthony Perry**  
Membership Secretary

### Subscriptions for Membership Year 2003

Rates for 2003 are:

	<u>Annual</u>	<u>Concessions</u>	<u>Life</u>
Single	£5.00	£3.00	£50.00
Couple	£10.00	£5.00	£80.00

Name(s):.....

Address:.....

Tel/E-mail:.....

Please complete and return this form or a copy of it with your cheque to your Street Representative or to the Membership Secretary, 10 Penzance Place W11

#### GIFT AID DECLARATION

To help us to gain maximum benefit from changes made within the UK tax system we would encourage you to complete the following if you are an eligible UK tax payer.

Name & Address of donor:

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.....

Signature:.....

This Newsletter was edited and the photographs were taken by and the layout composed by David Campion using Adobe InDesign 2.0.1. The two illustrations of Aubrey House were kindly provided by the Local Studies Library of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The Newsletter was printed by E B Reproductions, 4 St Johns Terrace, London W10