

NCS NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter of the Norland Conservation Society

June 2005



The photograph shows the east end of Queensdale Road, at the north end of Norland Square with the Prince of Wales public house (far right).

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

2004/5 has been a year of real progress - but not without some difficult issues, and heated debate.

This time last year, we were doing some soul-searching regarding the Way Forward for the Society. At the AGM, our role in safeguarding and enhancing the Conservation Area was whole-heartedly confirmed: in other words, more of the same. The view was clearly that we would be likely to see some very undesirable things happening quite quickly if we relaxed our vigilance.

That this is true is evidenced by at least two cases where we have fought and lost - the complete rebuilding of the Norland Place property (reported on last year), and the redevelopment of 18 Addison Avenue (which is not listed, and therefore our ability to control facade treatments is restricted). We have now obtained an Article 4 Direction to help us to control further

developments in Norland Place, and will be asking the Council to seek an Article 4 Direction for the south end of Addison Avenue.

Spasmodic outbreaks of Estate Agents' signs are another irritant which detract from the street scene, and we are currently getting to grips with this.

Planning control and protection of the street scene remain, as always, the core of our activities: we are extremely grateful to Robin Price, Chairman of the Kensington Society, and also our Planning Member, for inspecting, reporting on, and giving our comments to the Council on over 70 cases in the past year (reported on in more detail later).

This is very demanding on time and knowledge of Planning and Conservation powers and practice, and requires discretion and cogent powers of expression.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and SUMMER PARTY 2005

Tuesday 21 June 2005
at 7.30 pm in
St James's Norlands
Church
St James's Gardens,
W11

All residents of the Norland Conservation Area are welcome to attend.

Please join us, after the meeting, for food and wine; there is no charge for this! Come and meet your neighbours and make new friends

(Non-Members will be asked to join at the door).

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Chairman's Report
3. Treasurer's Report and Adoption of Annual Accounts
4. Election of Executive Committee
5. Amendments to the Constitution
6. Any Other Business - Discussion Forum

To join or to renew membership of the Society please send a cheque, made out to "Norland Conservation Society" to your Street Representative as listed on the back page of this Newsletter.

Extension of the Congestion Charge zone is an ongoing issue, - by no means resolved (reported on later). At the date of writing, Livingstone seems to be ignoring some 70% of 100,000 Londoners who voted against the extension. But his plans for extending the congestion charge zone into Kensington and Chelsea seem to have been altered, "to take on board concerns that the community will be split in half in southwest Chelsea." Our concern is more for the effect on local retailers, and the fact that we can see no apparent benefit for the Norland area: it seems more like a way to milk more out of car-owners in Norland. For reasons given later, we continue to support RBK&C and the Kensington Society in opposing the plans.

Similarly, we maintain our opposition to plans for the West London Tram, and continue to support RBK&C and the Kensington Society in so doing.

Norland Square residents have now decided to replace their chain-link fencing with some fine iron railings - with financial and Gift Aid support from the Norland Conservation Society. This will enormously enhance the Square, and, in fact, the whole Norland area. They are to be congratulated on taking such a major enhancement decision. (More details follow.)

Trees: . Following last year's comment on the Council's Tree Strategy in the Newsletter, we now feel the need for a thoroughly practical tree strategy for Norland: that is on the agenda for this year. See further Fergus Kinmonth's article.

Last year, we were looking to strengthen the **Committee** and appoint a new Treasurer and Membership Secretary. John Hodgson (147 Portland Road, previously our auditor) has kindly taken over as Treasurer. Wendy Woolf (31 St Ann's Villas) has joined the committee as Membership Secretary.

E-mail contact: We can now communicate with about 150 of our members by e-mail, when something urgent crops up. This seems to be appreciated by the recipients. If you are not sure we have your address, please make doubly sure by e-mailing me: clive@clive-wilson.com

Clive Wilson

Congestion Charging Zone Extension

You will be aware that Mayor Livingstone has consulted, got a 70% rejection from 100,000 people across the whole of London, and nevertheless seems intent on ploughing ahead, against strong and repeated protests from RBK&C, whose area is effectively the only one affected. So much for democracy and "consultation"...

At the moment of writing, rumour has it that he has drawn the sting of the Council's opposition by offering to extend the 90% residents discount to residents in the area of South-West Chelsea that will fall outside the extended zone.

