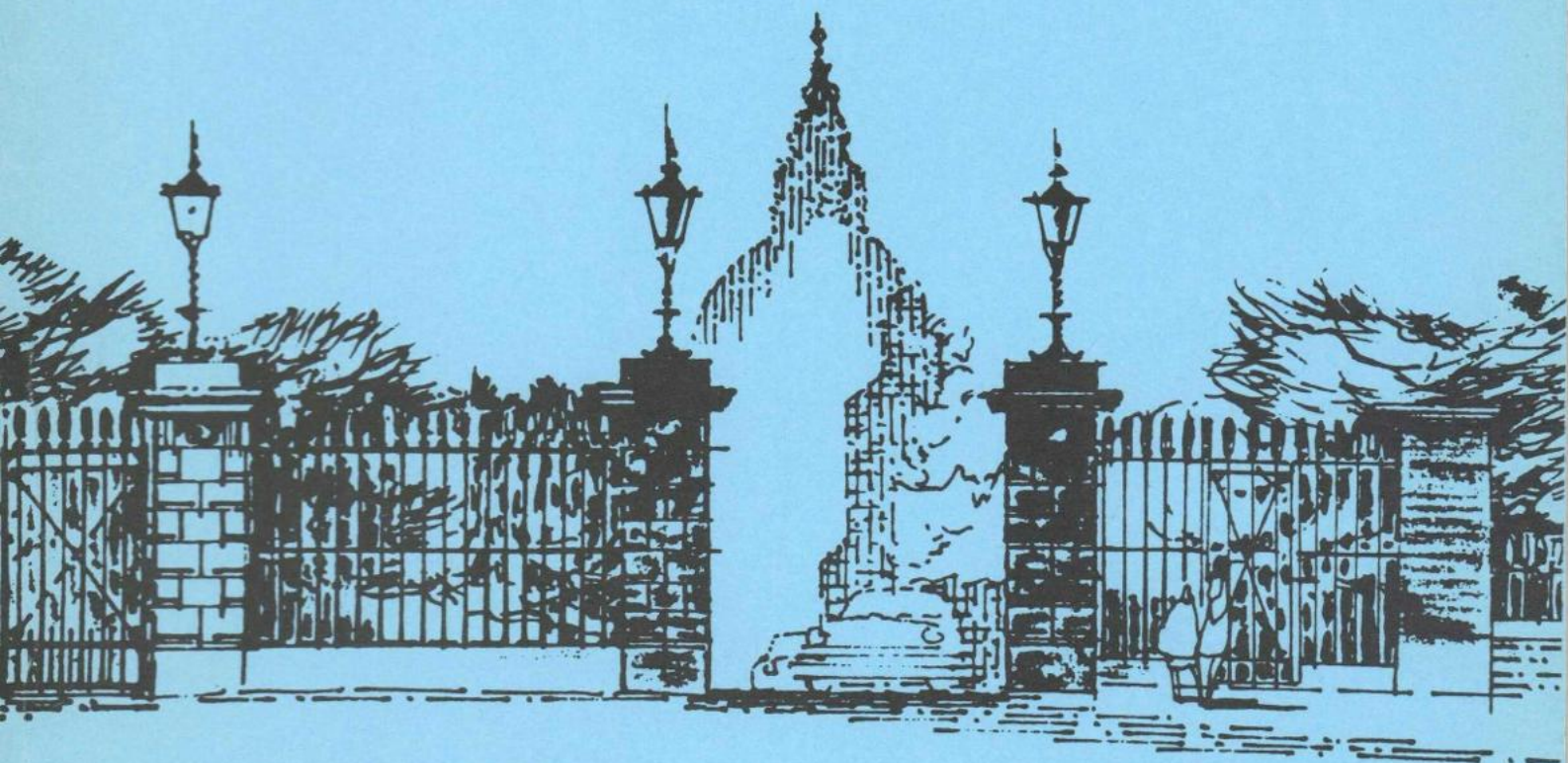


THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

30th ANNUAL REPORT
December 1991





BY APPOINTMENT
TO HER MAJESTY
QUEEN ELIZABETH
THE QUEEN MOTHER
DRAPERS



BY APPOINTMENT
TO H.R.H.
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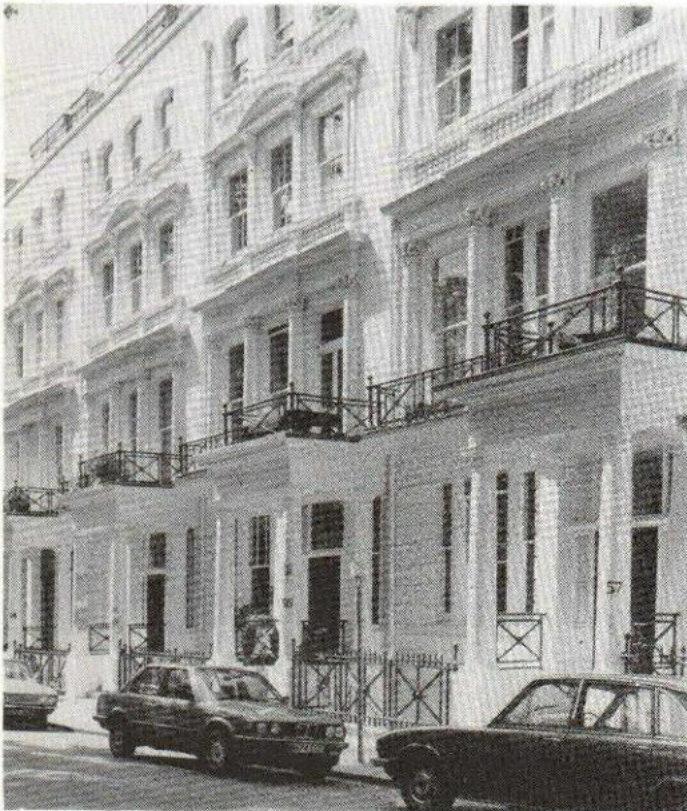
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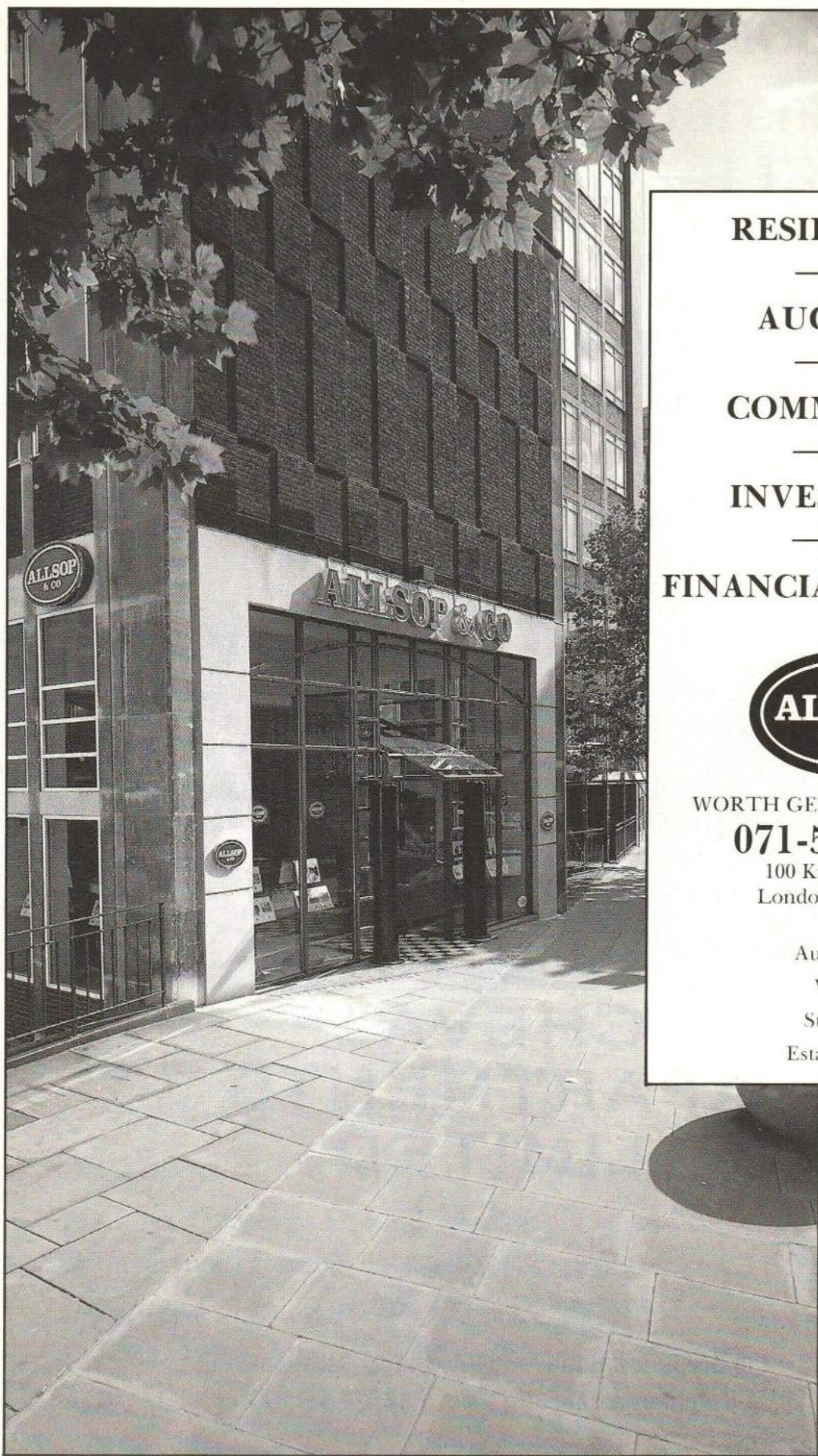
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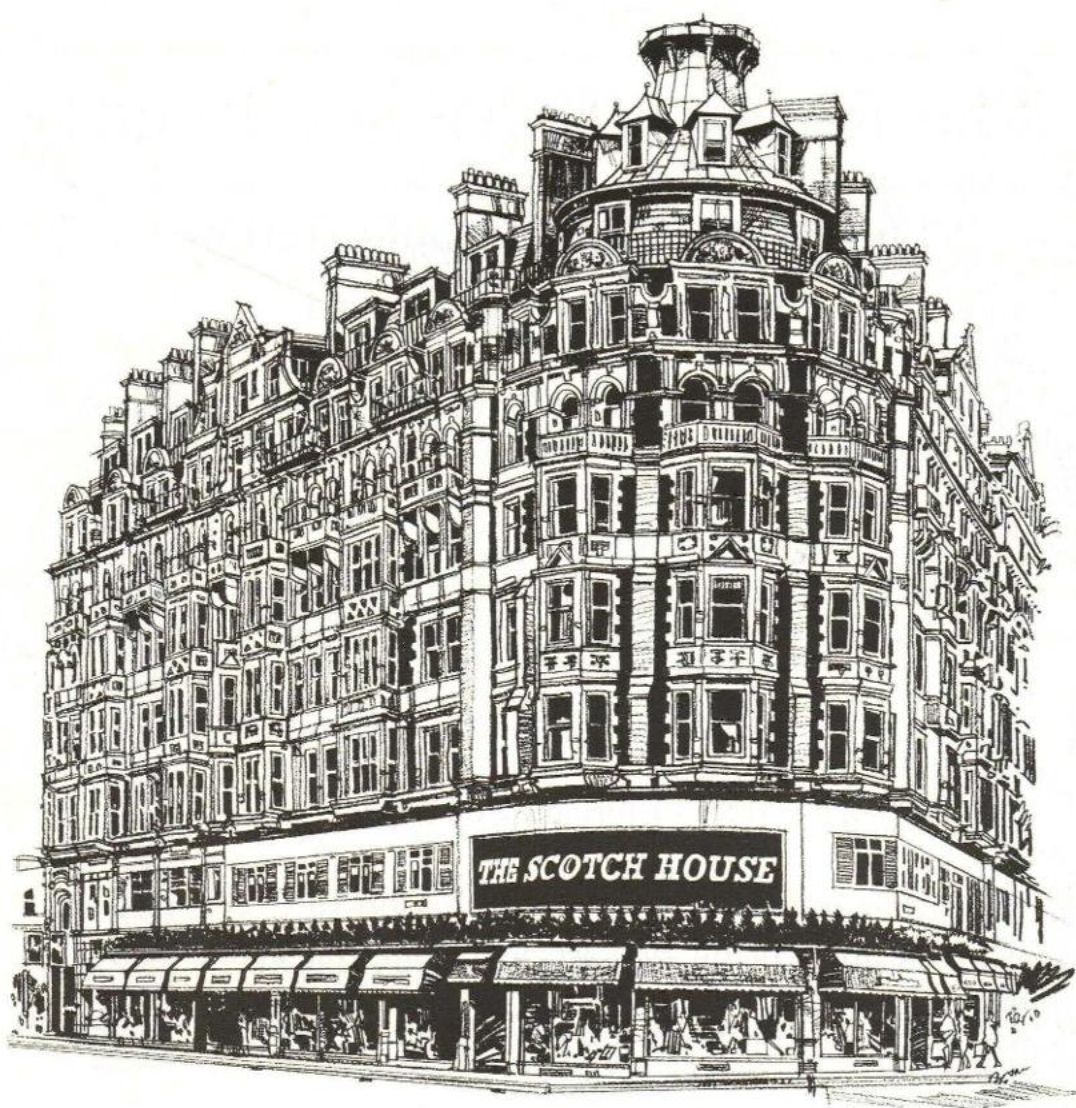


