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ANNUAL REPORT
December 1987



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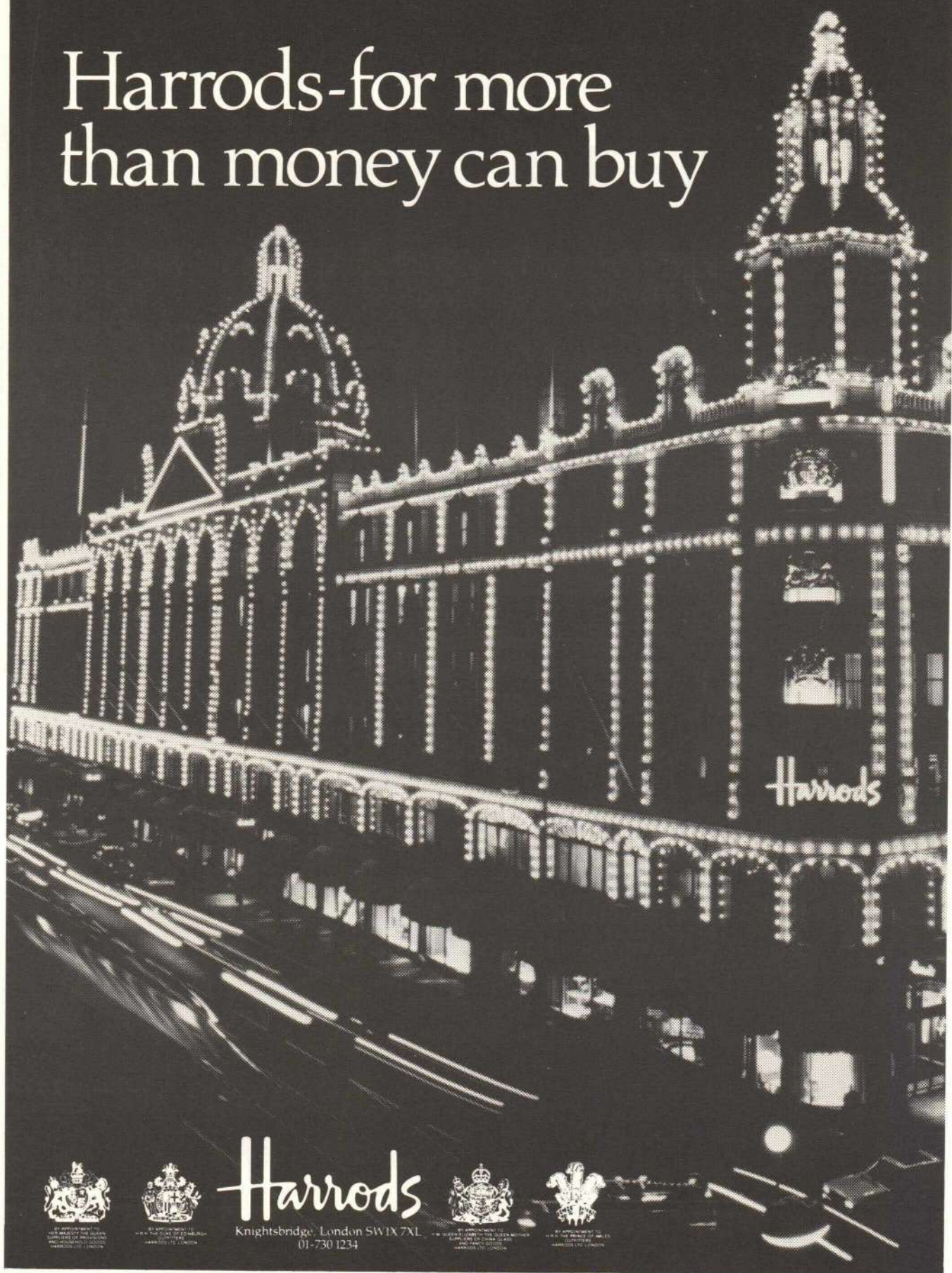
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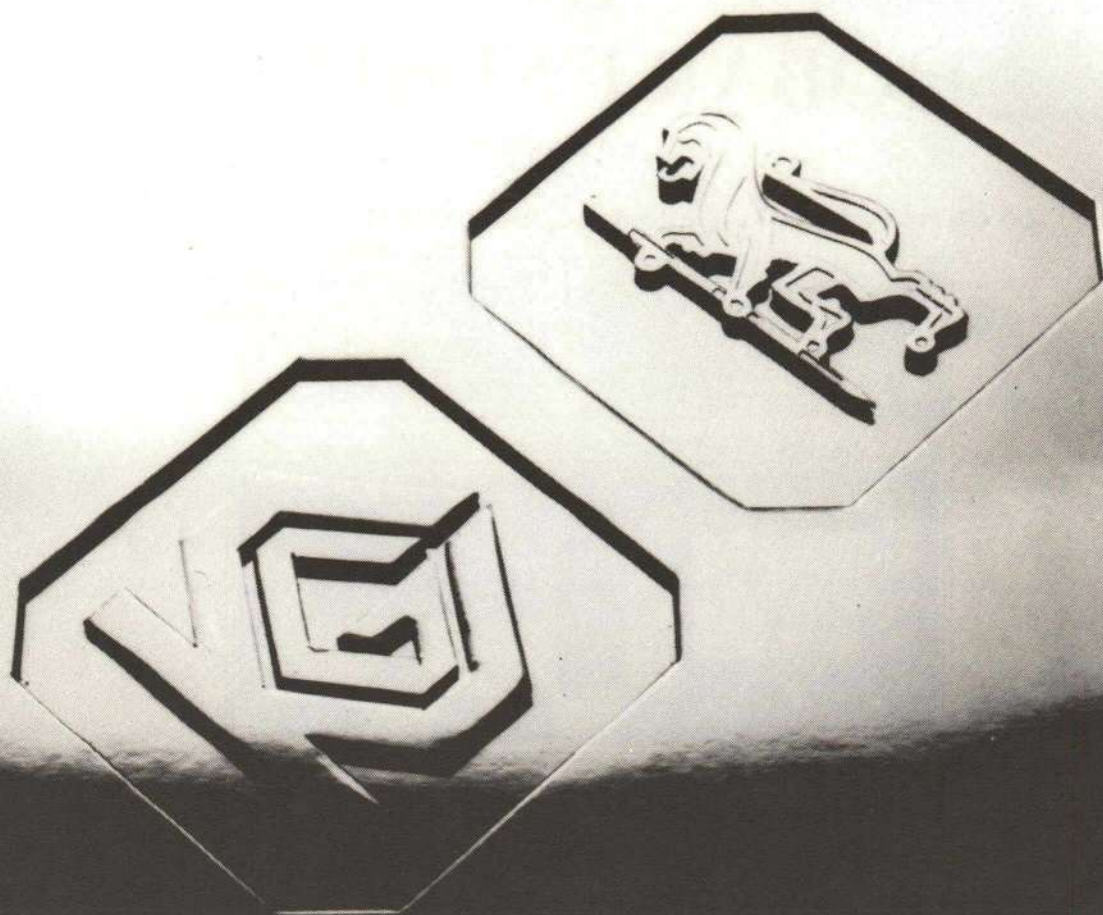