It must be recognised that our voice in this matter must be next to irrelevant - particularly in the light of the Mayor's reaction to the results of consultation so far. However, we have been supporting the Council and the Kensington Society, as far as we can, after considerable thought - helped particularly by the excellent briefing prepared by the Council called "The Facts" - which we (in March) circulated to all our e-mail Members, with a suitable covering note, leaving it to them to decide what line and action to take, but explaining our reasons for supporting Kensington Society's and RBK&C's objections.

Of course, most of the arguments in "The Facts" apply to the whole Borough, and are not particular to Norland. However,

from a purely Norland point of view, we do not believe the extension is going to have any benefits for the Norland Conservation Area, and in fact, it could be detrimental:

-Kensington is residential (not primarily commercial), and does not suffer congestion like the Central area: the aim is clearly not reducing congestion (which could even get worse in the central area with an additional 70,000 cars entering at the discounted rate)

-The economics won't work without an increase in the daily charge - TfL have already decided (after so-called "consultation") to increase this from £5 to £8; a further step could easily be a reduction in the discount for residents (to 50% v 90% - thus an additional cost of £650 for owning and using a car), and/or possibly, knowing how unpredictable Ken is, maintaining an additional separate charge for entering the central area.

-There won't be a surplus for investing in public transport until 2016

-£120m would be better spent on improving public transport in West and North-west Kensington, - which is RBK&C's priority, and which we should support as beneficial to Norland.

-In fact RBK&C reckon parking revenue will be reduced, and will cut investment in transport by £5m.

-Once the hardware is installed, the Mayor will be at liberty to increase any of the rates at will.

Strictly parochially -

-There is lots of evidence (mostly anecdotal) that shops (particularly small shops) and small service businesses have suffered in the central zone, and that we should fear the effect for the Holland Park Avenue shops which are an important amenity of the Conser-

vation Area. Also imagine the effect on Council Tax bills if they (and many others) pleaded successfully for a reduction in their Business rates.

-We do not of course have an Origin & Destination survey for the rat-run traffic which causes us grief through Norland Square and west along Queensdale Road, and on both sides of St James's Gardens. But looking carefully at the map of the planned CC Extension zone, it seems likely that most of this traffic is actually heading for areas in North Kensington which would be within the Extension zone. So, it seems unlikely that the CC Extension will help significantly to solve this problem.

On balance, therefore, we are clear that, though this is an issue which is too big for us, Norland would not benefit, and in fact, it is likely to be adversely affected by an extension. We are therefore right to continue to support RBK&C in opposing it, and in so doing, we should keep our members (in fact, our e-mail members) informed of The Facts (and any subsequent briefings), and suggest possible individual action, if they also, on balance, agree.

Clive Wilson

Treasurer's Report

The accounts for 2004 show a small deficit for the first time in five years, caused by an increase in the cost of the newsletter (now printed in colour) and the need to replenish the Society's stock of stationery.

The current year has begun well with subscriptions of £673 from 149 members, and donations of £704 very gratefully received in addition, - gratifyingly, for your Committee, often with thanks for our good work. Allowing for 191 Life Members, this leaves some 50 members still to pay for 2005. If you

have not yet sent your cheque, we would be most grateful to receive it. After a donation of £500 to the Synagogue's charity, as an expression of thanks for their hospitality, the annual lecture returned a small profit.

The financial position of the Society is sound, but its activities continue to be impacted by inflation. The proposed subscription increase will help to ensure that it can maintain sufficient reserves to mount a rapid challenge to any proposals that might inflict environmental damage to the conservation area. The Society also intends to help local projects, such as the re-installation of railings in Norland Square. We welcome donations to supplement the new minimum subscriptions.

John Hodgson

Amendments to the Constitution

The Norland Conservation Society Constitution currently states:

"The annual subscription shall be such reasonable sum as the AGM, on the advice of the Executive Committee, shall determine from time to time, and shall be payable on or before 1st June each year in respect of the year ending on the following 31st March. Membership shall lapse if the subscription is unpaid 3 months after it is due."

As our financial year now corresponds with the calendar year, it is proposed to simplify the Constitution to read as follows:

"The annual subscription shall be such reasonable sum as the Executive Committee shall determine from time to time, and shall be payable on 1st January each year. Membership shall lapse if the subscription is unpaid 3 months after it is due."

This motion is on the agenda for the AGM on 21st June 2005.

The change will enable the Executive Committee to change the annual subscription without waiting for the next AGM.

West London Tram Route

After a short presentation by a team from Transport for London, at the RBKC Council Meeting held on 19th January 2005, Councillors were asked for their comments. 'Pie in the sky and total disbelief that the proposal will work'. That was one councillor's view of the proposal for a tram route from Shepherds Bush to Uxbridge, a view that appeared to be shared by many.

