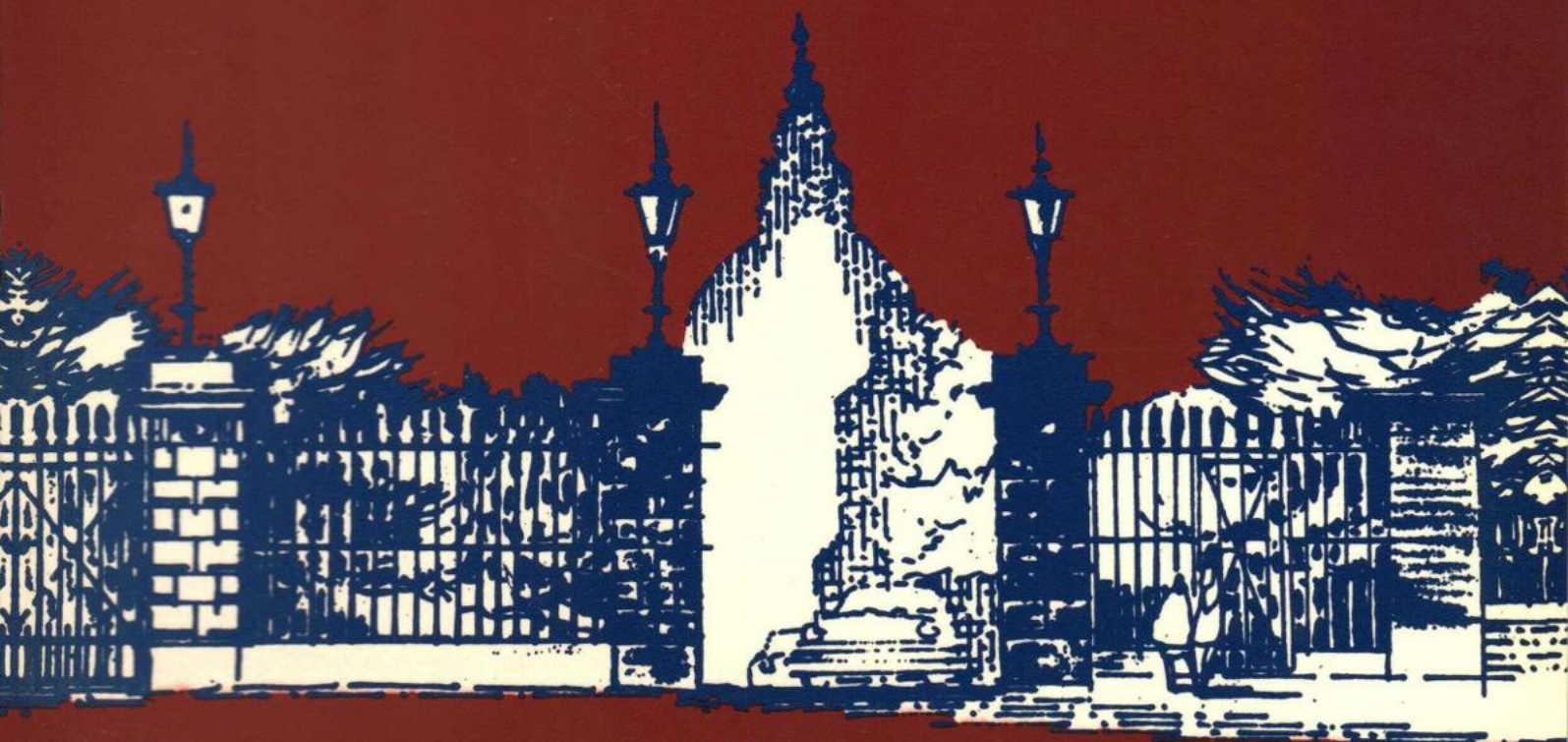


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37th ANNUAL REPORT

December 1998





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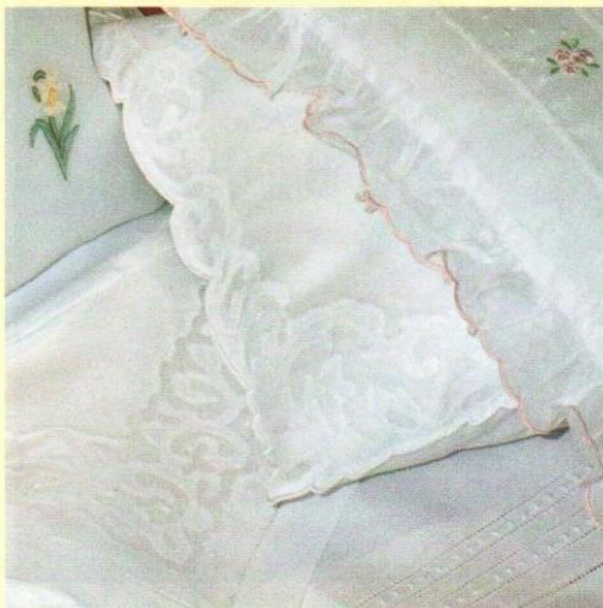
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SW1. Besides use of the garden in the square, it opens on to a shared garden at the back of the terrace. But its treat is spectacular joinery: French oak floors and deep mahogany in one bathroom. The other has

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Avril Butt, head of the residential department at De Groot Collis, a Chesterton subsidiary, says: 'The difficulty in finding suitable investment and prime development sites in central London for prospective investors, developers and joint-venture partners, has resulted in marked increases due to healthy competition.'