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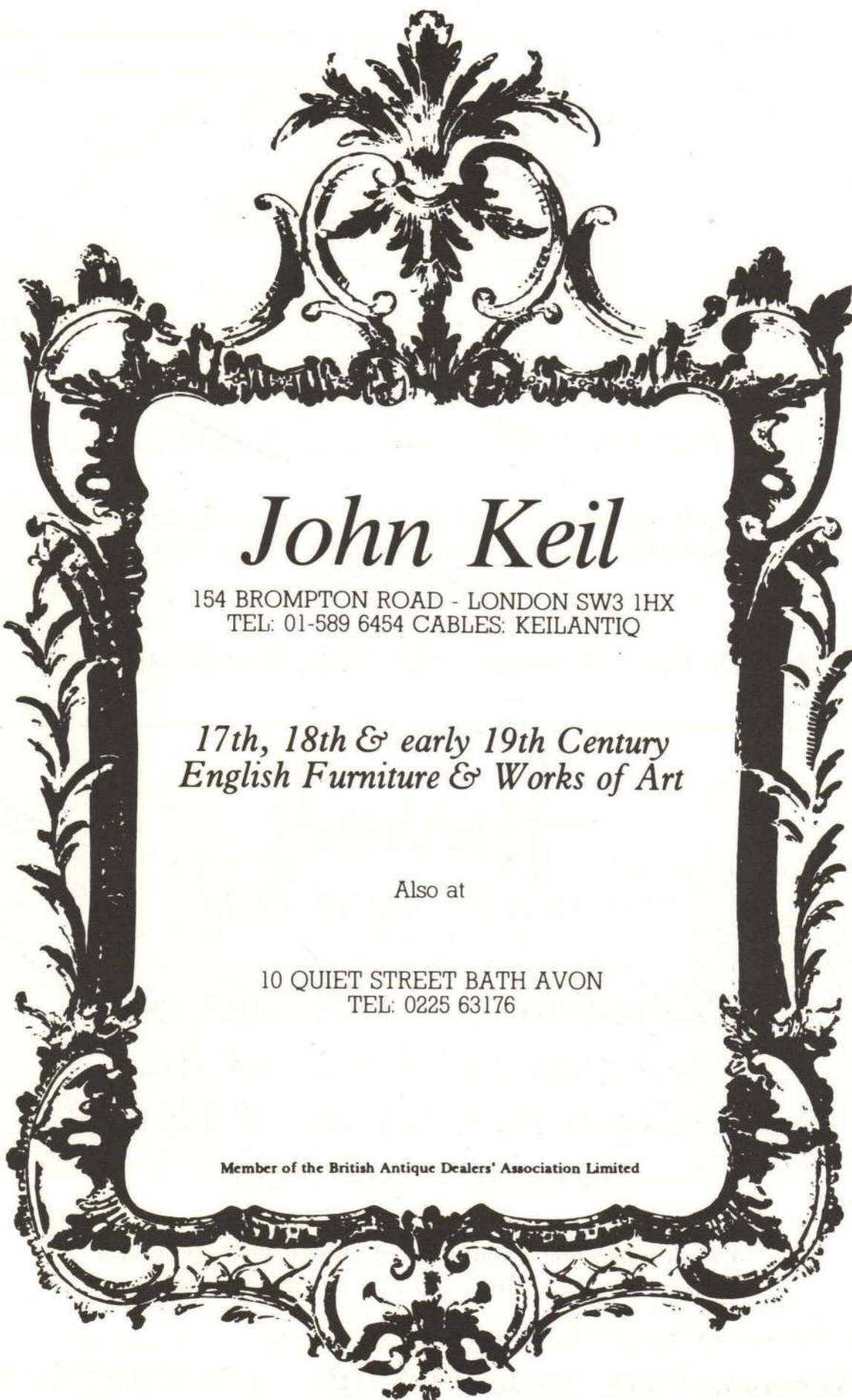
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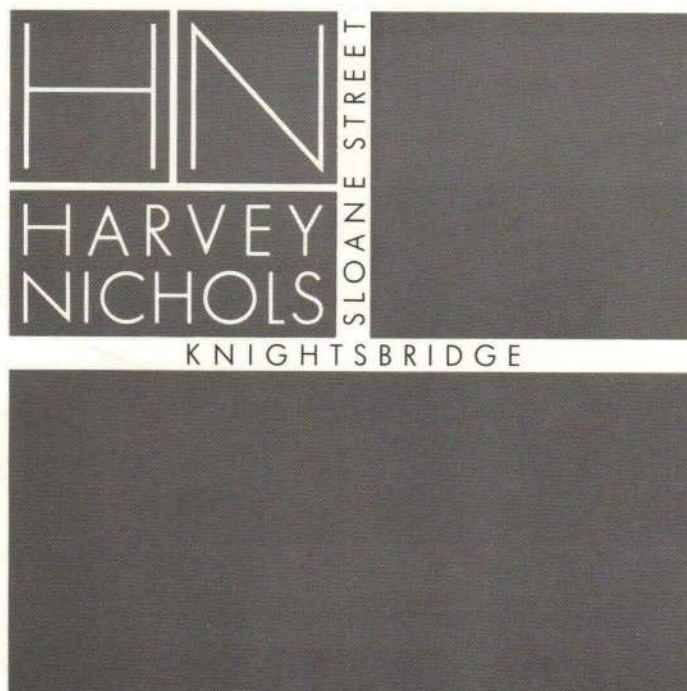
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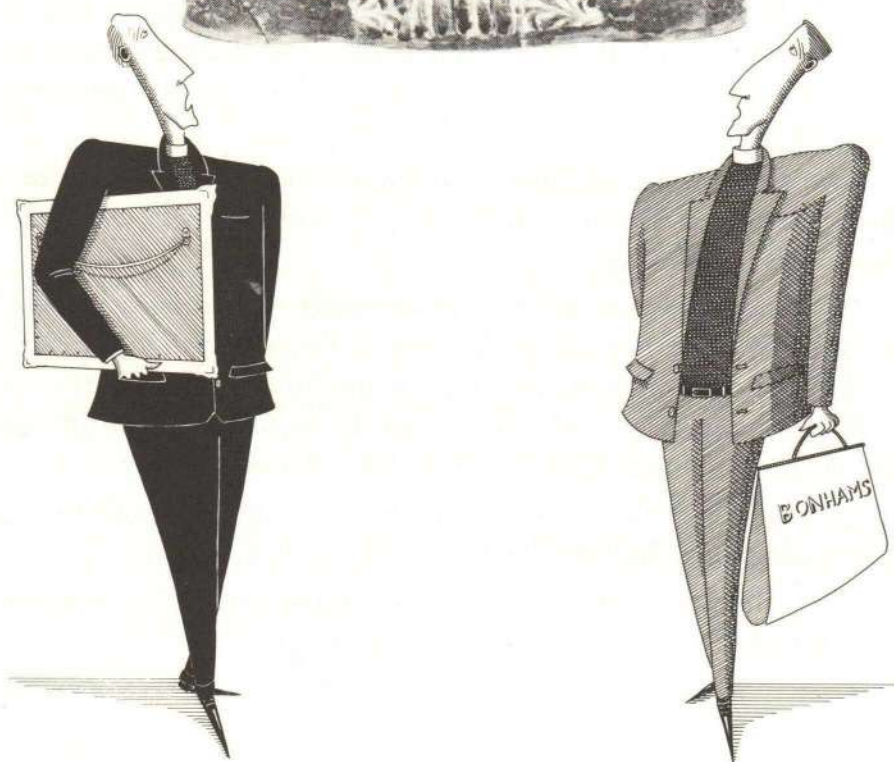


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CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

After the euphoria of the Silver Jubilee year, the Association settled down once more to its routine business of preserving and enhancing the quality of life in Knightsbridge and striving to protect the environment from the constant pressures affecting its integrity.

Those of us who have lived in this delightful area for a long time will know what a difficult task this is to achieve. There are victories and defeats, but always the need for action whether it is to preserve lovely

buildings or areas; or to influence the improvement of a new design; to work for better traffic control and more parking and to labour to keep the streets of the area clean and free from litter.