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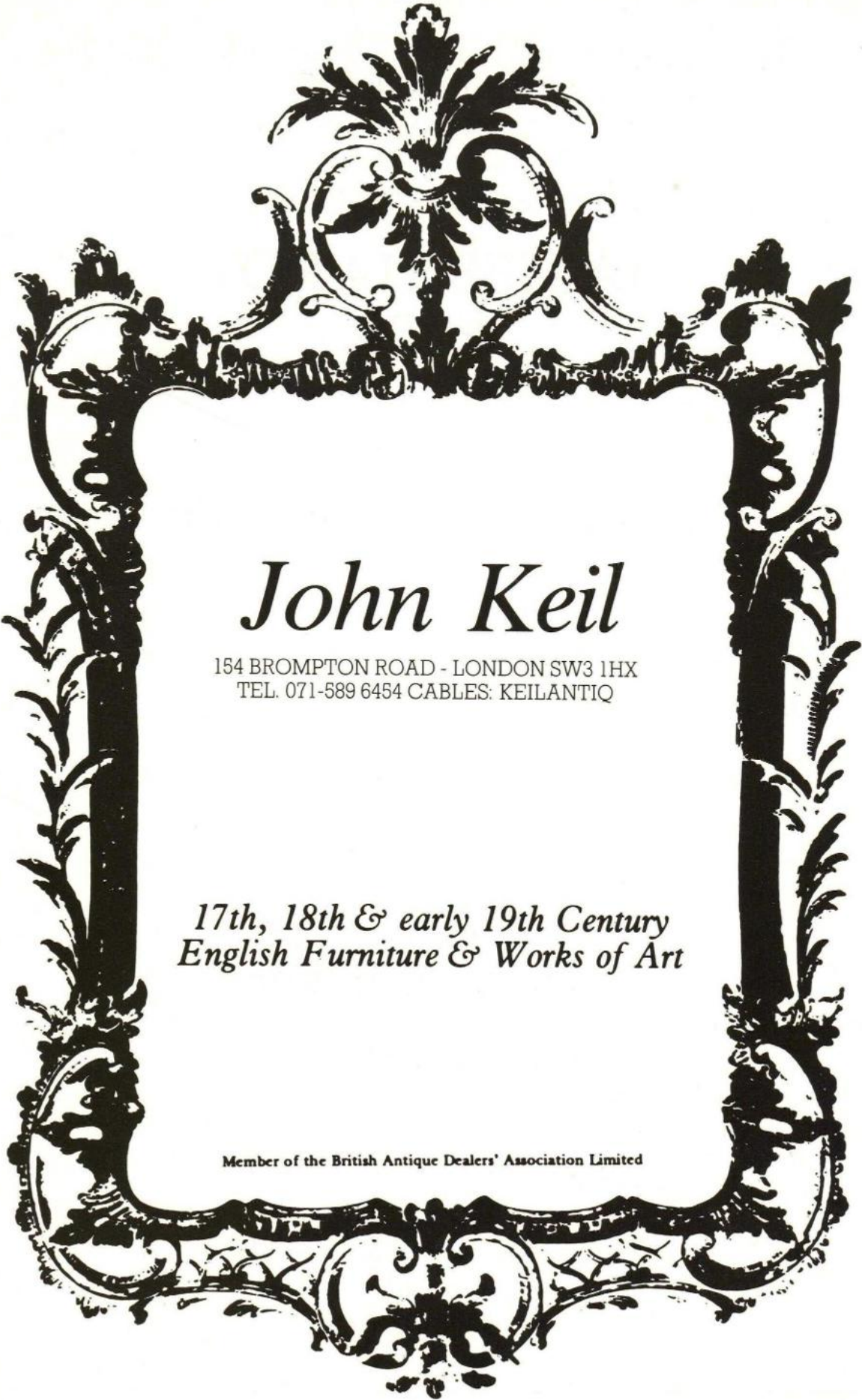
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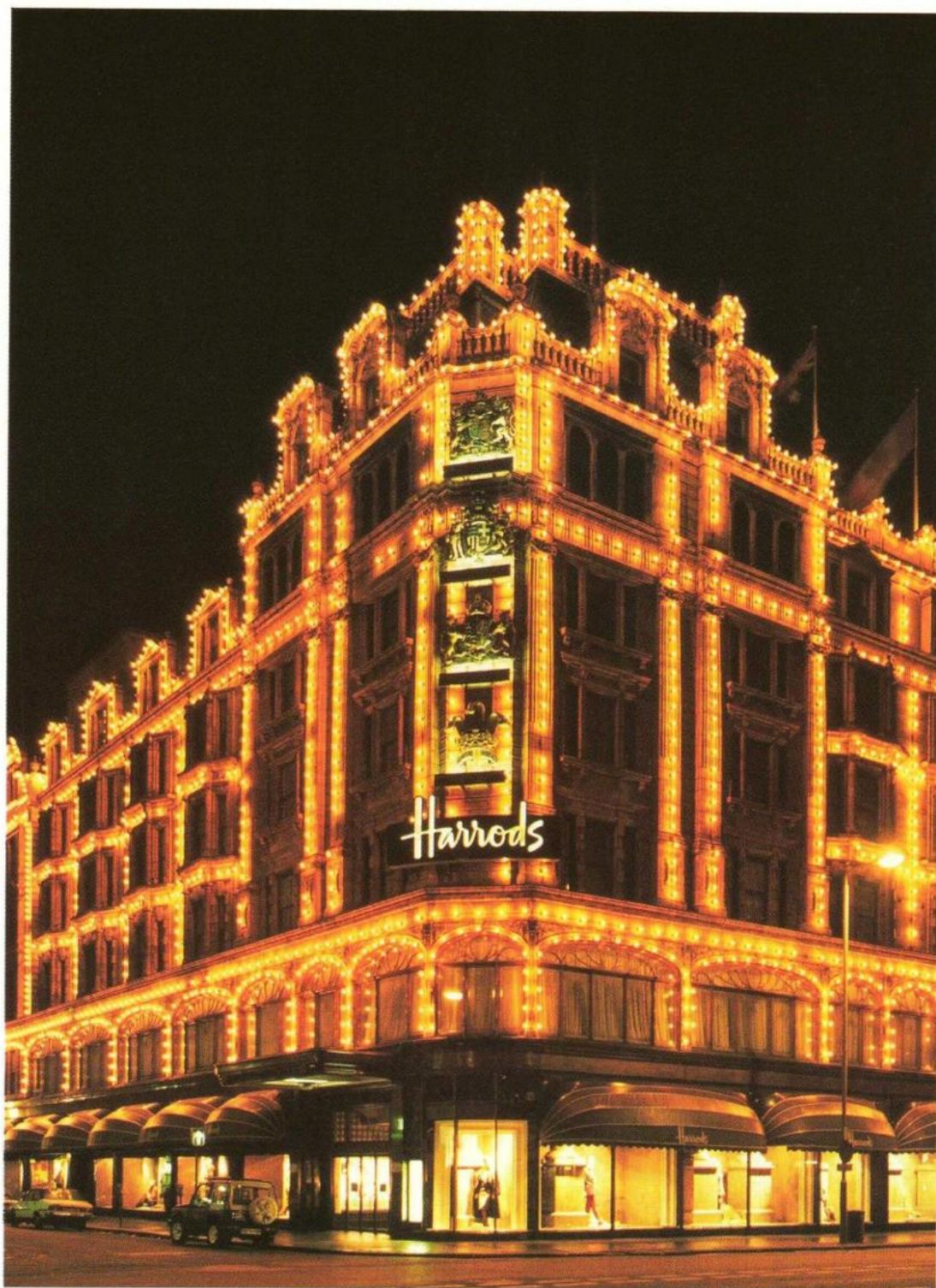
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The glorious semi-rural peace of Hyde Park.