Homes

The agent who sold a house for £20m

Mystery buyer, mystery seller - but a discreet super-saleswoman has just pulled off the property coup of the year. Report by MIRA BAR-HILLEL and TIM BARLASS

One must also know how to handle such a deal. "I was once talking to Sheikh Zaid of Abu Dhabi and called him Your Excellency instead of Your Highness," she says ruefully. "I nearly got my hands cut off."

THE LONDON MAGAZINE

also computer-linked, as are De Groot's Knightsbridge, Chelsea and West End offices. Involved in lettings since 1978, Emily Anson, who heads the department, says, "Renting has become an established and credible alternative to purchasing, despite the recent upturn in the residential property market. Being computer-linked means that we can give applicants instant information on our instructions."

side of Regent's Park. I admired Crown. It is also an er house but this terrace look for

De Groot achieve £10m from Far East buyer

An investor from the Far East has paid £10 million for bought 4, 5 and 8, Observatory Gardens, London W8. The buyer intends to develop the properties into 15 flats. The sale equates to £470 a sq ft, which agents de Groot Collis claim is the highest price they have achieved in terms of square footage.

The sale was made off-plan by de Groot Collis' Priscilla Stille, who took plans of the development to the Far East. Avril Butt, head of the residential agency, says the buyer wanted an 8 per cent yield and long-term capital growth. She adds: 'The difficulty in finding suitable investment opportunities for such investors has led to marked price increases, due mainly to healthy competition.'

being developed by a Middle Eastern developer. Nov has found ready buyers through De Groot Collis at property exhibitions in the Far East, particularly in Singapore.

homes with garage

Jeremy Davidson, of the Chelsea office of De Groot Collis, says: "In prime central London areas, private parking facilities add about 10% to the value of a property and we have seen instances where clients have been prepared to pay up to £50,000 for a nearby lock-up. In the £1.5m-plus range, parking is as important as the number of bedrooms." De Groot Collis is selling one house in Chelsea with off-street parking for £545,000 and two in SW1, both with their own garage, for £400,000 and £535,000.

Two ritzy houses in London for sale at about £5m. No land Gate, SW7 is set at freehold through De Groot Collis (071-235 8090). It is a restored end-of-terrace house with views north along the river from the upper floor. From the Oratory station, Westminster station, Crystal Palace and Crystal Palace station. No 1 Cumborough Road, London SE16 6PU. £5.5m.

PROPER

Davidson reckons "a tennis court can help to break out, a house"

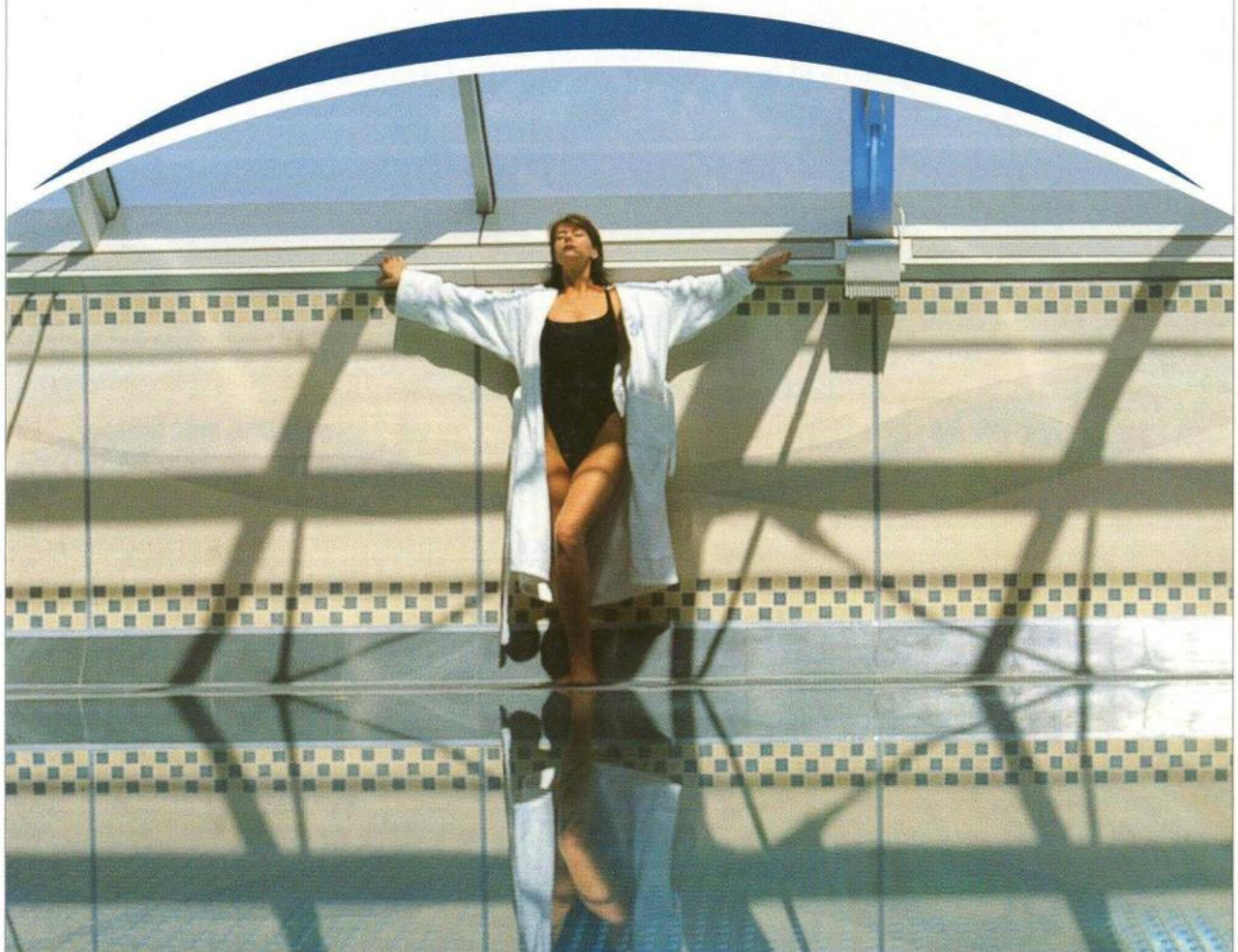
The National Heart Hospital in Westmoreland Street, W1, vacant for five years, has been sold to Gleneagles International, a division of Singapore developer Parkway Holdings. The buyer has negotiated new long-term leases on the site from the Howard de Walden Estate and has plans to develop a new hospital.