On all these matters our sub-committees report to our main committee. They are composed of public-spirited residents who give up so much time to ensure their smooth and successful working. This year the Committees faced many new challenges.

THE ENVIRONMENT

It was an exacting year for the Environment Committee, the Association's most important committee. Under its effective Chairman, Richard Robinson, and his deputy, Raymond Henley, aided by our distinguished architects Michael Wright and Jeremy Mackay-Lewis, and supported by its dedicated members, the Committee faced some matters of great concern. Although the number of planning applications in the area was down by some 25 per cent the workload was rendered greater by the size of the proposals which were referred to it.

Probably the most important application was the one for the redevelopment of St. George's Hospital. The proposal was for the restoration of the Wilkins building and its conversion to an hotel, with some additions at roof level with which the Committee were not entirely happy. However, in order to pay for this, the developers claimed that they needed to demolish the five adjoining houses on the

Knightsbridge front, four of which had recently been listed, and all the adjoining buildings and extensions within the Grosvenor Crescent and Grosvenor Crescent Mews site. These would be replaced with a large, modern office block.

The design of this block and the demolition of the listed buildings did not find favour with the Association or with other consultative bodies. The Royal Fine Art Commission was particularly critical of the application. During the year, the Committee commented on two revisions of the office building, which it felt went some way to meet our criticisms, the new feature being that the block no longer jutted out on the Knightsbridge front, ruining the gentle uninterrupted curve of the street

The original gateposts and railings at the entrance to Brompton Square. The Brompton Conservation Proposals Statement suggests the reinstatement of the stone gateways on the lines of the original pattern.



PUBLISHED BY PERMISSION OF RBK & C.

front. The general consensus of other bodies, however, was that the building was in no way distinguished enough to warrant the demolition of listed buildings. We understand the developers have gone away to think again, and, in the absence of any satisfactory development being forthcoming, Westminster City Council is now in a position to make a compulsory purchase order. Meanwhile steps have been taken to prevent the Wilkins building from deteriorating further and to carry out some remedial work.

A matter of great concern to the Committee is the redevelopment proposals by Eagle Star for the site which includes 132 Brompton Road, 1-11 Montpelier Street, and 1-3 Cheval Place. In August the Committee was invited to a private view at the architects who had prepared the plans. The one welcome feature of the proposals was the retention of the facades of the Crown and Sceptre and 1-11 Montpelier Street, which form such a familiar and fitting part of the entrance to the conservation area. However there were many aspects which were quite unacceptable both on grounds of density and design. The proposal constituted a gross overdevelopment of this very sensitive area, and this had been achieved by putting a mansard floor along the whole of the terrace. Into this building had been crammed 20 flats whilst provision for car parking had been obtained by creating an underground car park with a difficult and unfortunate entrance which did not even house enough cars for the number of residents. This was to be entered from Cheval Place, where the traffic conditions are already horrendous. Numbers 1-3 Cheval Place would be demolished to make way for the carpark and the design of the replacement building which was quite out of character with Cheval Place and would further destroy the charm of the street which

has suffered from two major unsympathetic developments in recent years.

Our views have been made known to the Royal Borough's Planning department, and a petition containing about 500 signatures of local people has been presented to the Mayor by local Councillor David Hudson. We suggest that the freeholders, Eagle Star, should take a look at 2-10 Cheval Place, under threat some years ago by the owners Capital & Counties. Originally keen to demolish this interesting terrace, they opted instead to refurbish the buildings, which resulted in a charming restoration and a profitable scheme for the owners.

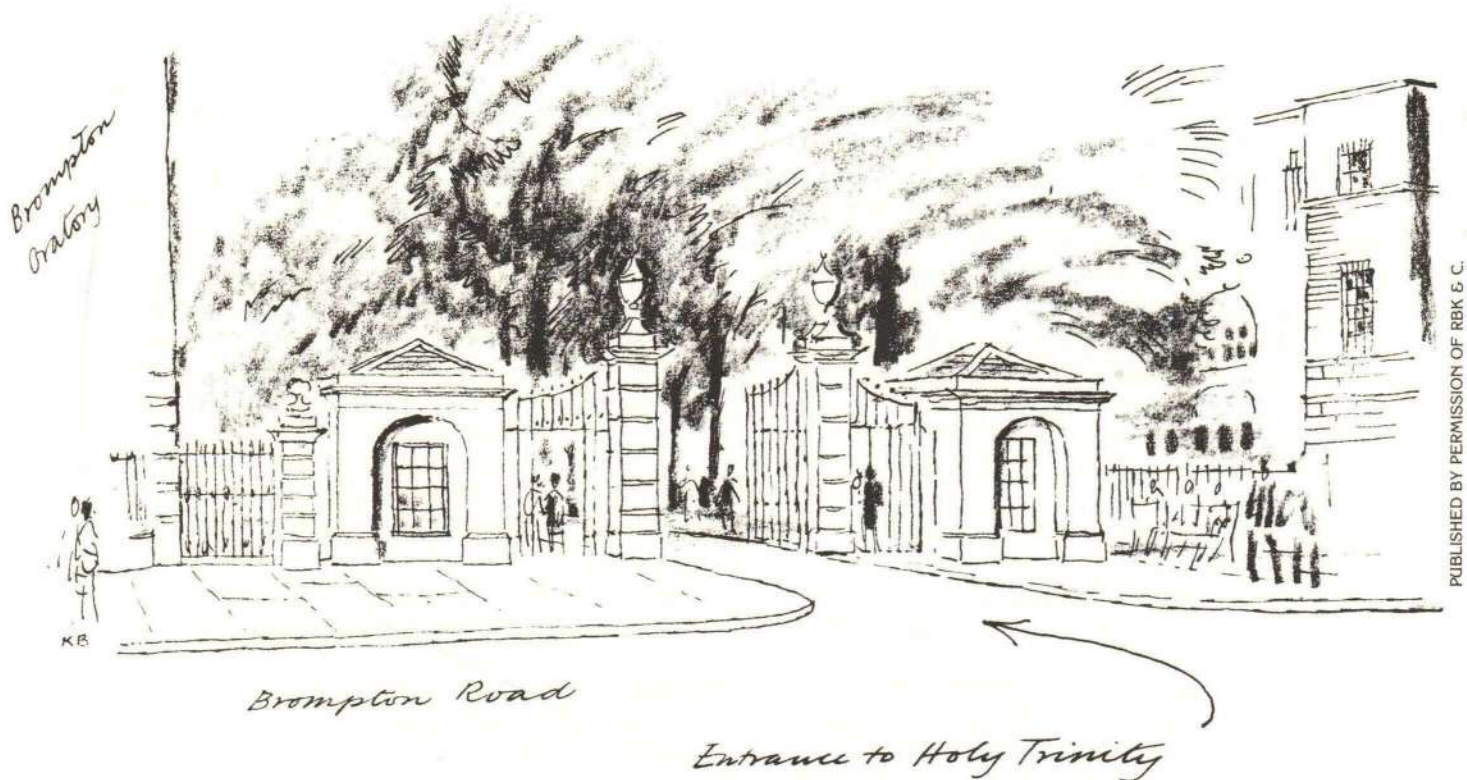
Of course, the Cheval Place/Montpelier Street block was recently included in the Brompton Conservation Area by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea after much lobbying over many years by the Association. Unfortunately, this happened only after much of Cheval Place was ruined by some insensitive developments. The Borough has now commissioned Chapman Taylor to draw up proposals for maintaining and improving the Brompton Conservation Area. The Association has had meetings with both the Borough and the architects to discuss the proposals. A Statement has now been published and there will be a meeting for public consultation at Holy Trinity Brompton Church Hall on the 20th January. The Committee, with one or two minor amendments is wholeheartedly in favour of the proposals, which enshrine many of the points for which they have lobbied consistently over the years.