Transport for London have spent considerable time and a lot of money on what they say is extensive modelling of the effect of their proposal on traffic in West London, but none of this was in evidence at the meeting.

The supposed benefit of the Uxbridge/Shepherds Bush service is to reduce the number of vehicle journeys required to carry the very considerable number of passengers (23m) carried by the 207 and 607 bus routes along the Uxbridge Road. The advantage that trams have over buses, is that they do not have to stop at the many road junctions along the route, and that they can carry double the number of passengers.

Transport for London say that they have modelled the 'knock on effect' on traffic in West London, but no evidence of that model was provided. Nor had thought been given to the White City development or the proposed extension to the congestion area.

The question of funding was also raised. Will it come from congestion charges or from Council Tax? Again no real answer was given except that it will cost a lot of money and that there will be a funding gap - a gap filled possibly by the private sector. The cry of 'white elephant' was heard.

In summing up, Councillor Daniel Moylan, the Deputy Leader, and the Cabinet Member for Transportation and Planning, said that

the Royal Borough had not seen any proper modelling or any figures to enable a well-informed response: he did not consider that in the Royal Borough, permission would be given for the building of even a conservatory on the basis of such scant information - much agreement from the floor.

The possible West London Tram is of concern to Norland because of the knock-on effect in terms of congestion and rat-run traffic.

Last year the Mayor of London issued a consultation document about the West London Tram, to which 17,000 replied. 59% were against the tram: far from being environmentally friendly, the tram would be an environmental disaster, pushing commercial traffic into residential streets, causing many small businesses to die (which Ken himself admits) and only benefiting the owners (Chelsfield) of the soon-to-be-built mega-shopping centre, at White City, where it makes its final stop.

Unfortunately, Livingstone has

a very curious view of the purpose of consultation: this answer didn't suit him, so he devised another poll of 1,000 people, which came up with the answer that 54% were for the tram. He has agreed to carry out further consultations before taking a final decision to go ahead.

RBKC's objections are clear and strong, and we support them:

- closure of the north side of Shepherd's Bush Green is likely to result in reduced capacity: this would have a serious adverse impact on traffic in the Royal Borough, including Kensington High Street, Holland Road, Holland Park Avenue, etc, and lead to increases in queues, delays and journey times
- The Tram would not reduce traffic congestion, - one of the main objectives set out in the consultation leaflet: only 10% of WLT passengers would come from cars
- The quality of information and modelling by TfL is poor, particularly in relation to impacts on the Royal Borough,

and takes no account of the proposed Congestion Charge extension nor the White City development

- the benefits of such a huge investment are unclear

On the bright side, Councillor Mike Cartright, a "big cheese" on Hammersmith and Fulham Council says: " we've got four major concerns about the tram:

- Traffic in residential streets
- Loading and unloading for businesses
- Making sure traffic can flow freely at junctions
- How to get the tram underneath the Hammersmith & City tube bridge

If TfL don't come up with proper solutions, then we will have no choice but to object to the tram when TfL tries to get a parliamentary bill through."

NCS members may have an opportunity to voice further objections early next year. We will ask for your support at that stage.

Caroline Yardley



St James's Church from St James's Gardens

NORLAND FOX-HOUNDS

The NCS is here to stay
We do our best in every way,
to keep it just the nicest spot
These foxes are a dangerous lot!
Just about this time last year
The residents were in despair,
from foxes running round the street
and getting under children's feet,
and sitting round and getting fat
with food retrieved from house & flat.

They roam in gardens dead of night,
they really are an awful blight.
And so the local dogs and cats
Communed and after lengthy chats
A motley gang - without much fuss
Saw foxes off on the late night bus.

But sadly they are still around
And surely must be put to ground
They take their place without a care
in people's gardens everywhere,
and with their cubs they set up house,
no wonder we are prone to grouse!

If someone has a good idea
of how to get them from their lair
let your Norland member know
and we will to the Council go.

If lots of people write a letter
we can show them all much better
that these foxes must be moved -
They cannot stay and search for food.

Perhaps redundant country foxhounds
could come to help us on our grounds.
Now that country huntings' banned -
here in town they'd lend a hand
to rid us of these furry beasts.
"My, the hounds would have such feasts".
We'd cordon off the local area,
Our Council couldn't say much fairer



The master with the hounds in tow
Would rout the foxes - out they'd go.
Now country huntings' not allowed,
In town we'd get a smashing crowd.
No country hunting? Don't feel down
there's nowt been said about the town!!