ESTATES GA7

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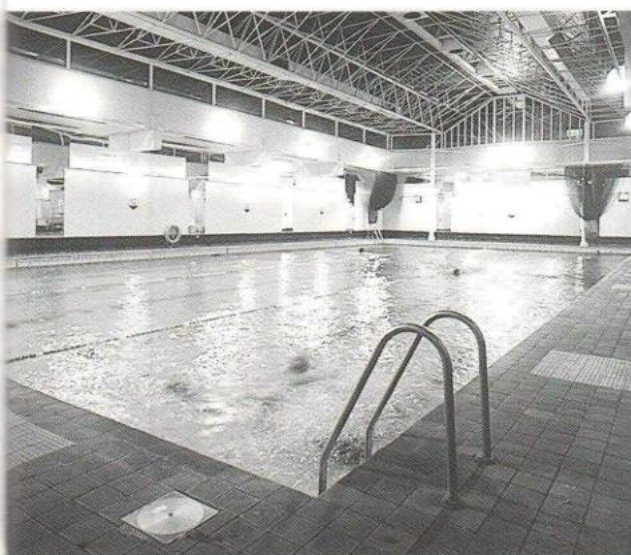


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A black and white photograph of a hand holding a globe, which is resting on a dark, rectangular pedestal. The hand is positioned as if it has just placed the globe on the pedestal. The text is overlaid on this image.