In cases where development is desirable or inevitable, the Committee endeavours to influence the design of the buildings in a way which would compliment the surroundings. Naturally the successes are not so apparent as the failures which remain to mock their neighbours, as in Cheval Place. Last year we were awaiting Westminster City Council's decision on plans to demolish and rebuild five houses (112-120) in Brompton Road. The first scheme was rejected, but permission has been given for the second revision which has much less glazing and a greatly improved roofline than the first submission.

In mentioning this development it should not be forgotten that permission to rebuild Lord Roberts Workshop was originally given subject to the adjoining property being reconstructed behind the facade and now, only a few years later, it is to be demolished. Similarly, both the Association and the Council rejected the idea of the corner



Dilapidated state of 130 Brompton Road, despite planning permission having been granted some months ago.



*A new gatehouse could mark the presence of Holy Trinity Church and define the space beyond.
Study by Kenneth Browne.*

building on Montpelier Street and Brompton Road becoming yet another building society, and the Bristol & West appealed to the Ministry and received permission despite these objections. Now, although permission has been given, the building still stands untouched and in a disreputable state.

Earlier this year Imperial College submitted plans to Westminster for building a student's hostel above the sports complex at 1-7 Princes Gardens. This is another extremely complex situation. Members will remember the tremendous campaign fought by the Association some ten years ago to prevent the Linstead Hall extension being built in the brutalist style which has so devastated the South and East sides of this once elegant garden square. We fought and eventually won on both design and the excessive number of students already in the square. The Association waged a long and hard campaign, and eventually, after firm action by Westminster City Council, the College adopted a design put forward by Geoffrey Challen, our then much-valued chairman of the Environment Committee.

The current designs ignore the fact that the square already has a much higher density than permitted in the District Plan. The design, although paying lip-service to the rest of the terrace, is not of sufficient merit, and no attempt has been made to provide access for service vehicles and adequate parking for cars. However, our main argument is that

Imperial College has an obligation to the whole neighbourhood to stop the piecemeal development of this square and to come up with definite proposals for the future of both remaining empty sites in consultation with the Association, and in accordance with the promise made by the then Rector, after the development ten years ago. In the meantime, the Association has commissioned a Report on the planning submissions which has been sent to Westminster City Council.

Other major proposals discussed during the current year were the plans by the Royal Geographical Society for building some 41 flats, some against the blank wall of Albert Hall Mansions facing their garden, and others actually under the garden itself. On revision, they proposed including an underground car park in the garden. We felt that this would have a detrimental effect on Exhibition Road traffic unless the whole surrounding traffic system were altered.

The Royal College of Art is hoping to rebuild behind the facades of 198-200 Queen's Gate through to Jay Mews, where several old, but not particularly distinguished mews houses are to be demolished. The application has been granted subject to the approval of English Heritage, who, we understand are not happy about the extent of demolition in the Queen's Gate buildings, and would like to see more of the internal features retained.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

The problems of traffic continue to concern members in all parts of the area. The Traffic and Parking Committee under the leadership of Dr Stanley Steel has put increasing pressure on the Council to increase the number of residents' parking spaces and has been successful in Rutland Gate. With the large rebuilding and refurbishing schemes taking place in Ennismore Gardens it is obvious that pressure on the already inadequate parking there will increase dramatically, and the Committee will continue to urge the Council to dedicate further spaces to residents.

The Association's views were sought on the success, or otherwise, of clamping in the area. The consensus seemed to be that residents appreciated that clamping had reduced the appropriation of residents' spaces by others, but that they would appreciate a more relaxed attitude by traffic wardens to minor infringements by residents' cars outside their own homes, brought about by the difficult parking conditions.

Many complaints have been made all over Westminster about heavy vehicles parking half on the pavements. Enquiries have elicited the information that ratepayers pay dearly for this. Every time a paving stone is broken it costs £200 in repairs. We understand that if citizens note the vehicle number and date and time of any such offence they may see, and send the information to the Assistant Director (Works) at City Hall, Westminster, or, if it takes place in Kensington, to the Director of Works at the Town Hall in Hornton

Street, then refunds will be sought from the offenders.

Residents must be offended, as they are inconvenienced, by the state of the roads and pavements. It is surely one of the first priorities of Local Government to keep the streets and pavements in repair, and the Committee is pressing both Councils for more urgent attention to this matter. Some damaged areas which have featured in our correspondence for over a year remain unrepaired and a hazard both to pedestrians and traffic. The Committee also feels that



State of the pavement and highway between Trevor Square and Lancelot Place.



Damage to pavement at the corner of Ennismore Gardens and Kensington Road.

long suffering citizens have waited long enough for effective co-operation between the Councils and the many services which have the right to dig up the roads.

In many cases the public utilities either do not give their contractors an adequate specification or do not enforce proper compliance. The delay which then ensues before local authorities restore the roads or pavements leads to further deterioration.

The Committee are pleased to report that Westminster City Council's Works Department have recently informed the Association that public utility work in the area is almost complete, and that the Council intends to instigate a major re-instatement

programme in the area of both pavements and carriageways, commencing in the Trevors in the early part of next year and working westwards.

A campaign vigorously pursued by Sir Archibald Ross has resulted in a notice saying "Unsuitable for long vehicles" being placed at the entrance to the west side of Ennismore Gardens, to the great benefit of residents. And the Traffic Committee is also pressing for a sign in Brompton Road indicating that vehicles over 40 ft cannot turn into Montpelier Street, and for signs at the entrances from Kensington Road to Rutland Gate and Ennismore Gardens saying "No access to Brompton Road".

LITTER AND RUBBISH

The citizens of Knightsbridge owe a great deal to the work of Frances Rice for the comparative cleanliness of our streets and squares. She leads her Committee in a positive way, waging a constant war against litter and rubbish of all types, and working closely with the Cleansing Departments of both Westminster City Council and the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea.

Most of the work of this Committee is routine and repetitive, and relies much upon the co-operation of all local residents and businesses. However, during the year a matter of great importance to all citizens has arisen in the shape of plans to privatise the Cleansing Department of Westminster City Council.

Whilst there is general agreement that throughout the country tendering for rubbish collection will expose many anomalies (for instance, it costs £17 more per ton to collect rubbish in Camden than it does in Westminster) the centre of our great capital city is a special case.

Here we are host to millions of commuters and visitors daily; endure protest marches and demonstrations and are the setting for processions and State occasions. Litter and rubbish has to be collected at least daily and Westminster certainly collects as much rubbish as any other two London boroughs together.

We are assured that the tendering requirements will be very strict and it is hoped that suitable organisations will exist to satisfy these requirements. One interesting development is that members of

Westminster's own Cleansing Department are themselves tendering for the contract and they, at least, have experience of this mammoth task.

The Committee will watch the process of re-organising the entire Cleansing Department with great interest and concern and remind councillors that outside contracting does not remove the Council's day-to-day responsibility for the results. It is to be hoped that after savings, a little extra percentage of the City's budget will be spent to bring the heart of London to a satisfactory level of cleanliness.

The Association continues to sponsor litter bins in Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea, and to acquaint new residents of the dates and times of litter collections.

The Committee appeals to businesses not to put out bags of refuse and empty packaging before the appointed times for collection and is still concerned about the state of Brompton Road. The Royal Borough had promised a special effort here during spring and summer, but any improvement is not obvious and the Committee will be following up this matter together with local business houses.