Veronica Scott

Norland Trees

Fergus Kinmonth puts an ear to
the ground among the trees.

The grandiosely-titled **Tree Strategy Document** which was published by the RBKC planning department in January 2004 ran to a lavish 56 pages. We waded dutifully through it and made a constructive commentary. Nothing has been heard since.

The guidelines that were introduced to the Council by our Society 30 years ago, defining the purpose of Conservation Area designation and permissible development, never tackled the subject of trees in a Conservation Area. This document presented an opportunity to do so. We have written again asking for a progress report.

The Council has recently lost the head of its tree section. A depleted office must now enforce the Borough's tree conservation

legislation, organize the pruning of street trees and interface with the public. This might be a lot to ask of them, but trees are the very essence of Kensington. Their care is a crucial concern, as is proper public awareness. We expect these tasks to be undertaken by the Council as a matter of trust. The RBKC should make recruitment of sufficient staff a priority if we are to conserve this heritage.

Devoid of leaves, we see our **roadside plane trees** stylized by contractors to match the stereotypes of an architectural drawing. Is this apparently brutal treatment, particularly evident in Addison Avenue, either necessary or appropriate?

Granted that they need to be pruned back every few years for shade, subsidence and stability reasons, could this not be done more considerately?

The current pruning regime consists of crown reduction (in



Addison Avenue

which all radiating branches are cut back proportionally within a continuous profile), followed by removal of subsequent regrowth on a three-year cycle.

The "fallow years" allow the tree to restore itself following removal of biomass and to regain a reasonable appearance.

It's a pity that these fine trees should be repeatedly disfigured, but the cost of "high pruning" is considerably greater than that of short rotation.

The trees might be considered sufficiently tall in relation to local architecture and need to be maintained in proportion. On

the other hand, the frequency and severity of treatment is essentially the result of pressure from insurance/mortgage underwriters to reduce claims.

Some residents have received surveyor's reports, remarking critically on the proximity of



Addison Avenue

trees. Although no simple relationship has yet been established between pruning regimes and building subsidence, surveyors frequently prescribe drastic pruning or removal of trees as a "due diligence" precaution.

In relation to street trees, it seems that no insurance company has made a successful claim against RBKC for subsidence-related damage. Nonetheless, the prospect of litigation is bound to affect the quality of street tree management.

Precautionary strategies such as the stealthy downgrading of mature plane trees in Ladbroke Grove (recently contested by residents) are not presented to us for comment.

Many would be happy to see Holland Park Avenue enveloped in a tunnel of vegetation. Without intervention we might be confronted by ranks of ornamental cherry and "olive trees" instead.

Fergus Kinmonth

Licensing Act 2003

The looking-glass world of Westminster has decided that 24 hour licensing will cure excessive drinking. Thus the Licensing Act 2003. It is, naturally, a minefield, and it is not of much benefit, if any, to residents

in vulnerable areas. We are, therefore, singularly fortunate that in Norland we now have few pubs, and that most such facilities are congregated in the largely non-residential area of Holland Park Avenue.

For residents these are the essential points:

- Licensing passes on 6th November 2005 from the magistrates' courts to the local authority, though magistrates' courts will still hear Licensing Appeals.
- There will be two licenses: one for the licensee, to last for 10 years; the other for the premises, to last the lifetime of the premises.
- All licensed premises will have to re-apply (as also licensees) to the local authority in the 6 months from 7th February to 6th August 2005.
- Interested parties (local residents, the body representing them, or local businesses) may lodge an objection to vary what a licensee is currently allowed to provide.
- Any direction received must relate directly to the premises to which the application refers and must also relate directly to one or more of the four Licensing Objectives, viz: the prevention of crime and disorder, the prevention of public nuisance, public safety, the protection of children from harm.
- Regulations under the Act require applicants for new premises licences or for variations to existing licences to place an advertisement in a local newspaper within 5 working days of the application and to place a (blue) notice on their premises outlining the details of the application for a period of 20 working days from the application. Residents therefore need to be vigilant, because:

- An objection to the application has to be received by the licensing team within this 20 working day period.
- RBKC, of its own volition, is to supplement this meagre obligatory notice through its email licensing notification service to designated officers of Conservation Societies, Residents' Associations, etc
- RBKC then has a further 20 working day period within which its Licensing Committee has to make a decision.
- Licensing Committee hearings will be held during the working day.
- If residents believe they have rogue licensed premises in their immediate vicinity they must observe, record, acquire evidence, witnesses and photographs (as necessary) to pass to the RBKC enforcement officers and to enable residents and/or officers to make a valid representation to the Licensing Committee.
- Premises can be called in for review by the RBKC Licensing Committee once those premises are active under the new legislation. Again, any representations or objections must be in strict terms of the four licensing objectives, as above.
- RBKC's Statement of Licensing Policy is a closely drafted document designed to protect the interests of residents. It remains to be seen how far its policies can be sustained when tested in the courts.