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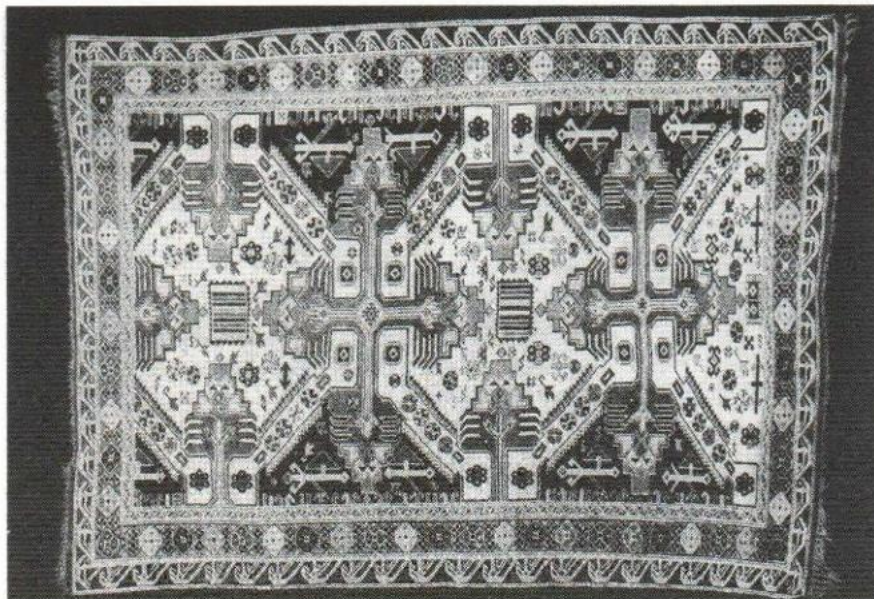
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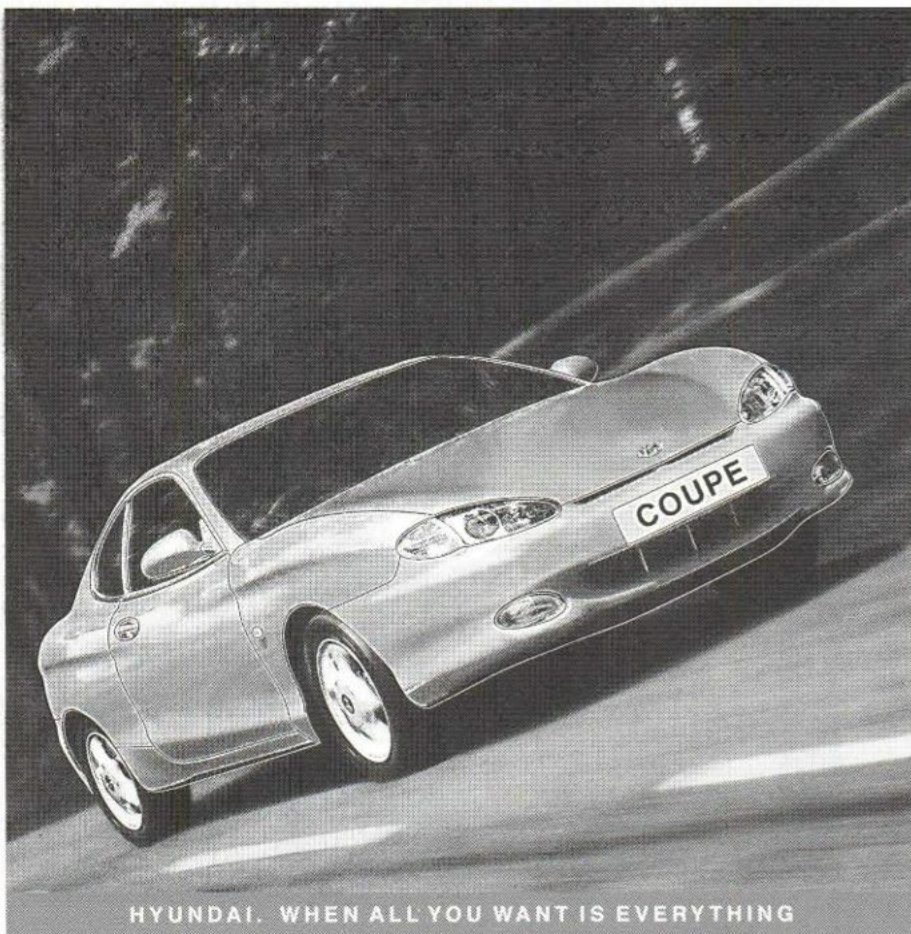
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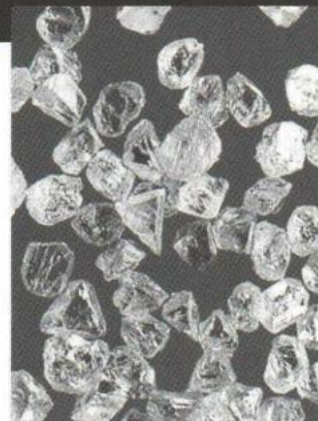
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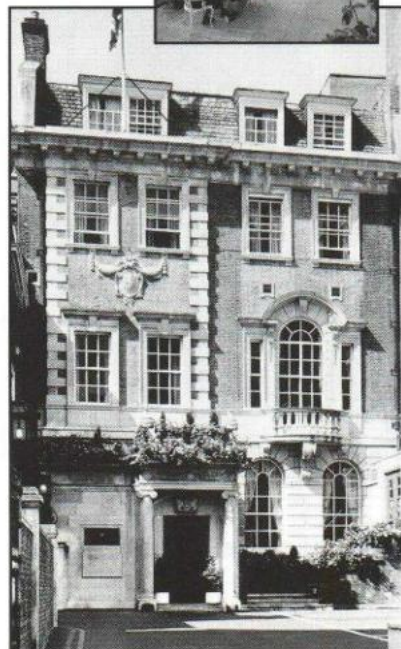
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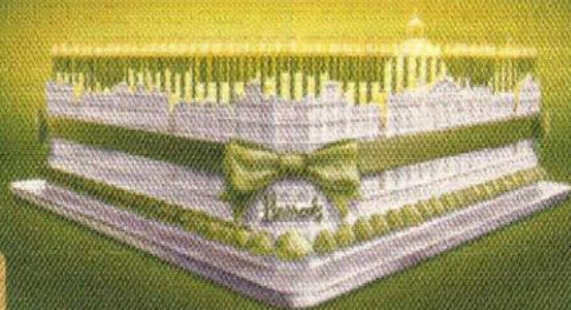
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The Queen and Sir Jocelyn Stevens watch a spectacular firework display after the 'Son et Lumiere' at the unveiling of the beautifully restored Albert Memorial (see feature on page 42).

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

In making my first report to you as Chairman of the Association, I would like to begin by paying tribute to my predecessor, Neville Labovitch, who did so much in his long period of office to put the Association on the map.

In token of his signal contribution, he was appointed our first Honorary President. The committee presented him with a bound edition of the 20 years of his annual reports - which themselves have come to be recognised as one of the most interesting and professional of such publications. I am delighted to say that he continues to play an active part in our affairs.