During the coming months it also intends to approach London Transport to discuss the litter problem in Knightsbridge underground station which has become acute.

While on the subject of London Transport, many members have expressed delight with the new Cl Hoppa bus route, and we would like to compliment London Transport on the introduction of this helpful service.

HERITAGE

The replacement of lost amenities and their improvement is of great concern to the Association.

The reinstatement of the ornamental lights facing Hyde Park received a great impetus

when the first light was switched on last year by the Prince of Wales, and their installation and that of the railings along the frontages is proceeding.

We commend once more the work of



Proposal for covered walkway during the restoration of the V & A.



Proposed temporary walkway during work at the V & A showing sponsorship advertising.

Terence Digby-Seymour and John Wallis for the restoration of the railings round Ennismore Gardens. A grant from Westminster City Council has now given enough money to complete all the work.

It is proposed that a new initiative be launched to restore the railings to Trevor Square and preparations to launch an appeal will be made during next year.

To help the work of this Committee and in restoration and improvements generally, it has been decided to establish a fund, registered with the Charity Commissioners, to be called "The Knightsbridge Heritage Trust". Among those who have agreed to be trustees are Lord St John of Fawsley, Sir Nicholas Henderson and Sir Robin Gillett.

The devastation to the tree population which resulted from the recent storm has dismayed everyone in Knightsbridge. To all who derive pleasure and inspiration from Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, the loss is appalling. Many offers of help have come from all quarters and the Prince of Wales has given his backing to a fund to be established to help replant trees in the royal Parks. Details of the Appeal are included elsewhere.

Recently, the Association was approached by Sir Clifford Chetwood, a Trustee of the Victoria & Albert Museum, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, to discuss a proposal which they are considering for cleaning and repairing this famous building. In order to pay for the restoration, plans have been drawn up



Aftermath of the storm. Above: a tree fallen in Rutland Gate. Below: devastation in Hyde Park.

to erect a covered walkway to protect pedestrians whilst the work is being carried out, and to place advertising panels at regular intervals on the exterior. We are assured that these will be tastefully presented and will, of course, only be there during the period of the work.

The Association is very concerned about the condition of the Albert Memorial and worried by some of the alternative solutions discussed in the Press for its future. It is hoped to take some initiative about this famous landmark with other interested bodies.



LOCAL AND OTHER AUTHORITIES

With all the problems detailed in the proceedings of some of our Committees, it may be thought that there is constant friction between the Association and members of local authorities. Nothing could be further from the case. All our Committees enjoy an harmonious and fruitful relationship with officers and members of both Westminster City Council and the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea.

Particularly in Westminster in which the majority of our area lies, we have had enthusiastic help and attention to our problems from the Planning Department under Sid Sporle, the Cleansing Department under Ian Cooper, (whom we congratulate on the award of his MBE), the Works Department headed by Max Mussi, and other sections too numerous to mention.

We have also found the chairmen of Council committees very ready to receive our views and give them full consideration and the Association is, of course, a statutory body for consultation under the Planning Act.

We are lucky to have two councillors, Anthony Prendergast and Dr Michael Dutt, who are sensitive to the views of their constituents and very ready to help to forward the aims of the Association.

In the part of our area which lies within the borders of Kensington & Chelsea we are fortunate to enjoy representation by two new Councillors, Melinda Libby and David Hudson, who have already been of considerable help to the Association. We would also express our thanks to Alan Sanders, the Director of Planning, for the help given by his department and John ff. Davies who heads the Works Department of the Royal Borough.

A significant difference between the operation of the two councils is that Westminster sends copies of all plans to the Environment Committee, thus greatly facilitating our deliberations. We strongly urge Kensington and Chelsea to adopt this helpful procedure, without which our task is made exceedingly difficult.

The Association has a close and regular association with the local police, particularly at Gerald Road Police Station under the leadership of Chief Inspector Peat and Chief Superintendent Iles. They have been very helpful in advice on traffic matters and home protection where they are always anxious to

counsel residents on ways of improving security.

Some years ago the Association was successful in a petition to the Commissioner to prevent the closure of Gerald Road Station, and rumours of this have again arisen. We have written expressing our concern at the possibility of such an event.



The Hon. Peter Brooke MP.

BARNET SAIDMAN

The neighbourhood has been lucky for many years, as part of the Westminster constituency, to have enjoyed representation in Parliament by the Hon. Peter Brooke, M.P. As well as being a busy minister Mr Brooke has managed to remain a model constituency member. It is not surprising that the Prime Minister should have made the imaginative choice of appointing him as Chairman of his political party. In congratulating Peter Brooke, we should like to express our thanks to him for the great help and assistance he has again given to the Association during the year and which we have no doubt will continue despite his increased responsibilities.

AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Cllr Tony Prendergast and Dame Simone Prendergast talking to Cllr Gardner the current Lord Mayor of Westminster. Far right: Cllr Michael Dutt.



Mr Alan Sanders, Director of Planning at the RBKC and Diana Jenkins.



Mr & Mrs Roy Anderson.



Bruce Owen winning the 6 metre world championship for Great Britain.

SOCIAL AND EVENTS

Following the celebrations of our twenty-fifth Anniversary and the visit to the Association of the Prince of Wales, there have been no major social events during the year. These events are, however, very popular with members, and it is hoped to stage some during the coming year. The good news is that Nina Wallis, with her great organisational experience, has agreed to chair the Social and Events Committee, and she would welcome any offers of help from members.

Our events, when not connected with public affairs, are always in aid of good causes, and it is hoped that the work of the Heritage Committee will give ample scope for this.

It is interesting to report that during the year one of our members, Bruce Owen, won the 6 Metre World Cup Championship for Great Britain, skippering his boat Scoundrel.

FINANCIAL

The financial statement presented by our able Treasurer, Christine Gilbertson, again shows a satisfactory position. The expenses of running the organisation are artificially low because so much of the burden is undertaken by Committee members themselves, particularly in the administration. As the work load increases this will have to change and more professional help employed. During the year it was necessary, in view of the size of some

of the proposed developments, to engage consultants, and there will be transfers of money to schemes for environmental improvement.

As the present statement illustrates, membership fees, which have been kept at the same rate for many years, do not cover the expenses, and the Association relies upon revenues from events and advertising.



THE PRINCE OF WALES ROYAL PARKS TREE APPEAL

Committee

Neville Labovitch MBE, Chairman,
The Lord Forte, The Lord St. John,
Cllr. Anthony Prendergast CBE,
John Quinton, Iain Vallance, Hugo Vickers,
Ashley Stephenson MVO, Tim Bell.

The Royal Parks have lost over 5,000 trees in the recent storm. Most of them are mature trees 150 to 200 years of age.

A fund has been launched, with the support of the Prince of Wales, to plant new young trees for the benefit of future generations, but also some large mature trees to fill in obvious bare places in the parks.

£100 will replace a young tree and £5000 will pay for a large one and its early care and maintenance.

The Knightsbridge Association is supporting the Appeal Committee and would like to plant trees in the name of the Association.

The Treasurer would be happy to receive donations, clearly marked for this cause, and sent to her as follows.

**The Treasurer,
The Knightsbridge Association,
3 Cheval Place,
LONDON SW7.**

Enquiries to the Hon. Secretary at the same address.

At the moment, the reserves are adequate to perform the Association's work effectively, but rising costs must be catered for in the future.

APPRECIATIONS

The work of the Association owes everything to the devoted men and women who give a portion of their busy life to the service of Knightsbridge. A few of them have already been mentioned by name in the appropriate sections, but all the members of the Committees deserve our grateful thanks.