There is much more detail. This is sufficient for immediate action. Supposing that the RBKC email notification service works, we shall act on residents' behalf.

Brethren, be sober, be vigilant.

Robin Price

PLANNING 2004-2005

Objections or comments have been made on about one-third of the sixty or so applications received since June 2004. These included the visual miscellany of elevational changes (mostly to the rear), rear extensions, mansard roofs, excavations under houses, new rear windows and dormers, roof terraces, shop signage, shop canopies, and pavement chairs and tables.

Many applications have been improvements or have sought to return the building to its original state; for these we are grateful to owner and architect alike.



Some proposals, like those for the Norland Square Mansions, have received a mixed reception; the owners in this case wished to add (a largely unseen) penthouse flat, and to return the exterior to near its original state. This application has not been granted.

Some applications have caused us considerable concern, in particular No 18 Addison Avenue, some of whose architectural solecisms at front and rear we hope in due time to rectify. We are in close touch with the RBKC Planning Department over their grossly insensitive treatment of an early 19th century town villa in a unique setting. The gates at the rear substituted for the garage originally proposed are causing precisely the problems anticipated.

The proposals for four flats and a mews house at the rear

of 12 Addison Avenue, to which we and its neighbours objected, will be re-submitted. The radical proposal to demolish the architect's office at 24 Addison Place and to replace it by a two-storey courtyard house involving considerable and deep excavation for the new basement floor, has not found favour with its neighbours, nor with this Society, for many reasons; not least structural concerns for neighbouring houses and garden walls, overlooking the neighbours, and unsympathetic roof pitch and materials. The proposals, after much negotiation with neighbours and Council, were, at writing, temporarily in abeyance.



Norland Place, following your Society's representations to the Council after a disastrous redevelopment of one of its houses, is now protected by an Article 4 Direction. This has taken some two years and many delays to achieve. We hope by the same means to protect the Addison Avenue houses to the south of Queensdale Road, and in due course, other vulnerable groups of houses at present unprotected by Grade II listing.

The Prince of Wales public house in Princedale Road has recently caused considerable problems to its immediate neighbours. Mitchells and Butler, the owners, have eventually agreed to hold a high-level discussion with us, as yet to take place.

For Sale signs multiply. Apart from Royal Crescent, the Norland Conservation

Area is unprotected. We need therefore to gather evidence of unsightly and massed proliferation. Please take photographs of any such fecundity and send them to me of to your Secretary, with date and place, for forwarding to the Council as evidence.



Tesco, though outside our immediate area and actually in the adjacent Ladbroke Conservation Area, at 88-90 Holland Park Avenue, has a significant bearing upon it, and has caused us considerable concern because of the unsightly and flagrantly inappropriate proliferation and size of its signage and excessive light levels.

Two meetings with Tesco, in association with the Kensington Society, have secured Tesco's agreement to reduce the size of its lettering and to adjust its escape of light. We shall see the result in due course.

We believe that this will go a long way towards the decent restraint and respect for the street scene that is required in a conservation area.

Our action may also influence a similar restraint at the new Tesco outlet in Notting Hill Gate.

Please continue to report any planning problems that you experience as soon as possible to your Street Representative or Planning Secretary. Early warning is early action.

Robin Price

The Annual Lecture

A Visit to the Holland Park Synagogue

This year's annual lecture took a rather different form from that of past years and about sixty of us paid a visit to the Holland Park Synagogue in St James's Gardens on 8th March when we were guests of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews Congregation.

The evening began inside the Synagogue when we were welcomed by Rabbi Lavi and Honorary Secretary Sebastian Salama, who talked to us about the religious services, and in particular about the order of service on the Sabbath. It was explained to us that the men sat downstairs and the women sat in the gallery. A typical service, starting at 8.45 am and ending

at noon, included: the opening of the Ark and removal of the scroll containing the Torah (the five books of Moses), a reading from the Torah by the Rabbi followed by a reading from the Prophets by a member of the congregation, the scroll being taken round the congregation, a sermon, a special prayer for the Queen and the Royal Family and finally hymns. For our benefit, the Torah was taken out and placed on the rostrum so that we could all inspect its exquisite calligraphy.