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

Although the anniversary has passed almost unmarked, 1991 is the thirtieth year since the founding of the Knightsbridge Association. This is a good time to pause and consider why we began, what we have accomplished, and what we have yet to do.

The origins of the Association are rooted in a strong desire to preserve what is good and familiar in our surroundings, and to resist the wholesale redevelopment which renders neighbourhoods indistinguishable from one another. In 1961 the urgent need for action persuaded a number of public spirited citizens to come together and take defensive action. The delightful squares, the quiet streets and charming mews properties of residential Knightsbridge bear witness to the success that has followed their initiative.

Since that time, the work of the Association has broadened considerably. It is now concerned with protecting the amenities of the area in all their aspects. Thus, it has established committees to deal with rubbish and litter, traffic and parking, law and order, and other problems that are germane to life at the centre of a major city.

The Knightsbridge Association's success is based on its ability to persuade busy people

holding responsible positions in industry and the professions to give their time to serve on its committees. This is evident in the easy working relationship between the Association and both local and central government, the police and other public bodies.

In our thirtieth year, there is no place for self-congratulation nor time to pause in what is a constant battle to protect and enhance the environment. The redevelopment proposed by the Prudential of the properties which they own, stretching from Brompton Road to Hyde Park, is one of the largest ever contemplated at the heart of Knightsbridge. It creates the opportunity for correcting some architectural mistakes of the recent past but certain aspects of its use may have a profound effect upon the area.

Nothing can be taken for granted. A small cloud has arisen on the horizon with the appointment by the Minister of a committee to review the use of the Royal Parks, starting with Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. Some of the subjects discussed are of concern. These parks, which constitute the green heart of London, are an unequalled treasure and provide a breath of country air in a hectic, overcrowded city. The Association will fight hard to protect their simple, serene existence.

ENVIRONMENT

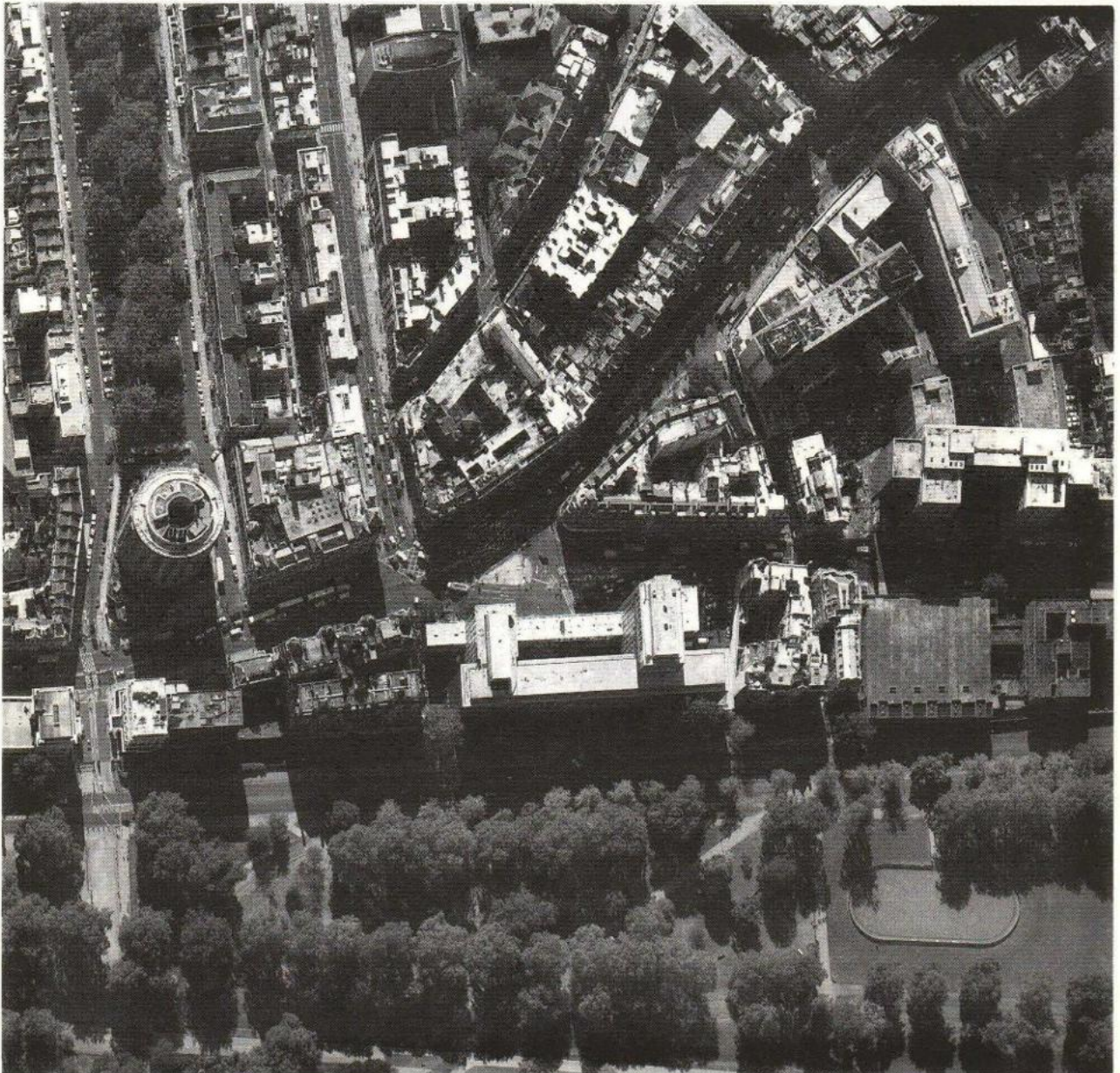
During a year of economic recession, with property development reported to be at its lowest ebb, there was yet no respite for the Environment Committee. However unprofitable the returns for development in other areas, and despite the pause in the seemingly endless rise of rents in Sloane Street, there seems to be no lack of confidence in the future prosperity of Knightsbridge. In fact, the Environment Committee has never had a busier year.

The Knightsbridge Association is, of course, consulted by both Westminster City Council and The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea on all planning applications in the area. There is also an increasing tendency for developers' architects to consult the Environment Committee prior to applying for planning consent, thus

saving much time and money for all concerned. This means a much heavier workload for committee members but gives both parties the opportunity to modify aspects of the proposed developments which would be detrimental to the local interest.

The proposal by Harrods to convert their depository in Trevor Square into an hotel with an entrance on Brompton Road opposite the store, which occupied so much of the committee's time during the last two years, came to a head in August when Westminster City Council refused permission for the development. The decision of Westminster's planning committee was unanimous and the refusal was on the grounds that the proposed hotel was contrary to Council policy, being outside the Central Activities Zone,

The heart of Knightsbridge seen from over Hyde Park.



and proper arrangements had not been made to mitigate the nuisances that it would inevitably bring.

The Association had obtained many concessions from the architects which would have gone some way to removing the severe aggravation caused to the Trevors by Harrods' suppliers' vehicles delivering to the depository. During discussions members had reluctantly accepted the possibility of an hotel since Harrods had stated that they could not move their goods entrance from Trevor Square without this development. The alternative of a residential scheme was not acceptable to them. The Council planning committee obviously did not accept this position and Harrods have appealed to the Department of the Environment; there will be a public enquiry next year.