Especially I would like to express my appreciation to Joyce Goodman and Raymond Burton for their time and expertise in assisting with this Annual Report.

The business houses of Knightsbridge, both great and small, have been most helpful in their support by advertising in these pages. It is interesting to note that a partnership has grown up between the Association and business concerns in getting things done in the area. Businesses recognise the contribution which cleaner streets, higher standards of maintenance, traffic control and stricter policing make to their success, and appreciate the role of the Knightsbridge Association in improving all these areas.

In every area and in every way, the Knightsbridge Association relies upon the administrative genius of our charming Honorary Secretary, Carol Seymour-Newton. Without her driving force so much of our work would be impossible and as usual I express to her the gratitude and appreciation of the whole membership.

Our membership is, of course, the reason why the Association is the respected and effective force that it is. Our membership is large, and it is also active and interested in the protection and enhancement of the environment.

I express my appreciation to all our members for their support and hope that some of you may be able to spare even a little time next year to help the hard-pressed members of our Committees in any areas which are of particular interest.

The Committees of the Association rely constantly upon the enthusiastic and public spirited support of the membership which makes their work possible and worthwhile.

**Neville Labovitch
December 1987**

Mosaic on West Front depicting Sculpture.

THE ALBERT MEMORIAL

by

LORD ST. JOHN

*The Rt. Hon Lord St. John of Fawsley is
chairman of the Royal Fine Art Commission.
He is a member of the Knightsbridge
Association.*

One of London's and indeed of Britain's most-loved buildings, the Albert Memorial, is under threat of imminent destruction. Unless swift action is taken to save it, the Memorial will simply corrode, crumble and collapse.

Within a few years, only the granite steps (over two miles of them) will be all that is left of an edifice which, whatever its faults, is the greatest monument we have to the exuberance, self-confidence and optimism of the 19th century.

What an irony if we should lose it at the very moment that Victorian values are enjoying an unprecedented renaissance.

We are a nation of gerontophiles. If you live long enough in Britain, either as a person or a piece of architecture, however much you may

have formerly been criticised and even villified, you become canonised.

The Albert Memorial was being attacked even as it was being put up. The battle of the Goths and Classicists raged around its designer, Sir Giles Gilbert Scott.

Palmerston detested it and wanted a Grecian Temple, others wanted the Prince on an equestrian statue with a drawn sword – hardly an apotheosis for one who had devoted his life to the arts and peace, and who from his deathbed saved us from the folly of war with the newly emerging United States.

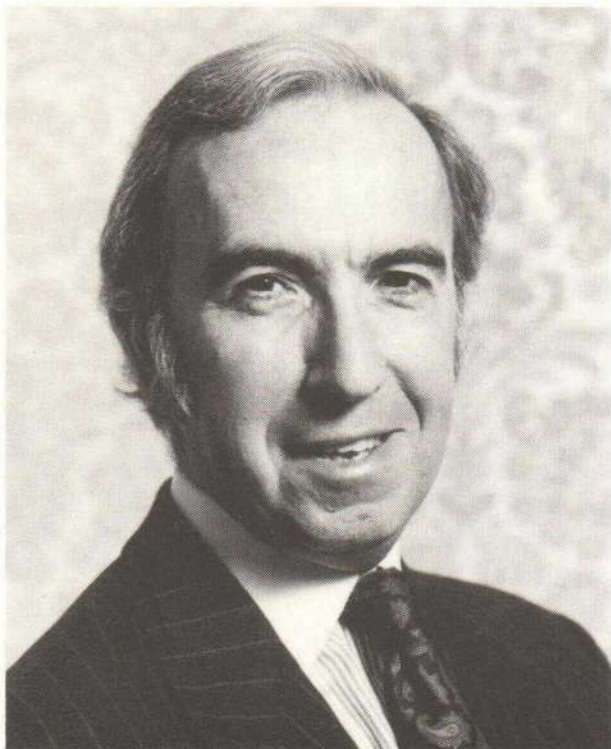
Since then architects have derided it but the people, whose detective instincts in these matters are nearly always a more reliable guide than those of the experts, have grown to love it. Woe betide the government which allows it to fall down.

When Prince Albert died in 1861 at the early age of 42 from typhoid fever, the germs of which were incubating in the effluvia of the drains of Windsor Castle, he left behind a remarkable legacy.

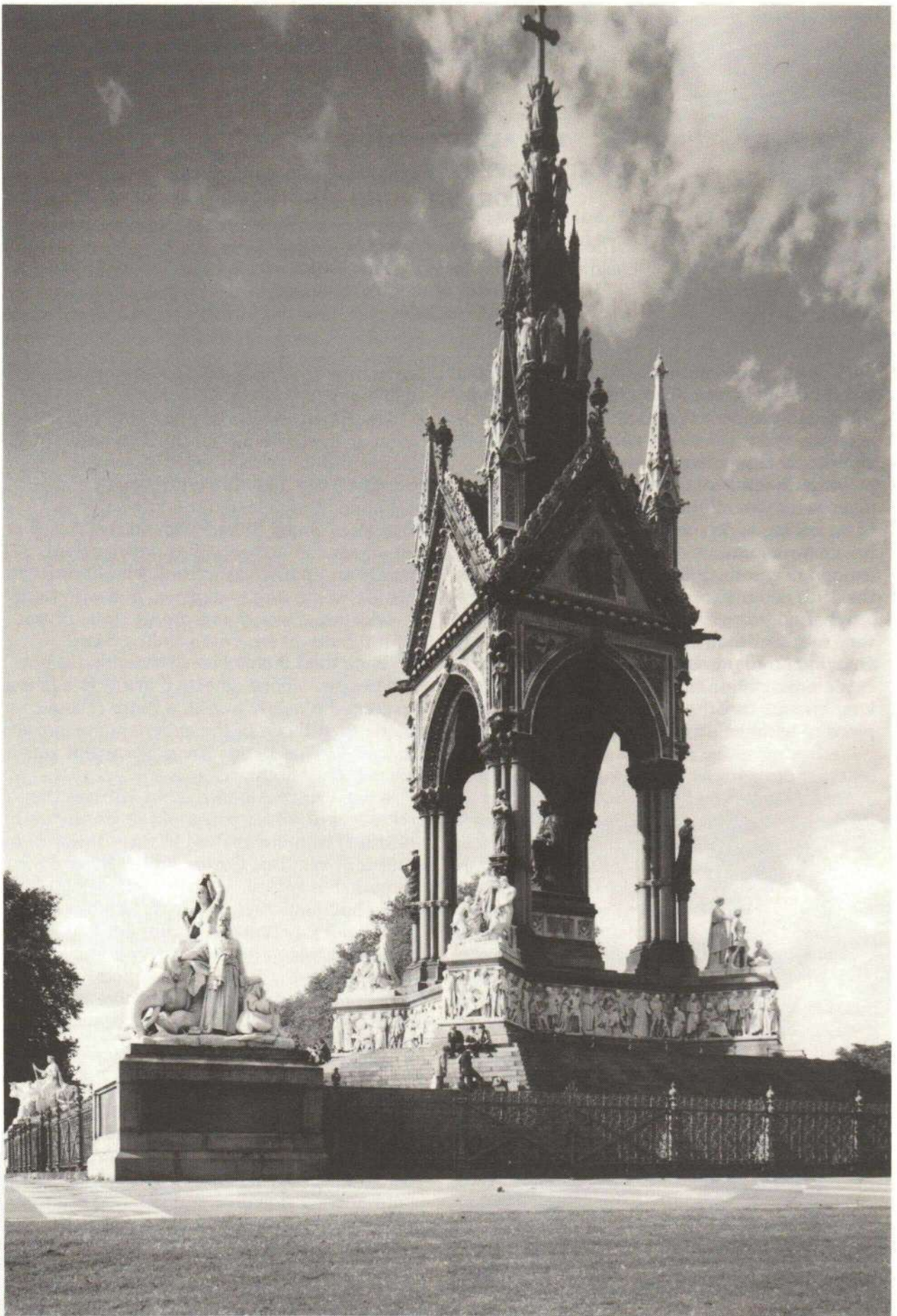
He had launched the Great Exhibition of 1851 with its consequent progeny of museums which have given a permanent character to the South Kensington face of our ever-changing London. What more fitting commemoration, than a statue of their progenitor in their midst?