We then adjourned to the assembly hall at the rear of the Synagogue for an illustrated talk on the history of the congregation by Mrs Suzanne Saragoussi whose great-grandfather had been a founding member. The story she told in her impressive and well-researched presentation



Mrs Suzanne Saragoussi

- aptly entitled 'Timeline' went back two thousand years to the time when King Nebuchadnezzar sacked Jerusalem and carried off the inhabitants into exile to Babylon (now Iraq); it was then that the two main divisions of the Jewish exile were laid. Her story concerned the Sephardim who, after many peregrinations over the centuries, arrived in Britain. Their wanderings led them first to Muslim countries following the great trade routes; then along the coast of North Africa to Spain, from where they were expelled at the time of the Inquisition in 1492; then back again towards Islam to find new homelands in Turkey and Greece (then part of the Turkish Empire), until, when the latter started to crumble at the end of the nineteenth century, they headed west again towards Europe, and finally Britain.

After hundreds of years in exile, many no longer understood Hebrew, and while in Spain had evolved their own language, a form of mediaeval Spanish, known as Ladino. Many forms of prayer and orders of service were a combination of Hebrew and Ladino, which is still spoken today; Mrs Saragoussi related that her own father who was born in Britain did not speak English until he went to school.

Jews had, in fact, resettled in Britain after Oliver Cromwell



allowed them to return in the 1650s, and the oldest Synagogue in the country, Bevis Marks (a Sephardi community), was opened in 1701. But it was at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth that many Turkish and Greek Jews began to arrive and settled in the East End of London close to the docks where they had landed.



Without the benefit of social security, these new immigrants educated themselves and assimilated very well in their new homeland; they showed particular respect for the Royal Family. It was chance that brought them to west London in 1908 on the occasion of the Anglo-French Trade Exhibition at White City. This became the focus for many of the new immigrants who were involved in the carpet trade through their long sojourn in Turkey. They began to settle in Shepherds Bush, and by the beginning of the First World War there were some seven hundred families in the area who had carried on the same religious beliefs and traditions through two millennia and who wanted to hold religious services. So a community was born, consisting of two different traditions - the Stamboulis from Istanbul and the Salonikis from Thessaloniki - who had slightly different forms of worship. They resolved their differences and

despite their poverty started to collect money to build their synagogue; one or two members even cycled round collecting sixpences from other members for the building fund.

However it was by allying themselves with the Bevis Marks Synagogue and with a generous bequest from Sir David Sassoon in 1924 that they were able to buy a piece of land at No 8 St James's Gardens. Building work began in 1927 and the Synagogue was opened in 1928. The main building was built in the style of Bevis Marks, although on a smaller scale. However, Moorish influence can be seen in the dome and the overall effect is less West European than Bevis Marks.

It is a building of simplicity and beauty which fits in admirably with the architecture of St James' Gardens.

Following a further bequest in 1928, another small piece of land was purchased, and the Synagogue hall was built in 1930.

The complex of buildings was completed by the addition of the upper hall in 1952, when the congregation celebrated its Silver Jubilee.



Mrs Saragoussi ended by saying that a community such as theirs was constantly evolving, attracting new membership from families fleeing more recent persecution; for example, from Egypt, Iran and Iraq.

Above all, a common thread had continued down the centuries, that of a shared form of worship, beliefs and traditions.

To end this splendid evening we were invited to enjoy refreshments in the company of members of the congregation. For those of us who were fortunate enough to be there, this was a most enlightening and rewarding occasion; it gave us an opportunity to see behind the façade of a building which was familiar to us all and to meet members of a community which has been at the heart of the Norland Conservation Area for so long.

Kathleen E Hall



New Railings for Norland Square

At the Norland Square Garden Committee EGM on Wednesday 9th March the residents of Norland Square voted by a four to one majority to proceed with the re-installation of the railings that were, pointlessly as it turned out, torn down in World War 2. 65 years later they will be restored and the plan is to complete the project in 2006.

Prior to the EGM the Garden Committee had engaged in an exercise of consultation and explanation and this ensured that a fully costed proposal was put forward. This was conducted with all 135 Council Tax paying dwellings in the Square. Susan Walker Architects drew up the plans.

Apart from the cost, mentioned below, the major issues concerned the preservation of the hedging, the resultant privacy, the maintenance of habitat for birds, litter and security.

The Committee and the gardeners believe that the new railings, being some 9 inches beyond the existing chicken wire, will actually improve the hedge through more effective pruning.