In the meantime, the residents of the Trevors

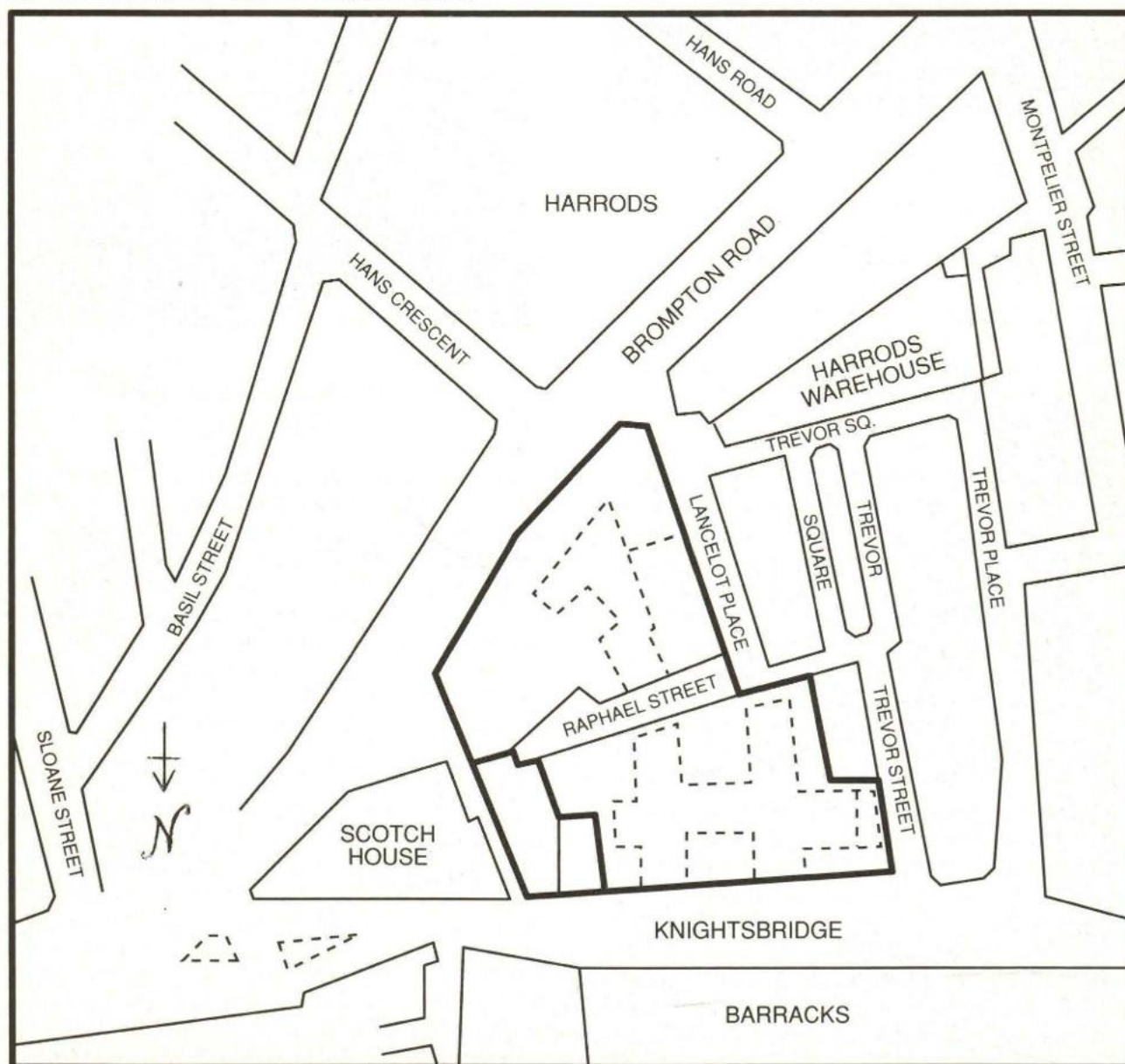
are still waiting for the re-scheduling of Harrods' suppliers' lorries which they have been promised for so long and which will enable Harrods to deliver goods to the depository in their own vehicles giving them more control and perhaps preventing the constant destruction of the gardens and street furniture in Trevor Square.

The Prudential Site

The postponement of a decision on the Harrods' scheme will at least allow the results of the traffic survey, which the Prudential is conducting in consultation with the Association, to be examined in relation to the area as a whole; the time has passed when the effects of traffic from a new development can be considered by its impact on the immediate locality alone.

The vast scheme put forward by the Prudential for the block of land bounded by Brompton

Plan of the area, with the Prudential development outlined.





Above: On the left, one of the 50's buildings to be demolished in the Prudential scheme. Below: 1 Knightsbridge Green, also to go.



Road and Knightsbridge, Knightsbridge Green and Lancelot Place is one of the largest re-developments ever contemplated in Knightsbridge. It has exciting possibilities in that the Prudential intend to demolish the unfortunate 50's buildings opposite the park and replace them by more interesting and more usable office structures. It also has dangers in that the intensely concentrated shopping centre that is proposed to adjoin Brompton Road may change the nature of the neighbourhood.

The Prudential has been sensitive to the reactions of the local community and many constructive meetings have been held with them and their architects and traffic engineers. Many of their original architectural proposals have been modified but there are still some areas where the committee would like to see change, particularly in order to make their new buildings sit happily in Brompton Road and Knightsbridge.

The Committee's concern with the traffic stemming from this major re-development, and the intensified uses contemplated, has led the Association to appoint its own traffic consultant to assess its effect on the neighbourhood. The consultant, David Tucker, a well-known expert on traffic matters, has already begun work and is regularly in touch with the Prudential's own traffic adviser and Westminster City Council.

A formal application was made in the early summer and discussions are in progress between the Council and the developers on use, design, highways and traffic issues. Meanwhile the Association is continuing its dialogue with the

Prudential and Westminster City Council. The Environment Committee has kept members of the Association informed of the Prudential's plans and will continue to do so.

The Normandie Hotel

Members will recall that the owners of the Normandie Hotel have, during recent years, applied frequently to increase the number of rooms on the site. Their original request in 1988 for 234 rooms was reduced to 154 but this was refused by Westminster City Council. This refusal was overturned when the owners appealed to the Department of the Environment and permission was granted in 1990. This year a new application has been submitted increasing the number of rooms to 190. The Association opposed this, and the Council has again turned down the application. The case will once more be going to appeal, sometime in the New Year.



The Royal Thames Yacht Club.

Royal Thames Yacht Club

There was a time when Knightsbridge was overwhelmed by a rash of applications for more embassies and diplomatic buildings. Now, the current enthusiasm seems to be the building of new hotels. An application was submitted by Mountleigh for the demolition of the Royal Thames Yacht Club and its replacement by a structure of far greater bulk and unsympathetic design. This would be a new hotel with 163 rooms and suites and which would incorporate premises for the Club. It would also incorporate 2 Albert Gate, which would be converted into conference suites.

The Association has objected on the grounds of bulk and design and has questioned the need for yet another hotel in this area, particularly one adjacent to the Hyde Park Hotel and opposite the Sheraton Park Tower. The Environment Committee particularly objected to the proposal to replace the existing residential flats within the Yacht Club by building 4 flats on top of Princes Court, a proposal which was strongly resisted by its tenants' association. The proposal for the original scheme has now been withdrawn and



Agriculture House, a post war building which would be demolished in a new scheme.

the Association is currently studying revised plans which do not seem to be an improvement.

Agriculture House, the Headquarters of the National Farmers' Union, which occupies a dominant position on the stretch of Knightsbridge near Hyde Park Corner, is possibly to be demolished and replaced. Plans for this were objected to by local residents and the Council refused permission on various grounds. The Environment Committee has seen revised plans to which it has not objected.

East of Agriculture House, the new office building No 1 Knightsbridge, has now been completed. At the time of the submission of the plans the Committee requested a modification to alter part of the building which would have obscured the continuous curve of the terrace. Now, with its pale honey coloured brick and gentle curves it is one of the more pleasant buildings to take its place on the approach to

Knightsbridge from Hyde Park Corner.

Next door, on Hyde Park Corner itself, St George's Hospital has gone through its metamorphosis and emerged as the Lanesborough Hotel. The hotel is due to open before Christmas and will obviously become a landmark in the area. Together with its neighbour this refurbished building will restore dignity to this long neglected corner of Knightsbridge.

Albert Court

For over 10 years, residents of Albert Court have been plagued by a series of applications to increase the size of this famous building that was erected around the turn of the century. In last year's report attention was drawn to yet another application to put five flats within the sloping roof. The tenants, advised by architect Anthony Blee, requested that the listing of the building be reinforced. The Environment Committee once again supported the tenants, and once again the Planning Committee rejected the application. As usual the freeholder appealed, and a public enquiry will be held in 1992.

Rutland Gate

The Environment Committee is happy to announce that steps have been taken to improve the upper garden in Rutland Gate. Last winter, residents of Rutland Gate were invited by the Association to discuss ways of improving

No 1 Knightsbridge, the new office building next door to the Lanesborough Hotel, shown on page 33.



matters both in the short and long term. Circulars were sent to all residents asking for contributions to a maintenance fund for the garden. Simultaneously a local committee was formed to persuade the Council to issue a compulsory purchase order on the absentee landlord, thus enabling the residents eventually to buy the freehold.