One of Neville's legacies is our committee structure. In order to keep as close as possible to the membership and to involve as many as possible actively, most of the day-to-day work is handled by the committees. Detailed accounts of the membership and major activities of each committee are set out on the following pages.

Every member of the Association has views about the Diana Memorial, sometimes strongly held. Knightsbridge is only one of the areas adjoining Kensington Gardens that would be affected by the schemes originally suggested. Our reservations stemmed not from a desire to protect "our back yard" but from the wish to reconcile the desire to provide a suitable memorial to a loved

Princess with longer term concerns that one of the most beautiful green sites in our great city in which peace and leisure can be enjoyed is not degraded.

The pleasures of the Gardens will be enjoyed long after memories of her have faded. The Association's stance throughout has been to focus on the practical consequences. Those who do well from tourism must recognise the long term interests of Londoners - and tourists too. It would be tragic if visitors became disenchanted by the very schemes that were supposed to interest and satisfy them.

Members will therefore await with interest and perhaps anxiety, the conclusions reached by the committee set up by the Prime Minister under the chairmanship of Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He will have had the benefit of an extensive programme of consultation, and of representations from many quarters. The leading amenity societies around the parks, including the Association, have been active in trying to reach a constructive solution which does not impair their character.

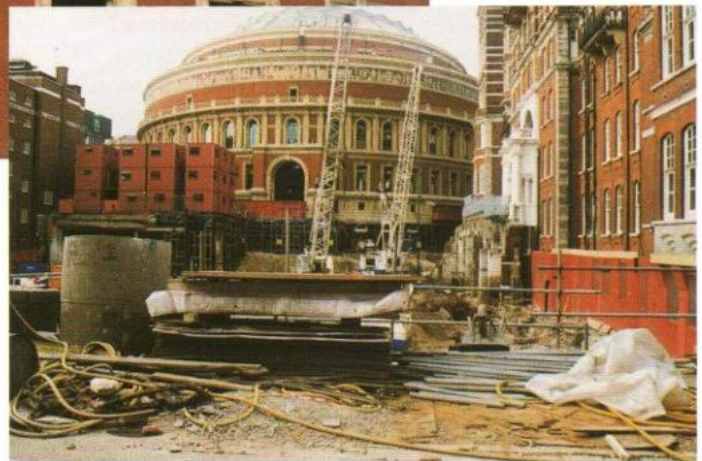
Details are beginning to emerge of the new arrangements for the government of London. The Knightsbridge Association is watching carefully to see what powers the new bodies are given and how these will affect existing local government.

THE ENVIRONMENT



Right: The statue of Prince Albert being removed from the terrace to the South Steps for restoration.

Below: Excavation below the South Steps (Prince Consort Road) to accommodate service bays, car park, plant rooms, dressing rooms and workshops.



The Royal Albert Hall

In 1996 the Hall was successful in securing £40 million of Lottery money, enabling it to go ahead with ambitious plans for the first major refurbishment since its construction in 1851.

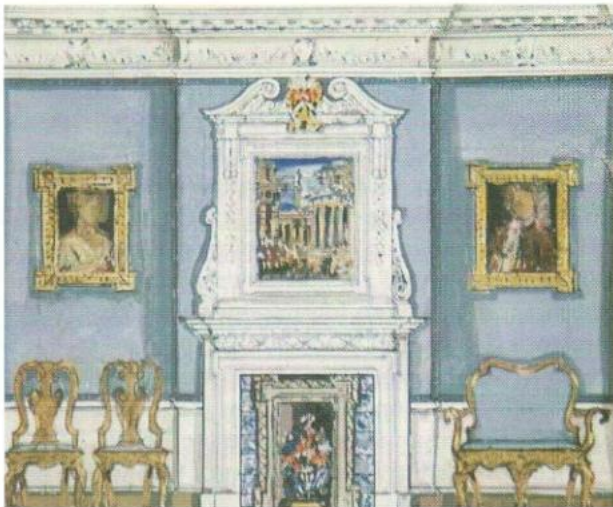
It is no mean feat to keep a major public venue open for business whilst at the same time carrying out a major modernisation programme. It is gratifying to see that the work is being carried out with minimum discomfort to the public.

The modernisation of the interior began two years ago including upgrading the kitchens and cloakrooms, refurbishing circulation areas, improving technical facilities, enhancing the comfort and appearance of the auditorium, and installing new lifts.

In 1993 the Hall acquired the site of the steps to the south. The contractors are currently excavating and constructing a new underground service yard,

