



# Notting Hill Gate Improvements Group

Dedicated to the Improvement of the Notting Hill Gate Area  
www.nhig.co.uk



SUPPORTED BY  
THE NATIONAL LOTTERY  
THROUGH  
THE ARTS COUNCIL  
OF ENGLAND

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## AMENITY DIVERSITY CHARACTER

THESE ARE THE VIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF NOTTING HILL GATE IMPROVEMENTS GROUP (formed Dec 1993) ON RBK&C ACTION PLAN FOR NORTH KENSINGTON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (LDF) – MAR 2008.

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### AREA 3 – NOTTING HILL GATE & PORTOBELLO

- CENTRAL OPEN SPACE & FOCUS.** Newcombe Plaza must be enlarged & re-designed to create a strong sense of PLACE and CENTRE. This is the prime imperative. There is a declared prescriptive legal right of way over the existing space.
- ICONIC CENTRAL RE-DEVELOPMENT OF NEWCOMBE HOUSE & NORTH & SOUTH.** New building must have a “wow factor” – Barkers in Ken High St - “Gerkin” in the city. N.H.G. is a place of world renown & deserves & needs a defining landmark. Space at rear car park & on top of ‘underground’ an important opportunity.
- SMALL INDEPENDENT (FAMILY RUN) USEFUL LOCAL SHOPS.** Almost nothing is more desirable and welcome to local residents than a known & friendly face in such a shop. It is very difficult to live and enjoy life in a great city without people like Basil (Olympic Eletronics) or the Patels (Tylers). You are a mere customer, not a person in the huge International clone town chains that increasingly dominate us. Page 11 of the Action Plan states the LDF will “set out how the Council proposes to achieve its vision”. We submit this universal desire by residents will be very hard to achieve. We propose RBK&C should acquire small shops (sec 106 Agreements or whatever) – these can be part of the huge Pension Fund for employment that RBK&C can control. Clear & firm declaration by RBK&C to support small shops would facilitate & sustain refusal of planning applications & ENFORCEMENT (Joseph 230-234 Westbourne Grove failed to divide huge shop into 3 small ones).
- BALANCE / SUSTAINABILITY.** This is the essence of “CORE STRATEGY” – “Keeping Life Local & Fostering Viability”. We support the current mix and seek to retain offices (preferably small) in Newcombe, David Game, United & Astley Houses. On site affordable housing would greatly help to enrich social mix & find places for young artists & entrepreneurs who add so much added character, style, and panache to the area. We are against gated communities as divisive.
- RESTORE THE CORONET “RENEWING THE LEGACY”.** This grade II listed building (the only one in NHG) must be restored to its former glory. (See 2 1898 images enclosed). Great pressure must be applied to Land Securities (freeholders) and the Elim Church (long leaseholders with a full repairing and insuring lease) to carry out the necessary work to this most important building in Notting Hill Gate. Partnership funding should be provided to secure a programme to restore. We have promised a contribution.  
The securing of the preservation and enhancement of our “fantastic concentration of buildings – Renewing the Legacy” is largely dependant on “Enforcement” by the RBK&C Planning Dept. ‘God is in the details’ and there has been an awful erosion of the details which add up to the appearance of our “built Heritage & Public Realm”. Bastard railings, baluster walls, gates, windows, paved front gardens, rear & side additions and shop fronts & fascias have downgraded the beauty of the area. A shortage of zestful and knowledgeable planning officers is blamed. This must be rectified if this legacy is to be maintained.

6 FARMERS MARKET. This was introduced by us and should be expanded with improved facilities. The busy colour adds immeasurably to the conviviality, vibrancy, health & happiness of the centre. It should be provided, if and when moved, with as central a location, added space and facilities as needed.

The ideal place would be on an enlarged Newcombe Piazza. The market would be central to the residents and visitors shopping life. A place where personal service, advice and the exchange of ideas & news takes place. A quintessentially happy activity since time began. This does not apply in Tesco and clone multiple shops.

Our ideals are AMENITY DIVERSITY & CHARACTER. A thriving market is essential diversity in the world of shopping – now become a principal if not the main activity of the increasing urban community.

7 PROLIFERATION OF ESTATE AGENTS, BUREAU DE CHANGE & COFFEE SHOPS. The proliferation of these uses has severely damaged the fragile & important diversity of the area. There are 40 estate agents shops within some 100 yards of the centre. 5 coffee shops cluster between the 2 exits (south side) of Notting Hill Gate underground station, less than 3 paces apart. 10 Bureaux de Change are sited within 50 yards of the centre. These uses pay high rents so are attractive to landlords but consequently cut out the small useful local independent friendly shops that create a community. These otiose uses in such multiplicity are of no benefit to the community but only profit for themselves & high rents for developers.

In cases where Planning Consent (for Class A1 to A2 & A3) is required the RBK&C must say “No” and defend the policy to the Inspector on appeal by having a firm, clear and ardent policy to enhance the town centre quality.

At 148 Kensington Church St a disgraceful Bureau de Change flouts the law on user and the disreputable plastic, neon & aluminium shop front with numerous tin display boards on the pavement is an eye sore and takes the place of a more useful occupier; no doubt at a lower rent. If, as is so often the case, objection is taken by the occupier to appeal, then every effort should be made to ensure the Council wins these significant assaults on our environment.

8 PUBLIC ART. We consider this of great importance as creative of a focal point and sense of place. We greatly support the proposal for Dante Leonelli’s Eco Halos which would be a superb entry to London echoing the historical “gate”. There is a crying need for a central clock as a point of significant reference that should be an object of beauty and delight. A 1% for Art Policy to be reconfirmed.

9 ENFORCEMENT & PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENT. In former times our towns seemed more attractive. Much modern change is unpleasant and stronger powers & ACTION are needed to protect against ugliness and misuse of our space. Britain is delightfully ‘laissez-faire’ but what rules there are must be rigorously enforced. We need more committed enforcement. Without this “The Council cannot achieve its vision and protect the Boroughs rich heritage”. – RBK&C “Action Plan”.

10 ACHIEVING THE VISION. Any works requiring consent automatically require compliance with ‘Health & Safety Regulations’. Surely the protection of our environment, if clearly and firmly set down, should require the same obedience? The task is to describe with reasonable clarity what is unacceptable and enforce the rules.

11 MAJOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS. These should be very clearly set out in a local display – preferably an attended empty shop.

12 THE EDF SITE. This WHOLE site should be carefully planned as a WHOLE not piecemeal. This area is a rare opportunity.

John Scott

John Scott March 08



CORONET THEATRE, NOTTING HILL GATE, W.  
W. G. R. SPRAGUE, Architect



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1898