Donations received by the Committee enabled them to invite tenders for regular maintenance of the garden and work commenced in May. There is a marked improvement in the appearance, and additional planting will be undertaken in the Spring. In the meantime discussions are taking place with the Council on the long-term future of the Upper Garden.

The Committee is glad to report that the problems experienced by neighbours from the activities of the Accademia Italiana now seem to have abated. The City Council insisted on the Accademia making a formal application for change from the existing office use of the lower floors to that of an exhibition centre for the promotion of the arts. Permission was granted personally to the Accademia for a period of one year only to May 1992 with built in safeguards to protect the amenity of Rutland Gate residents. The situation is being monitored and it is hoped that the Accademia will continue to conduct its affairs in a manner acceptable to the neighbourhood.

An area of great concern to the Environment Committee is the continued erosion of architectural features by insensitive repairs, alterations and extensions. Modern and over-ornate finishes which are out of keeping with the neighbourhood continue to appear. An increasing number of properties have had the traditional

wooden sash windows replaced with inappropriate frames made of plastic, while leaded panes have been replaced with plastic strips. Modern lamps and lanterns, which are out of sympathy with the buildings, have appeared as well as other features which are too ornate for simple Georgian and Victorian terraced houses.

It should be noted that the Council has the power to seek the removal of embellishments to listed buildings and their reinstatement to their original form. It would be helpful if residents would contact either the Design or Conservation officer in the Planning Department of the appropriate council when wishing to carry out substantial repairs, restore missing or damaged features such as cornicing, railings, balustrades and lanterns, or to replace windows and fanlights. The Association would be happy to provide the relevant telephone numbers.

In addition to the major items mentioned, the normal flow of applications was referred to the Environment Committee by the two Councils throughout the year. These were examined at the regular meetings and site visits were made when necessary. This demanding programme of work places a heavy load on the Environment Committee.

The strength of this group is that its members include not only gifted and hard-working citizens with long experience of environmental matters, but also highly qualified professionals who give their spare time to protecting Knightsbridge. Ably led by the Chairman, Richard Robinson, and its two distinguished architects, Michael Wright and Jeremy Mackay-Lewis, together with Lesley MacDonagh, a skilled planning lawyer, the committee forms a formidable negotiating body.

HYDE PARK & KENSINGTON GARDENS

It is well over a century since a British government was referred to as an administration. Today, even the most conservative government is interventionist. Sometimes initiatives are taken to change institutions which seem to be part of the background of our everyday life. Recently, the Secretary of State for the Environment announced a fundamental change in the way that the Royal Parks are to be serviced and the establishment of a committee of enquiry into their uses.

In future, the upkeep of the parks will be put out to competitive tender to private firms, which the Minister hopes will bring savings without losing any of the quality and care both of the parks and their wildlife. The Association hopes very much that these can be preserved.

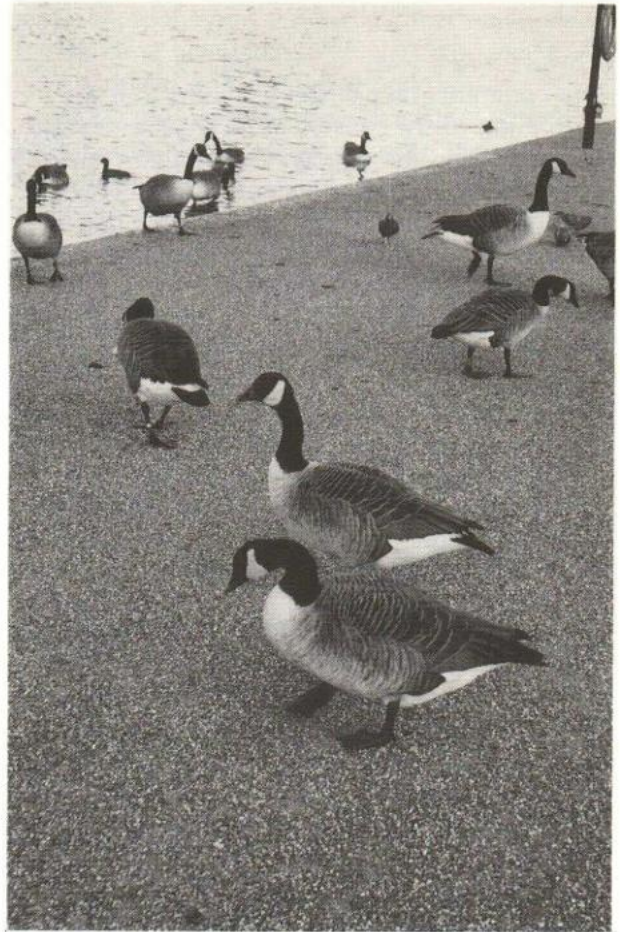
The bandstand in Hyde Park in the late winter sunshine.



The committee of enquiry, chaired by Dame Jennifer Jenkins, has been briefed to bring out its first report by examining the uses of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens and making recommendations. The Knightsbridge Association was asked to comment on the issues involved and a paper was prepared and delivered in October.

The issues raised by the Parks Review Panel are detailed and fundamental. They include sport, cycling and horse riding, exercising dogs, special events, providing high quality horticultural displays, protecting wildlife and historic landscapes, catering and the provision of restaurants and other facilities. Also raised was the alarming prospect of development in the parks.

The Association has made it clear to the panel that the main use of the Royal Parks to Londoners and visitors alike, is to provide them with large, calm, open green spaces in which to take their leisure away from the noise and bustle of city life. There exists at present a good balance of facilities and opportunities for informal sport and recreation and all that is needed is to improve the standard of the services already provided. It is implacably opposed to the building of new permanent structures and concerned that the relaxation of control on events is reducing the quality of the amenities of the central London parks and their surroundings.



Above: Waterfowl near the Serpentine in Hyde Park. Below: The tranquility of Hyde Park.



LAND USE CONSULTANTS

HERITAGE

The committee is pleased to report that the restoration of the railings in Montpelier Square, undertaken by the Garden Committee chaired by Lesley McDonagh and anticipated in last year's report, has now been completed. This greatly enhances the appearance of this famous square. It is also pleasing to report that Holy Trinity Brompton has received permission to restore the railings round the north and east side of the churchyard.

The Heritage Committee is constantly pursuing the restoration of historic features in the neighbourhood and encouraging others to do the same. It also contributes to efforts made by other organisations and this year the bollard which the Association sponsored for the restoration of Rotten Row is now in place. It is situated on Rotten Row south of the Serpentine in line with the west side of the barracks.

One of the legacies of the GLC is the *Survey of London*, which has been chronicling buildings in different areas in a splendid series of books. This work has been taken over by The Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of London, which continues to research and publish the volumes in sequence. Under the general editorship of Hermione Hobhouse it is a detailed and comprehensive history of London's building fabric from early times to the present day. It describes buildings which are of outstanding architectural or historic significance and also investigates the ordinary structures which contribute to the character of the city.

The first volume was published in 1900 and the survey staff are beginning work on a volume devoted to Knightsbridge, which will be published in 1994. Some parts of the area have, of course, been included in earlier volumes because the titles do not entirely match the present boundaries. However, the new volume will include the heartland of the original hamlet and will be of great interest to members of the Association.

Hermione Hobhouse has already spoken to



Above: Rotten Row showing the bollard donated by the Knightsbridge Association. Below: Cllr. Davis presenting Lesley MacDonagh with a donation from Westminster City Council to the Montpelier Square railings appeal.



members of the Main Committee asking for the co-operation of the Knightsbridge Association in the compilation of this volume and will address the membership at the Annual General Meeting.

TRAFFIC, TRANSPORT AND PARKING

Traffic and parking are as always a constant worry to residents and businesses in Knightsbridge. The Traffic Committee is particularly concerned with the use of residential streets as short-cuts by vehicles attempting to avoid blockages on the main arteries. Through traffic using these small streets and garden squares travels at too fast a speed and the committee is constantly pressing the local

authorities to install road-humps to bring the speed down to an acceptable level.

The Committee is also dealing with some of the traffic anomalies which prevent local traffic from being able to make the correct turn to reach its destination, making U-turns necessary. Recently, it has put forward a scheme to the Department of the Environment and Westminster City Council which would enable traffic travelling

west along South Carriage Drive to turn right and proceed north across the Park. A new scheme is also being suggested for Exhibition Road.

One of the regular problems in the area is that South Carriage Drive in Hyde Park is closed on Sundays, which causes traffic jams in Knightsbridge. From April next year, the Hyde Park underpass is to undergo substantial repairs and each of the tunnels will be closed for about six months. The Committee has requested that the South Carriage Drive should stay open on Sundays during the closure to avoid the serious congestion that would otherwise follow.

The Committee, led by Dr Stanley Steel, has also had to deal with the problems created by the proposed cancellation by London Transport of the popular C1 hopper bus on the route between Victoria and Kensington. The introduction of this bus was welcomed in that it linked up stretches of London not otherwise easily connected and is popular for its quick and friendly service. The Association made strong

representations and the service has remained for the time being, although the frequency has been reduced and the ticket price raised.

During the year, Westminster City Council has been successful in allocating over 1,000 extra respark places throughout the city, which will come as welcome news to residents. It is interesting to note that in the city as a whole there are 22,332 spaces to accommodate the 29,526 permits which have been issued. In Knightsbridge alone there are 1,113 spaces for 1,315 permits. Thus Knightsbridge has 85% of the space required, compared with 74% available in the City of Westminster as a whole.