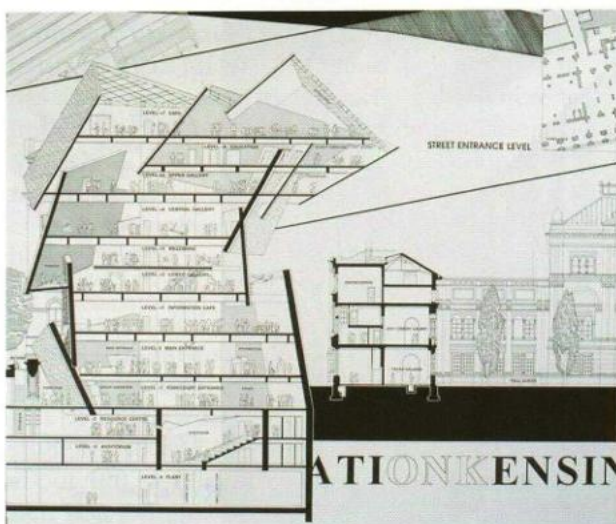
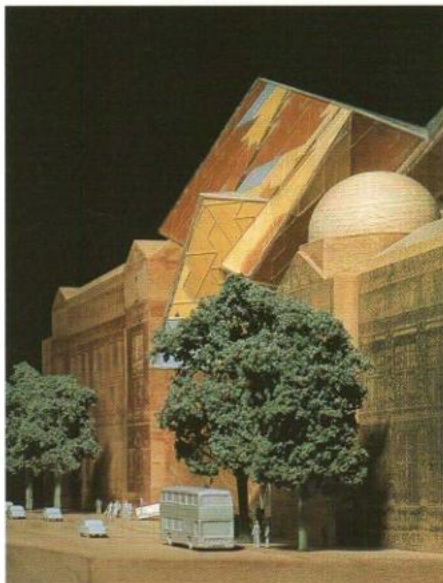
including a car park, so that shows can be mounted and demounted away from the street, reducing the disturbance to residents that arises when this has to be done from the streets around the Hall. The operation will be speedier enabling more events to be held.

Earlier this year the statue of Albert and his surrounding muses was removed, together with the steps, terracing and balustrades. These are being carefully restored and will be returned when the underground work is completed, in the year 2001.



Above: British Galleries 1500-1900:
proposed redecoration
of the Henrietta Street Room, 1735-40.

Below: The model of the
controversial Spiral building.
Bottom: Cross section of the Spiral,
looking North.



Victoria & Albert Museum

The design for Daniel Libeskind's controversial 'Spiral' extension was slightly modified during the year and a planning application was submitted to Kensington & Chelsea in May.

Members of the public were invited to view the model and drawings which were displayed during the summer. The Association's committee voiced strong objections to the Royal Borough, maintaining that the design although exciting and futuristic was completely unsuited to the Exhibition Road site, where it would be crammed between two elegant Victorian buildings.

The removal of the Grade I listed Aston Webb screen, currently linking these two buildings, and its re-assembly at basement level (to form the entrance to the Museum from an extended subterranean passage from South Kensington underground station) was considered wholly unsatisfactory. It would no longer be seen to its full extent. Truncating it top and bottom is hardly appropriate treatment for something worthy of Grade I listing.

The Association is somewhat bemused to learn that English Heritage, guardians and sponsors of the listing system, find acceptable the proposed design of the spiral and the treatment of the screen.

If the planning application is successful and the second extension attracts significant private funding, an application for 75% of the capital cost of the project will be submitted to the Arts Council Lottery Fund.

Meanwhile, the V&A has been awarded a £15 million Lottery grant for the British Galleries project, which should help to transform the outdated Galleries into 'the most comprehensive and accessible collection of British art and design in the world'.

A further application to the Lottery will be necessary to carry out the proposed improvements to the subway which would be necessary for the resiting of the screen.



The new building would occupy the 'Boilerhouse' courtyard.



Science Museum

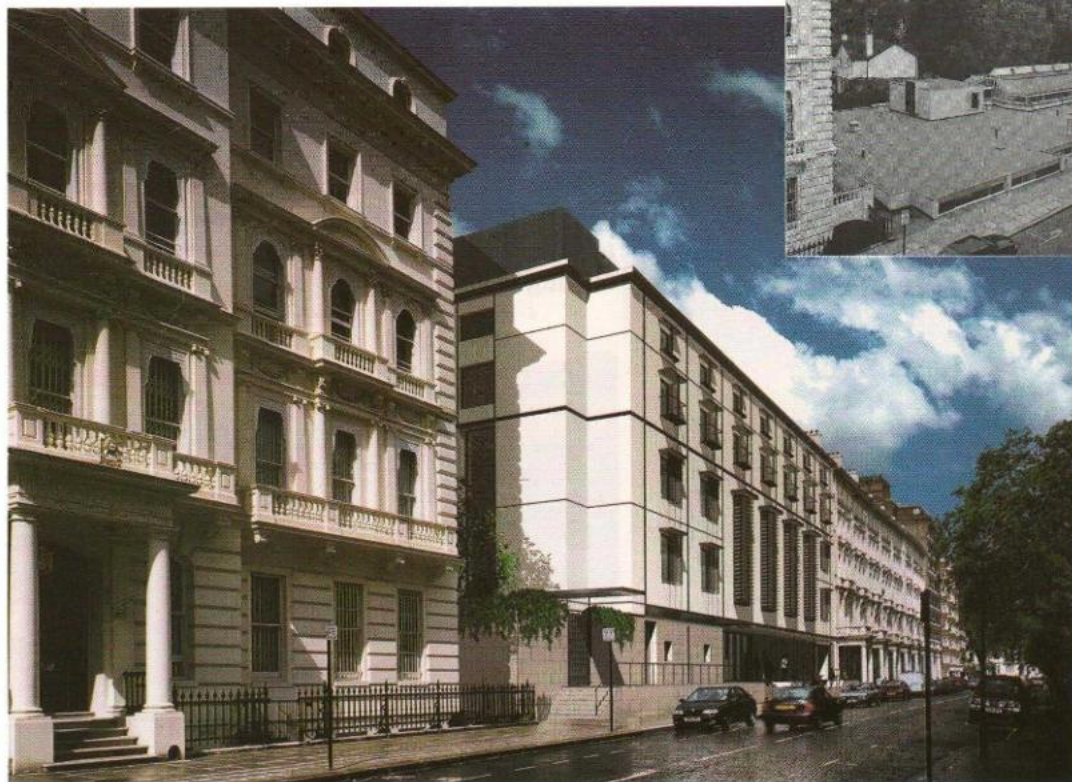
The main construction work for the Wellcome Wing, pictured in last year's Report, is due to be completed in July 1999. The final opening date, after all the exhibitions have been installed, is planned for June 2000. Following Kensington & Chelsea's refusal of permission for the much criticised seminar building on Queen's Gate, the Museum submitted an alternative design in the summer. Although an improvement on the previous design, the Association expressed its concern about several aspects of the new proposal. The Council's decision is awaited. The seminar building will also house the British Association for the Advancement of Science.