Albert himself detested the idea in his lifetime: "It would disturb my quiet rides in Rotten Row to see my own face staring at me. As if (as is very likely) it became an artistic monstrosity, like most of our monuments, it would upset my equanimity to be permanently ridiculed and laughed at in effigy."

So alternatives were considered, such as an obelisk (difficult to Christianise declared Sir Gilbert), scholarships, an Albert University, or bursaries to promote good industrial design.



Lord St John.





Part of the continuous frieze of painters, poets, composers, architects and sculptors.

But the Queen favoured a statue and she wanted it done by Marochetti, a German who had already been responsible for their advance effigies at Frogmore, and who according to Victoria was "the *only* sculptor in England of really transcendent genius".

Over the statue Scott erected his glittering ciboria or baldachino which hitherto had been familiar only as culminations for ecclesiastical altars.

The soaring spire (185 feet later reduced to 148) was to be surmounted by a cross facing

north-south, and later put back in the wrong direction east-west by the Ministry of Works, when it had been demolished by an itinerant anti-aircraft shell.

Leading up to the cross were rich patterns of glass mosaics from Venice, bronze embellishments, and encrustations of enamels, petra dura, spar, multi-coloured marbles and agates.

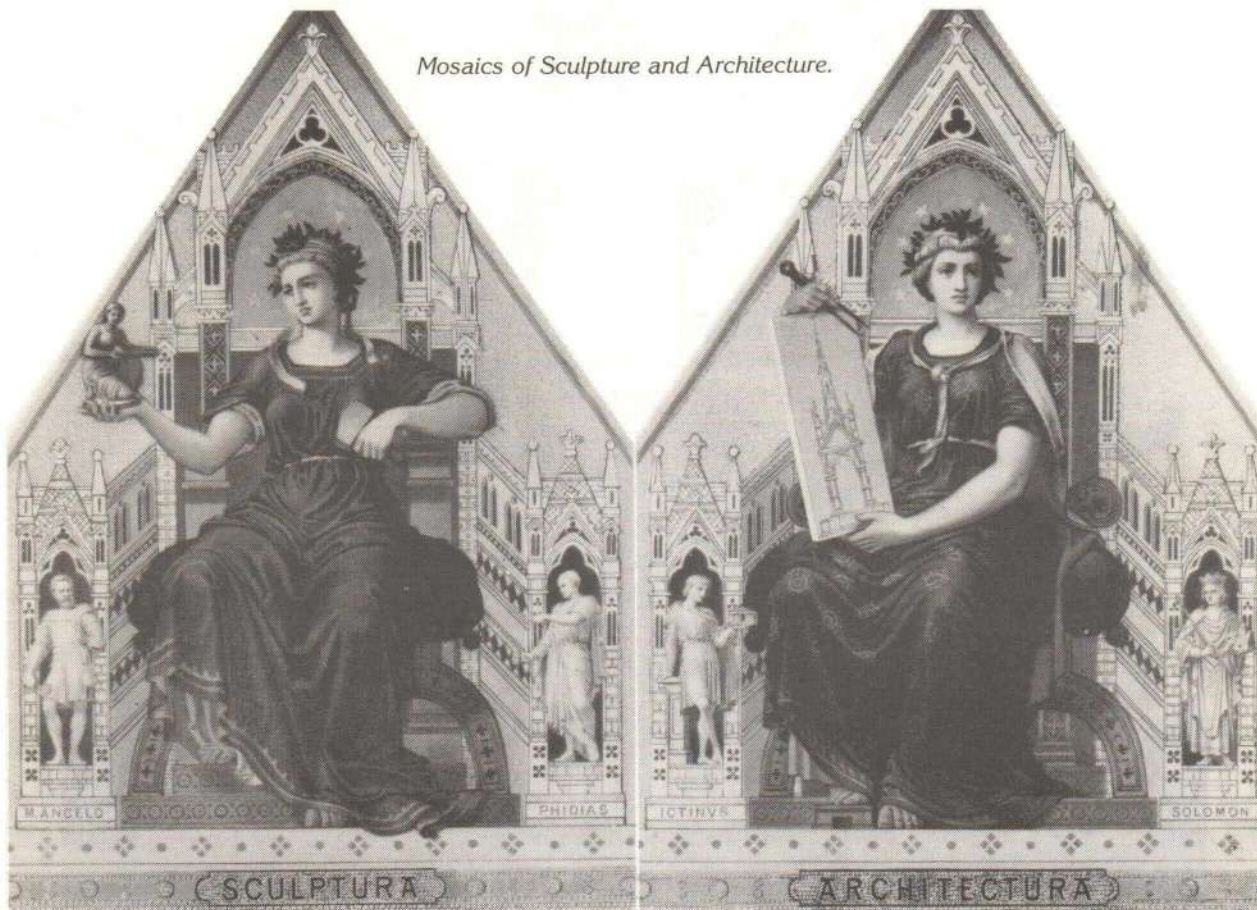
This whole flamboyant canopy is supported by 868 brick arches resting on a bed of concrete, above which is positioned a frieze of 169 lifesize statues stretching for 210 feet.

The statues still look splendid and the greatest care was taken to secure good likenesses of the painters, sculptors, scientists and poets represented.

Crabbe Robinson, for example, the intimate of Goethe, was called in to advise on his facial expression. When the statue of Prince Albert was finally unveiled in 1876 it dazzled and shone like Pallas Athene for it was coated from top to toe in brilliant gilt (later removed by a parsimonious government ministry who did not fancy restoring it).

And there it has stood gawped at by natives and tourists for over a century until the dread indigenous rain seeped through the cracks in the bronze, lead and stone and ate

Mosaics of Sculpture and Architecture.



away the great cruciform of cast iron which supports the whole imperial structure.

A wooden pallisade now keeps the public at bay and saves their skulls from being crushed by falling masonry.

The statues are tied on by ropes, and even the angels and virtues tucked away on high are beginning to shed their pinions.

So what is to be done? The Royal Fine Art Commission has asked for an immediate report on the state of the monument. The Department of the Environment has launched an engineering enquiry.

There seem to be only a handful of possibilities. First to remove the spire – this would be a palliative only. Second to demolish the monument altogether – this would be outrageous. Third to encase it in

perspex – this would be absurd. Fourth to take out the cast iron structure and replace it by steel.

The latter would be fiendishly difficult to do and would create an anachronism, losing one of the great achievements of 19th-century engineering.

There is only one feasible solution – to restore the monument both inside and out and provide a water drainage system which will prevent the damage happening again.

The total cost of the monument was £137,000 – the equivalent probably of £20 million at present-day prices.

Surely ours, a much richer age, can afford the fraction of that sum to preserve for the future the most splendid commemoration of Britain's headiest days of power and glory.

Group of figures symbolising America.