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has 35,000 permit holders but only 23,000 or 66% of the necessary spaces available. Like Westminster City Council, they have been increasing the number of spaces and over the past few years have created another 2,500. Both Councils are committed to enlarging the facility and the Traffic Committee welcomes suggestions of any suitable sites from members.

LAW AND ORDER

Considerable efforts were made during the year by the Law and Order Committee to strengthen further the close ties that exist with the Metropolitan Police. All the meetings are now attended by senior and local officers from both Gerald Road and Chelsea Police Stations, which together police the Knightsbridge area. This is extremely useful at all times in obtaining a quick reaction to the community's problems and receiving vital information about criminal activity in the area.

Unfortunately, the problems that have been the Committee's main concern still remain high on the agenda. For example, the continuous nuisance of illegal pavement traders, ice-cream vans blocking major roads and other activities which make Brompton Road so unattractive to visitors and residents at peak periods.

The Committee is also concerned with the danger of scaffolding being used by burglars, ticket-touts operating in the Albert Hall area, thieves using entry phones to gain access to buildings and more minor matters such as the nuisance of faulty building and car alarms that disturb residents at night.

One of the main problems which disturbs the Chairman, Gordon Shingleton and his deputy, Ellie Brook JP, is the inadequacy of the fines imposed by the courts for many of the offences committed in the area. It is extremely difficult to make arrests for some of the more serious crimes and a special effort is being made to express the committee's concerns in the

appropriate quarters.

Two problems which have caused considerable disturbance to neighbours during the past two years have now been resolved. The crowds of fans who used to sit around in Ennismore Mews have now dispersed since the pop singer living there has now moved. The *Bar Twenty 4* in Montpelier Place, where the activities were causing concern to residents has now closed down.

The *George IV* public house filed an application for a Sunday and weekday music and dance licence. Local residents, supported by the Association, opposed the application and it has now been withdrawn. The further application to add an extra floor for staff use was felt to be acceptable and the owners have undertaken to prevent customers drinking outside the public house after 9 pm.

The Law and Order Committee is always ready to hear from members having any problems or concerns with which it can help.

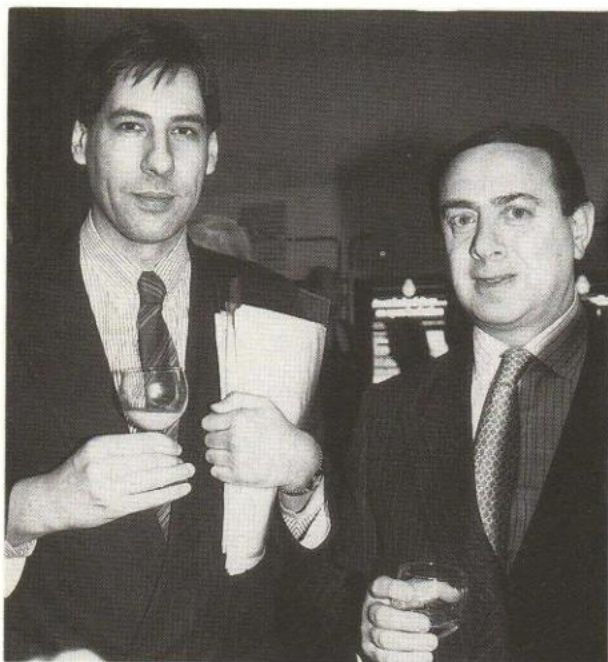
Congestion caused by one of the illegally parked ice cream vans.



RECEPTION BEFORE THE 1990 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Sir Archibald Ross, Jonathon Bodlender, the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Cllr. David Avery.



Above: Gordon Chard, Councillor Robert Michaels. Below: Simon & Lesley MacDonagh with James.



Sidney Sporle, Lord St John of Fawsley, Neville Labovitch.



Above: Jonna Wegenfelt, Mr & Mrs Klaus Leist. Below: Mrs Shaker, Mr & Mrs Bruce Gifford.





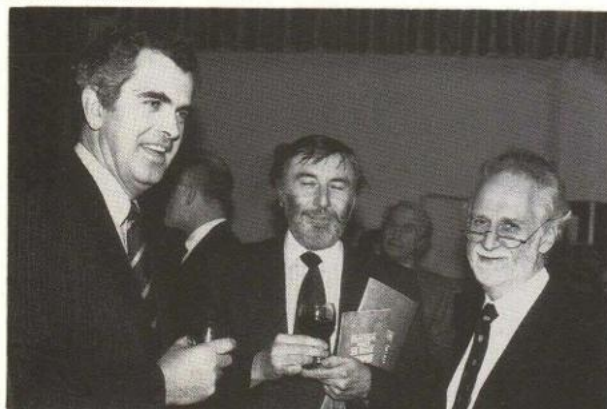
Baroness Gardner of Parkes, Lord Strathcarron, Elizabeth Manzoni.



Daniel Quirici, Pat Wolfston, the Rev Sandy Millar.



Above: Mardie Gorman, PC Duncan Law, Gordon Shingleton, Cynthia Thompson. Below: Dick Bingham, Derek Carpenter, Richard Thomas.



Lady Grade, the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Cllr. David Avery.



Above: Dr Stanley Steel, Lady Riches. Below: Chief Inspector Hugh Beresford-Peirse, Cllr. Desmond Harney.



LOCAL AND OTHER AUTHORITIES

The relationship between the Association and the two local authorities in the area is harmonious, fruitful and increasingly strong. The days have disappeared when the Knightsbridge Association's views on conservation and care for the environment were at odds with those of the local Councils. Today, the philosophy of all three bodies is generally compatible and where problems occur it is usually from the overriding of local decisions on appeal. When subsequently one looks at the consequences of this frustration of local judgement it is difficult not to believe that on many occasions the original decision should have been upheld.

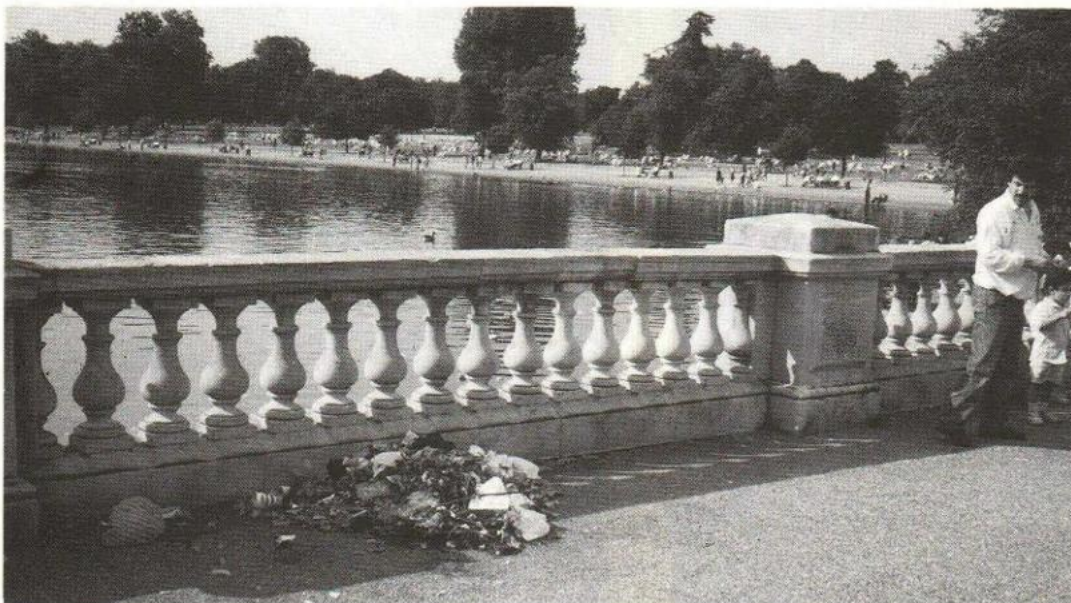
There have been several important changes at Westminster City Council during the year: Lady Porter, who had been Leader of the Council for many years, retired from the post to become Lord Mayor and was awarded the DBE. The Association extends its congratulations on this double honour. Congratulations are also extended to David Weeks the new Leader of the Council. Formerly, as Chairman of the Planning Committee, he had always been most helpful to

the Association which now welcomes Alex Segal as Planning Chairman with Olga Polizzi as his deputy.

Despite his heavy duties, Sid Sporle, the Director of Planning and Transportation has always found time to deal with the affairs of the Association and we are grateful to him and his colleagues for another year of co-operative achievement.

The area covered by the Knightsbridge Association also extends into the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and here also the Association has benefited from the courtesy and co-operation of the Leader, Joan Hanham, the Chairman of Planning Professor Sir Anthony Coates and the Director of Planning, Mary Dent.

Westminster's Member of Parliament, the Rt. Hon. Peter Brooke, who, as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, occupies one of the most taxing positions in the government, nevertheless takes a keen interest in the affairs of the Association. As a conscientious constituency member, he is unstinting in his help and advice on all occasions.



Above right: Paper recycling bank in Relton Mews and, above left, one of the bottle banks.

Left: Uncollected rubbish in Hyde Park.

LITTER, RUBBISH AND HIGHWAYS

Although the Association was formed thirty years ago to protect Knightsbridge from indiscriminate demolition and to maintain the fabric of the neighbourhood, it inevitably found itself involved in the protection of local amenities. A severe problem was, and still remains, the amount of litter which cascades onto the streets each day. Frances Rice, who heads the Litter Committee, has inspired a concentrated campaign to combat this modern disease. Her success can be seen in the generally clean squares and streets of domestic Knightsbridge, but there still remains the unpleasant state of Brompton Road and other main thoroughfares.