Natural History Museum

The replacement Spirit Building forms the first phase of the Darwin Centre, a new life sciences complex that will rehouse in modern environmentally controlled conditions one of the world's pre-eminent natural history collections of plants and animals, as well as providing unprecedented public access to this material. This collection is especially rich in 'type' material and specimens of historical importance.

Enabling work has begun. The main construction project is due to commence in January 1999 and will be completed around mid-summer 2000.



Top left: Model of the Science Museum's proposed seminar building. Above Left: Model of the Natural History Museum's 'Spirit' building. Left: Photomontage of preliminary proposals for the Sports Hall in Princes Gardens. Above inset: Princes Gardens as it is now.

Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine

Sir Alexander Fleming Building: The new building was designed by Sir Norman Foster & Partners and opened by Her Majesty The Queen on 21 October. The 22,000sq m, seven-storey building houses around 2,000 staff and students from the School of Medicine and the Department of Biology. It was funded jointly by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) - £40m; the College - £17m and NHS promised funding of up to £20m.

The building is the focus for a new six year integrated curriculum leading to MB BS degrees; it will also house a video tracking network which extends to 11 other sites, providing students with interactive lectures without the need to travel. Additionally it will be the centre of the College's expanded research and teaching base following the formation of the Imperial College School of Medicine.

Sports Hall: Following the City Council's refusal of planning permission for the sports hall and hall of residence on the tennis court site, the College decided to plan a smaller sports hall over the swimming pool in Princes Gardens.

In addition to the sports hall there will be fitness and exercise rooms on the first and second floors with three floors of flats above. The new sports hall will cover the whole of the rear part of the site and present a somewhat bleak elevation to the north. The south elevation to Princes Gardens presents a challenge to the architects to produce a design that will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and be sympathetic to the existing buildings which form the terrace immediately east of the site. A presentation will be arranged for members when plans are available.

Beit Quadrangle: Beit Hall in Prince Consort Road is outside the main College campus; built in stages between 1912 and 1930 around a quadrangle it has a collegiate air which is lacking elsewhere in Imperial College. It provides accommodation for the School of Biology, the Students' Union and rooms for about 100 students.

With the impending completion of the new biology building in the main campus, the east and west wings of Beit Hall will be vacated; each wing will be extended by an additional floor and refurbished for use as students' accommodation. At the same time, student rooms in the south wing will be upgraded. When completed the number of students housed in this building will increase from about 100 to a little over 300. During vacations Beit Hall will provide good quality residential



Her Majesty, the Queen, accompanied by the Rector, Sir Ronald Oxburgh, accepting a bouquet at the opening of the Sir Alexander Fleming building from Claire Whitlow, Fleming's great granddaughter.

accommodation for conferences.

It is important that any proposal reflects the nature of the Quad which has developed over the years in stages rather than as a single quadrangle. Alan Robson of Feilden Mawson has been appointed by the College as historic buildings adviser as he has great experience in dealing with such projects. His main task will be to ensure the proposals reflect the historical perspective of the Quad and are in keeping with the original design intent.

The aim is to complete the refurbishment by July 2000, in time for the British Association for the Advancement of Science Millennium Festival, which is to be hosted by Imperial in September of that year. On completion of the Beit Hall project the College plans to sell the hall of residence in Montpelier Street.

Weeks Hall in Princes Gardens will continue as a hall of residence, but Garden Hall in the same street will be closed and with other College properties nearby will be refurbished. The intention is to restore them to the private sector.

Houses in Princes Gate Mews: In July the College submitted for planning approval drawings for five houses in Princes Gate Mews, immediately behind the 'Southside' hall of residence in Princes Gardens (which extends for the entire length of this section of Princes Gate Mews). They are of contemporary design to reflect the style and scale of Southside which dominates the site. (The site is in the City of Westminster; the rest of the mews is in Kensington.)