Security will be improved by the use of electronic gates, including a new pedestrian gate on the north side of the Square, and the provision of electricity is included in the budget.

The litter problem will be ameliorated by the new plinths into which the railings will be corked and leaded but some extra protection may be required along the Holland Park Avenue side.

On completion of the project the RBKC Council have indicated that they plan to re-pave the perimeter in York Stone.

On the financial side the total project cost is £380,000 (including a contribution to the government of VAT of some £50,000). The Committee have already identified sources of funding totalling over £250,000. It is noteworthy that residents have already made pledges, over and above any precept increase, of £60,000.

The Norland Conservation Society, at its committee meeting on 1st March, not only gave its unanimous support to the project but also made a generous donation and agreed to help with the channelling of gift aid from the donations made by Norland Square and other residents. This was warmly appreciated at the Norland Square EGM.

We hope to get support from RBKC and other grant giving bodies. Any shortfall from these and other funding initiatives will be met from a levy on the precept - for two years only. Should all the fund raising initiatives be successful the Committee hopes that any temporary increase in precept will be minimal.

You will be able to follow the progress on the financing, and other updates, by visiting www.norlandsquare.co.uk or via a link from The Norland Conservation Society website.

The Garden Square Committee would warmly welcome any further donations. Please contact The Chairman, David Potter at 6 Norland Square

David Potter
Chairman, Norland Square Garden Committee
March 2005

P.S. The Planning and Conservation Department of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has confirmed that it is prepared to contribute £30,000 towards the railings.

Membership

Continuing efforts to build our Membership have resulted in a net increase (at 31st December 2004) to 393 - up 70 on a year earlier. Our number of Members gives us credibility and strength in our representations to the authorities.

We now have 186 Life Members, and 213 renewing annually. Of those renewing annually, 153 have signed **Gift Aid** forms, - which increases the value of their subscriptions by 28%, rather over £200. But, we would be grateful if all Members would sign the Gift Aid form, as this could add still further to the value of annual subscriptions, and, of course, costs individual members nothing.

As a result of our Membership renewal letter in January, we have been very grateful to receive £704 in donations (in addition to regular subscriptions), though at time of going to press, a further 50+ Members have still to renew. If these Members still live in Norland, we do hope they will renew - either right away by contacting their Street Representative (listed on the back page), or at the AGM on 21 June.

We have been reviewing our Membership policy, - in particular in relation to subscription rates, payments by Standing Order or Direct Debit, Life Membership and Concession rates.

Our **subscription rates** have remained the same since 1998, since when, of course, our costs have increased substantially. We have also aimed to greatly improve our communications with Members: the much-improved Newsletter (more informative, with colour photographs, for Members only); our website; our e-mail circulation list. In addition, Members can enjoy the summer party after the AGM at no cost. This all costs money,

and, in accordance with our Constitution, we will be asking the AGM, in June, to approve a subscription increase - from £5 per Member to a recommended minimum of £10, with £5 for concessions (versus £3).

Life Membership has proved to be very popular - at £80 per couple it has represented excellent value - and it has enabled us to build up our reserves. But, of course, Life Membership means Life, and it does reduce our regular annual income (except to the extent that we can attract more Life Members, or we increase the Life Membership subscription). For this reason, we have decided not to offer this option in future.

Up until now, we have not encouraged payment by Standing Order or Direct Debit, - which would of course be much easier to administer, and would mean that Members would not have to write out an annual cheque.

From next year, we are going to ask Members to pay by a SO or DD, to simplify things.

E-Mail addresses: We now have e-mail addresses for some 150 Members. This enables us to communicate quickly about any up-coming issues, and remind you of Society events.

If anyone is on e-mail and has not let us have their e-mail address, we would be most grateful if you could send it to the Membership Secretary, Wendy Woolf at:

jandw.woolf@btinternet.com

We are enormously grateful to David Campion, Chairman of the Pembridge Association conservation area, and a long-standing Member of the NCS Committee, for hours and hours of Trojan work setting up and maintaining our Membership database. Fingers crossed, it is now more like 95% right!

Clive Wilson

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 objectives. The Norland Conservation 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.