To maintain the condition of the residential areas requires co-operation from residents in putting out their rubbish at the correct times only, and spreading this information to their neighbours. An equal responsibility is borne by shops, business premises and especially restaurants to keep this rule and protect the public from the waste generated by their activities. The Committee will intensify its efforts in the commercial areas and hopes that it will receive co-operation from the business community in persuading their less conscientious colleagues to co-operate. The recent decision by a DoE inspector overriding the Royal Borough, means yet another fast food outlet in Brompton Road, which experience teaches will create large amounts of litter within a wide area.

Both local councils are making efforts to increase the provision of recycling facilities. In Knightsbridge there are bottle banks separated by colours, behind the Albert Hall, at the Science Museum, by the Imperial College buildings on the east side of Princes Gardens, and in Relton Mews, where there is also a paper bank. Their success depends on the preparedness of residents to use them.

The Committee has continuously drawn attention to the state of the roads and it is encouraging to be able to report that the situation in Westminster has markedly improved since the establishment of the "Westminster Initiative" which supplies report cards to be filled in indicating potholes and broken paving, defective lights, broken or missing street furniture, and other dangerous and unsightly faults. The speed with which complaints are dealt with has now increased considerably.

The success of the Litter, Rubbish and Highways Committee depends on the co-operation of the whole community and Frances Rice is anxious for the assistance of any members who are able to support her efforts.



Recurrent problems: broken paving (above) and exposed wiring (below).



SOCIAL EVENTS

Despite the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Association, there has as yet been no celebration. The heavy work-load and the strain of dealing with the many problems of the area have kept members of all the committees busy. It is recognised that social events are very popular with members and these can also be beneficial to the Association's Heritage Fund. Lady Grade, who leads the Social and Events Committee, is considering future functions.

Last November many members attended the inauguration of the Christmas Lights in Knightsbridge. Illuminated miniature Christmas trees were attached to lamp standards from Harrods to the Berkeley Hotel and down the length of Sloane Street. This imaginative scheme was the inspiration of Raymond Benardout who obtained support from the local business community led by the Knightsbridge Group of traders and the Cadogan Estate. The illuminations were switched on by Bonnie Langford and Christopher Biggins. The school choirs of St George's Hanover Square and Sussex House, Cadogan Square sang carols and the trumpeters of the Household Cavalry sounded fanfares to herald the new annual event.

This year's Annual General Meeting will take place on Monday 2nd December at Holy Trinity Brompton church hall. The meeting will be preceded by a reception at 6 o'clock, always a pleasant and very popular party. Guests will, as always, include officers and councillors from both Westminster City Council and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, members of the police and others. There will be plans on view of the latest proposals by the Prudential for their extensive development scheme and also details of Mountleigh's new proposals for a hotel to replace the Royal Thames Yacht Club. This year, Hermione Hobhouse of The Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of London, will say a few words on the forthcoming Knightsbridge volume of the Survey of London. All our guests are happy to answer questions from the floor and it is hoped for the normal good attendance of members and their friends.

FINANCE

The Honorary Treasurer, Christine Gilbertson, has again reported a satisfactory state of affairs. She jealously husbands the Association's resources, and expenses are very small compared



From top: Lt Col Seymour Gilbert-Denham, Raymond Benardout and Paulo Biscioni, after the switching-on ceremony; carols from the choir; Bonny Langford joins the choir as the lights go on.

with those of similar organisations. The committees are fortunate to have among their members people with professional expertise, which saves expenditure on outside advice. This year, however, it has been necessary to employ

the services of an expert on traffic movement in order to advise the Environment Committee on the effects of new, large-scale developments in the area. It is important for the Association to have funds available for such contingencies.

APPRECIATIONS

It is a recurring difficulty to find ways of including thanks to everybody who has donated their time and energy to the service of their friends and neighbours in Knightsbridge. The Association is extremely fortunate that it has been able to attract the services of busy men and women who lead demanding business and professional lives. These public spirited people, many of them distinguished in their own field, still find time to attend the meetings and conduct the affairs of the Knightsbridge Association. It is their efforts that continue to protect and enhance Knightsbridge, and I am exceedingly grateful to them all.

The Chairmen of the committees deserve the gratitude of the Association, as do all the members of its committees who are listed in the report.

A particular word of thanks must go to Raymond Benardout for his exceptional work on this Annual Report. The advertising pages, which are mainly the result of his efforts, are of great importance to the Association. They are a

tangible expression of support from the commercial community which appreciates the benefits it derives from the work of the Knightsbridge Association. The Association is grateful to the famous companies that have taken this opportunity to demonstrate their appreciation of its work.

Everyone of the committees of the Association benefits from the support of our Honorary Secretary, Carol Seymour-Newton, whose knowledge of civic and community affairs is now without equal. Her hard work and experience is essential to the success of the Association and it is impossible to value too highly the debt which is owed to her by the people of Knightsbridge.

My colleagues join me in expressing to the members of this Association our thanks and appreciation for their support which encourages the committees in their constant work to protect and enhance the quality of life in Knightsbridge.

Neville Labovitch
December 1991

THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

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Secretary
Christine Gilbertson — Hon.
Treasurer
Raymond Benardout
Raymond Burton
Jonathan Charkham
Rosalie Digby-Seymour
Lady Duncan
Baroness Gardner of Parkes
Lady Grade
Jean Lyell
Frances Rice
Richard Robinson
Stanley Steel MD FRCP
Nina Wallis
John Wallis
Sarah Wills

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

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Lesley MacDonagh — Vice Chairman
Michael Wright CMG FRICS RIBA —
Vice Chairman
Joyce Goodman
Diana Jenkins
Neville Labovitch MBE
Jean Lyell
Jeremy Mackay-Lewis BArch
FRIBA
Frances Rice
Carol Seymour-Newton
Stanley Steel MD FRCP
Cynthia Thompson
John Wallis
Sarah Wills

LITTER AND RUBBISH COMMITTEE

Chairman: Frances Rice

LAW AND ORDER COMMITTEE

Chairman: Gordon Shingleton

TRAFFIC AND PARKING COMMITTEE

Chairman: Stanley Steel MD FRCP

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

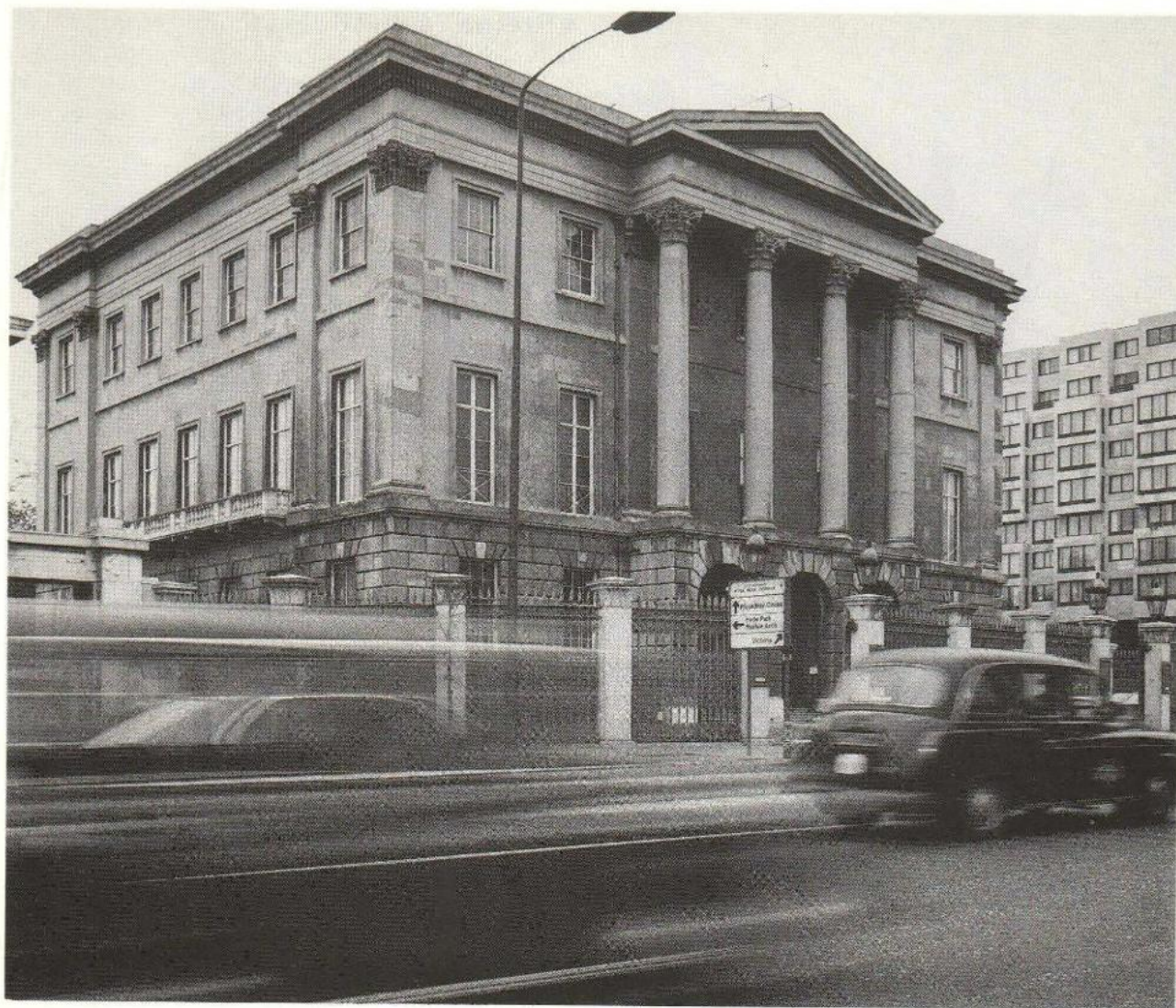
Chairman: Raymond Benardout
Hon. Secretary: Rosalie Digby-
Seymour



HYDE PARK CORNER

Hyde Park Corner is home to a unique group of neo-classical monuments built in the 1820's, outstanding in their quality — Decimus Burton's Screen and Arch in 1825, St George's Hospital in 1829, and Apsley House (originally built by Robert Adam in the late Eighteenth Century) altered and enlarged by the Wyatts for the Duke of Wellington in 1828. Before Belgravia was developed, these buildings — the Arch, the Screen, Apsley House and St George's — marked the entrance to London from the west. Indeed, in Victorian times, Apsley House was known as No. 1, London.