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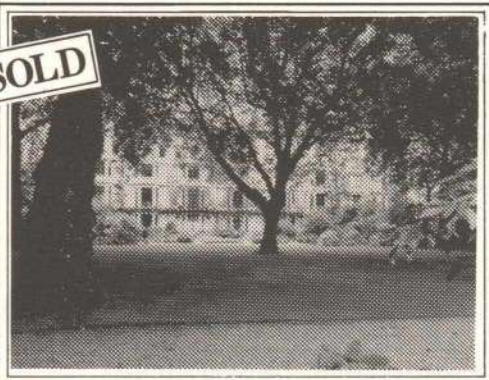
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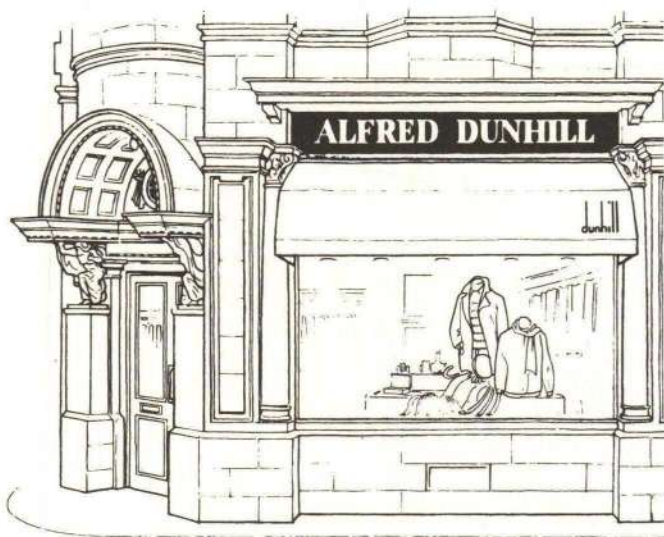
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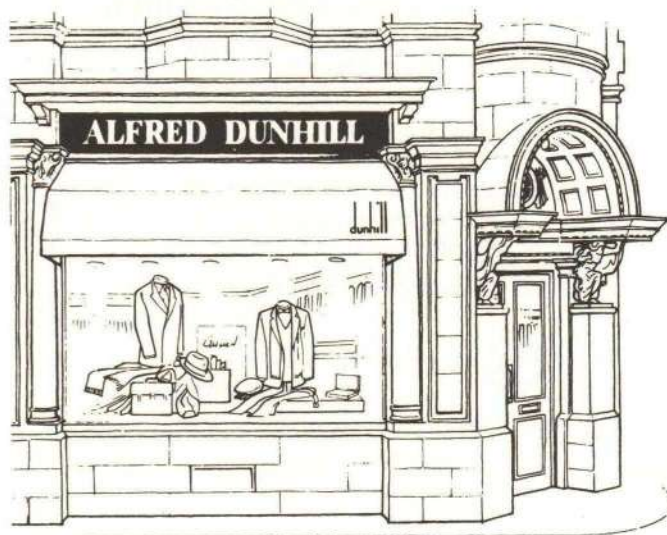


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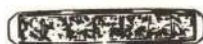
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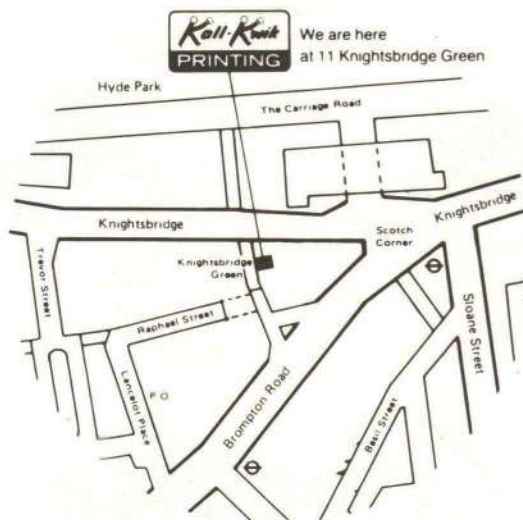


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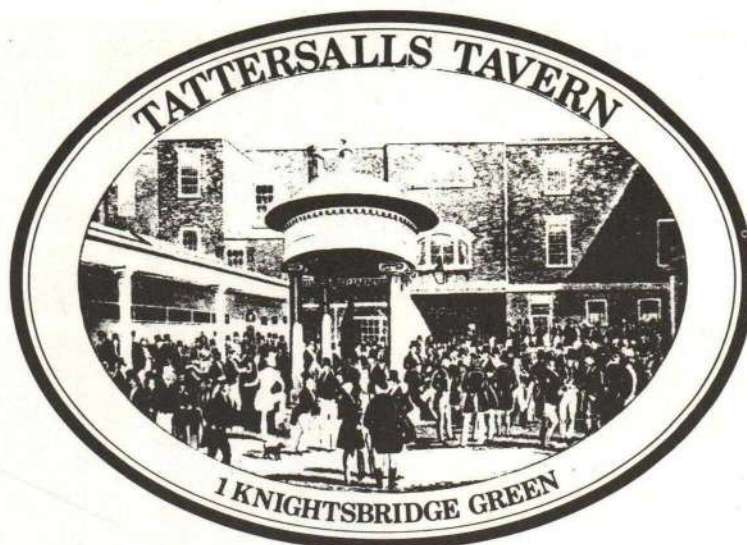


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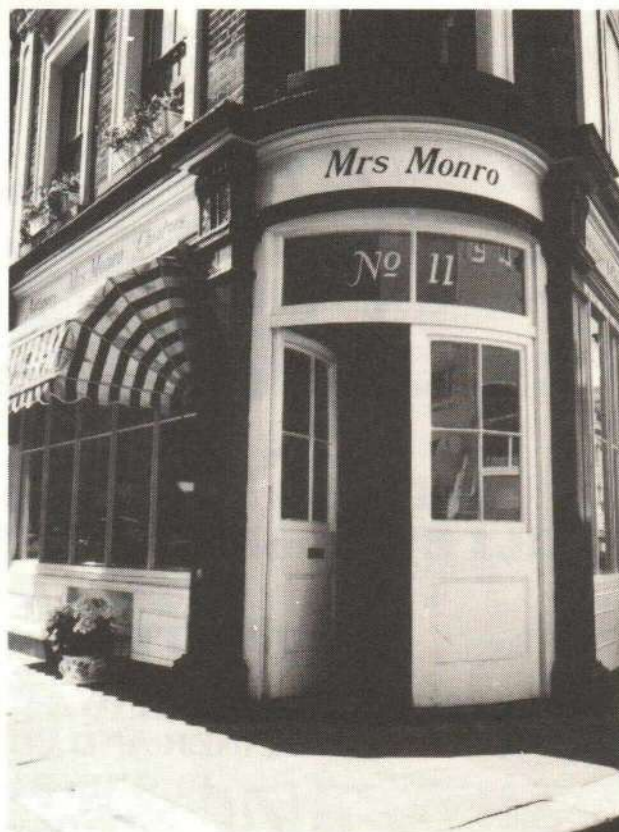
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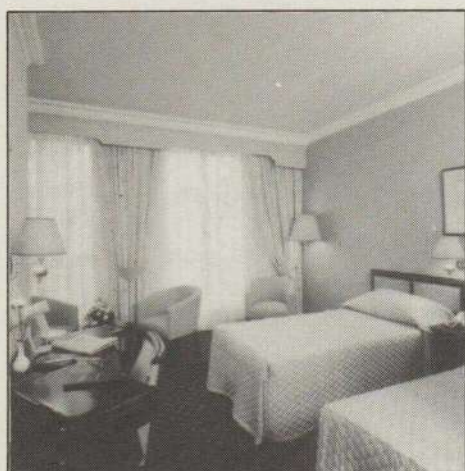
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