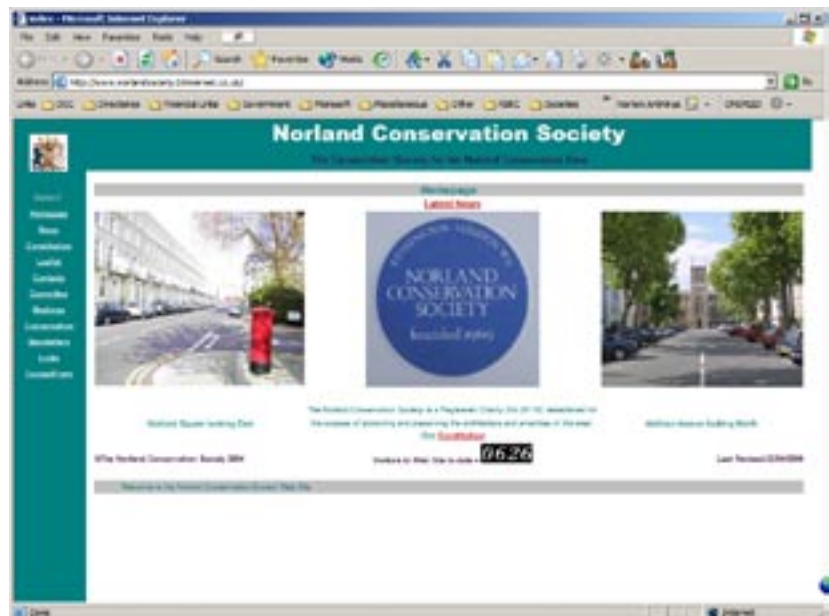
Those with an interest in obtaining further information about the Norland Conservation Society, and who have access to the Internet, can have a look at our website at:

www.norlandsociety.org.uk

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.

We welcome any ideas put forward for improving the content of the Norland Conservation Society website.

David Campion



THE COUNCIL'S E-MAIL NOTIFICATION SERVICE

The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Council enables those interested to subscribe freely to its weekly E-mail Notification Service providing selected details of all planning applications and planning decisions within a Ward or a Conservation Area 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

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2004 - 2005

Chairman:	Clive Wilson	52 St James's Gardens
HonTreasurer:	John Hodgson	147 Portland Road
HonSecretary:	Amanda Frame	23 St James's Gardens
Membership:	Wendy Woolf	31 St Ann's Villas
Planning:	Robin Price	Flat 2, 5/7 Princedale Road
Annual Lecture:	Kathleen Hall	6 Taverners Close
Newsletter/Web/IT	David Campion	12/13 Pembridge Crescent
Members:	Rosemary Bauccio	20 St Ann's Villas
	Keith Hunter	15 Queensdale Road
	John Murlis	41 Royal Crescent
	Anthony Perry	10 Penzance Place
	Veronica Scott	24 Addison Avenue
	Martin Short	27 Norland Square
	Tara Stack	31 Princedale Road
	Caroline Yardley	57 Portland Road
	Annabel Wylie	44 Queensdale Road
	Catherine Wilson	52 St James's Gardens

STREET REPRESENTATIVES

The members of the NCS Executive Committee who represent the various streets within the conservation area, and are the primary contacts for membership and subscriptions, are:

Addison Avenue & Addison Place:
- Veronica Scott

Norland Place & Norland Square
- Martin Short.

Portland Road
- Caroline Yardley & Tony Perry.

Princedale Road & Pottery Lane
- Tara Stack.

Queensdale Road & Queensdale Place
- Annabel Wylie.

Royal Crescent & Royal Crescent Mews
- John Murlis.

St Ann's Villas
- Rosemary Bauccio.

St James's Gardens, Darnley Terrace, Penzance Street & Penzance Place
- Catherine Wilson.

Taverner's Close, Queensdale Walk & Outside Norland
- Kathleen Hall.

Membership Subscriptions

Please note that the rates for annual subscriptions given in the panel on the left apply up to the date of the Annual General Meeting. Any new member subscriptions or renewals after the AGM will be at any higher rate approved by vote at the AGM. It is proposed to increase the basic subscription to £10 per person but with £5 per concession.

This Newsletter was edited by Anthony Perry from contributions made by members of the Executive Committee and others; photographs were taken by and the layout was composed by David Campion using Adobe InDesign 2.0.1 software.

Subscriptions for 2005

	<u>Annual</u>	<u>Concessions</u>	<u>Life</u>
Single	£5.00	£3.00	(Discontinued)
Couple	£10.00	£6.00	(Discontinued)

(NB See note on the right of this page re subscriptions)

Name(s):.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

Tel/E-mail:.....

Please complete and return this form or a copy of it with your cheque, made out to: "Norland Conservation Society", to your Street Representative or to the Membership Secretary, 31 St Ann's Villas, London W11

GIFT AID DECLARATION (for UK taxpayers)

I want the Charity to treat all donations I made since 6th April 2000, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations.

Signature:.....

Date:.....