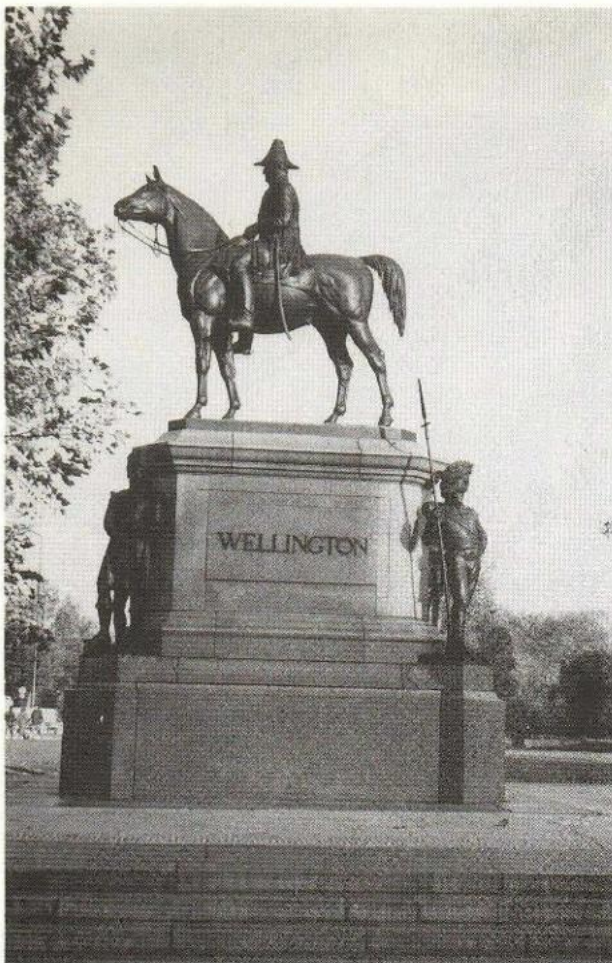
● **Constitution Arch:** The Arch, by Decimus Burton, was built as a northern gate to the grounds of Buckingham Palace, and originally stood opposite and to the south of his Screen. The Arch was moved to its present position in 1883, destroying the original alignment. In 1912, the Quadriga — the bronze chariot carrying Victory — replaced the original statue of the Duke of Wellington on the top of the Arch.



● **Apsley House:** Built by Robert Adam, Apsley House was enlarged and transformed in 1828 by the Wyatts for the victorious Iron Duke. They extended the house to the west, faced it with stone and added a new Corinthian portico to the entrance. Apsley House was presented to the nation by the seventh Duke in 1947, and in 1952 it opened as the Wellington Museum.

● **The Decimus Burton Screen:** The Ionic Screen is, together with the Arch, the culmination of Burton's work in Hyde Park, where he also designed many of the lodges. The Screen, which has become increasingly dilapidated in recent years, is about to undergo extensive repairs.





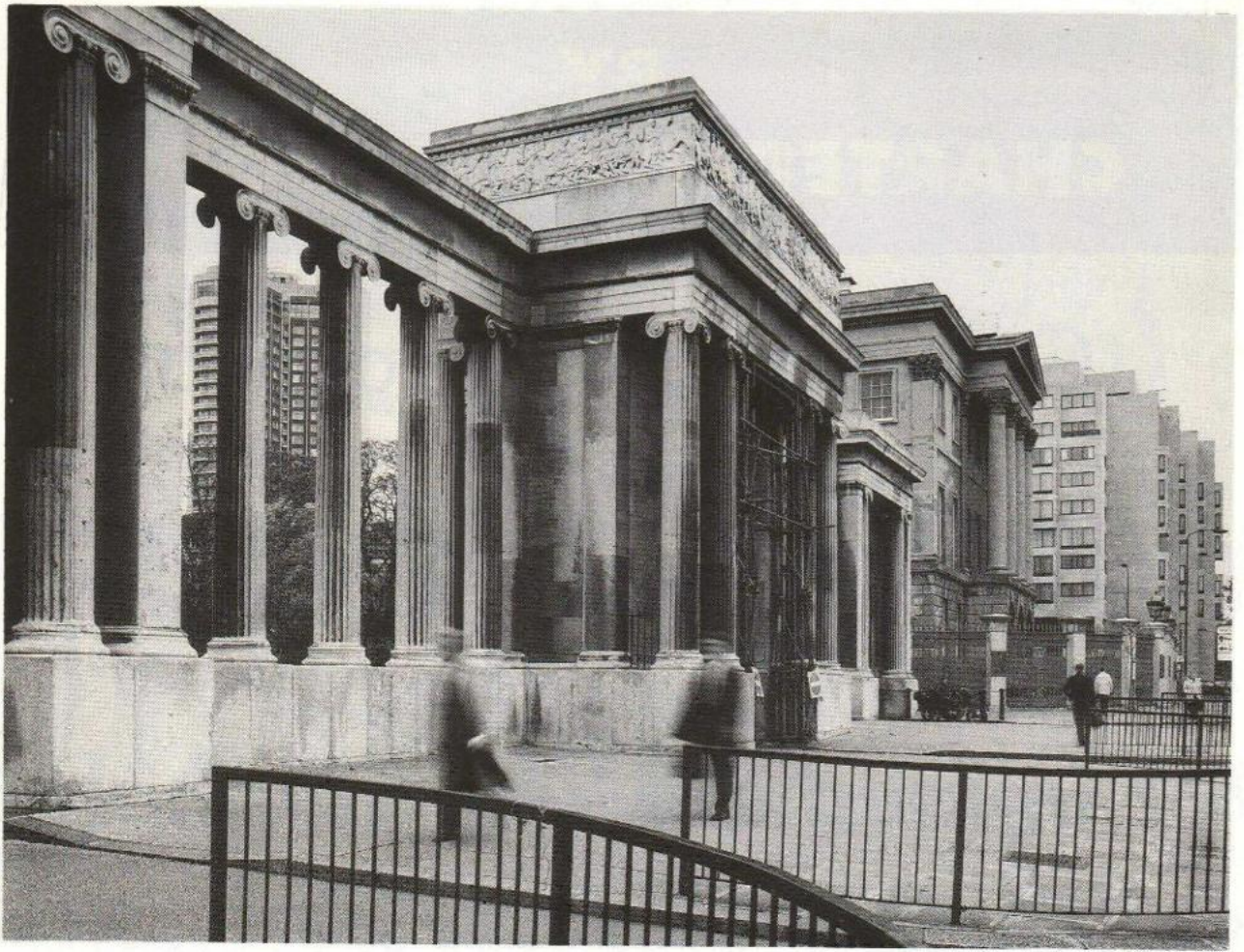
● **Statue of Wellington:** This bronze figure (left) of the Duke mounted on Copenhagen, made in 1888 by J Boehm, stands facing Apsley House. It was intended to replace the original statute on Constitution Arch, which was thought ugly and was later removed to Aldershot.

● **Artillery Monument:** The monument to the Royal Regiment of Artillery (below) was erected "In proud remembrance of the 49,076 of all ranks . . . who gave their lives for King and Country in the Great War 1914-1919."

● **The Lanesborough Hotel:** Named after the house built on the site by Viscount Lanesborough in 1719, this lavish new hotel (below right) is a skilful conversion by the Fitzroy Robinson Partnership of St George's Hospital, William Wilkins' attractive building, erected between 1827 and 1829. Wilkins' building is remarkable in having square pillars on the entrance portico.

● **The Decimus Burton Screen:** The elegant proportions of the screen can be seen in this picture (above, right) of its eastern end, where it meets Apsley House. In the background the Intercontinental Hotel dwarfs both Apsley House and the Screen. Burton's other work in London includes the Athenaeum club in Pall Mall and the Giraffe House at the London Zoo.





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The International haute cuisine in both its restaurants continues to receive many accolades. The oak-panelled Grill Room features traditional French & English cuisine whilst the magnificent Park Room, overlooking Hyde Park, has introduced an exciting Mediterranean cuisine where all dishes are light and delicate.

The Hyde Park Hotel looks forward to continue welcoming the Knightsbridge Association.

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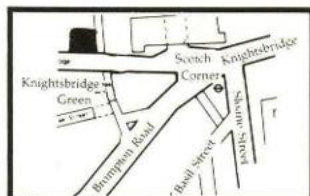
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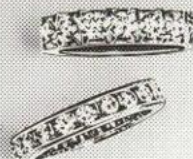
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