The houses have frontages of only about 18 feet and are without any off street parking. The Association criticised the frontages which are much narrower than other houses in the mews. It also objected to the lack of parking as the site now provides four resident parking spaces and two metered bays would be lost.

Southside Refurbishment: Proposals for the refurbishment of Southside will be finalised once the current design exercises are completed, early in the new year.

Harrods

Work on the Crown Court development in Hans Crescent and Basil Street is under way, and the shell and core of the building should be finished by the end of 2000. The development will provide luxury residential apartments, short term lets, various staff and office facilities for Harrods and a new restaurant.

The existing service arrangements will be relocated from Hans Road via Landon Place to below the new building. This will greatly relieve the congestion and disruption to residents in Walton Place and Hans Road.

There will also be a considerable underground car park for new and local residents and shoppers, with access and egress in Basil Street. The removal of the existing service area in Hans Road will allow the original facade to be reinstated.

Harrods House Hotel, the planned conversion of Trevor Square depository, combined with redevelopment of 100 Brompton Road, is unlikely to go ahead before the completion of the Crown Court development, probably three years away.

Right: Sketch of Harrods proposed pavement cafe, Hans Road.

Below: Harrods House hotel will include redevelopment of Trevor House, 100 Brompton Road. A sketch of the proposed hotel. Inset: The current site.



Above: Redevelopment of the Crown Court; the retained Hans Crescent facade.



The Prudential Development

Fresh drawings were submitted for the Brompton Road frontage of the Knightsbridge Green site, following rejection of the previous proposals in May 1997 by Westminster City Council.

Various aspects of the design were criticised by members of the Association at a presentation by the Prudential design team. Objections were also voiced by the Royal Fine Art Commission, the Royal Borough and the Victorian Society. In March the application was considered by Westminster's planning committee who concluded that they were 'minded to refuse' unless the proposals were substantially revised.

The Association has always felt that the redevelopment of the Brompton Road frontage has been compromised by the omission of Silver City House. Unfortunately this remains the case. Ideally, a comprehensive scheme for the whole block, from Knightsbridge Green west to Lancelot Place, would make it possible to set the frontage back at ground floor level, providing a wider and more spacious promenade for pedestrians.

The Prudential has now decided to split the site into three parcels. Proposals for the northern part of the site, 195-199 Knightsbridge, are essentially the same as those considered by the Council in March. They propose to retain and refurbish 1 Knightsbridge Green, which runs west along Brompton Road from Knightsbridge Green to Silver City House. The Association hopes this is only a temporary solution and that a comprehensive redevelopment of this important part of the site will be undertaken in the foreseeable future.

A new building is currently being designed for the corner of Brompton Road and Lancelot Place. Revised planning applications on all three sites will be submitted to the Council in the next few weeks.



Above: The Prudential site and its outdated facade which will be redeveloped.

Below: 1 Knightsbridge Green, which is now to be retained and refurbished - a decision which will disappoint many members.



Consultation Papers

Supplementary Planning Guidance - Restaurants, Cafes and Sandwich Bars: In commenting on the draft of this useful guide, which sets out the differences between A1 and A3 uses, the Association drew attention to an apparent contradiction with regard to the sale of hot food, and pointed out that no mention was made of the problems neighbours might experience arising from parking.

The Association suggested that when submitting an application for a large restaurant, the applicant should be required to include a report to show the extent of the problem and how it would be dealt with.

Review of air quality in the City of Westminster: This was a long and complex report but thanks to the expertise of new Environment Committee member, Yoram Goren, some useful observations were made to the Council. This is a subject of growing importance which the Association intends to pursue.

Statement on the Environment: The Royal Borough organised a series of meetings during May to discuss various aspects of the environment, including pollution, transport, waste and recycling, conservation and the built environment. Members of the Environment Committee took part in the discussions.

Revision of Westminster Unitary Development Plan: The Westminster Unitary Development Plan was adopted in July 1997 and now, only a year later, it is being revised following a review by the Council and the issue of a government consultation paper on 'Modernising Planning'.

A major objective was to make UDP policies 'shorter, clearer and criteria based, rather than a development control check list'. Two draft chapters were sent for comment; further chapters will be sent throughout 1998 and the replacement plan is expected to be adopted in 2001.

Draft Directories for Albert Gate & Knightsbridge Green Conservation Areas: The Association drew attention to the fact that both directories included papers from June 1988, which although correct at the time, were now out-of-date: the Normandie Hotel had been given approval for redevelopment and Knights Arcade had been converted into a restaurant. The Association also suggested that reference should be made to the Prudential's proposed Knightsbridge Green development.

The Royal Borough's Visitor Management Strategy: The draft VMS (April 1998) acknowledges the

Council's first duty to residents and describes six options (Objective Areas) to balance the need of the residents (rate payers) with those of tourism (4,222,989 visits in 1995):

1. Visitor movement
2. Visitor information, publicity, and signage
3. Streetscape and environmental quality
4. Visitor accommodation and catering
5. Economic impact and new development
6. Arts, attractions and events.

The Association was part of the public consultation process and is a signatory to the final document.

Knightsbridge Planning Forum: Last year's report referred to the letters which had been written to the leaders of both Councils about the amount of potential development in the pipeline for their areas and the need jointly to consider the issues of urban environment, pollution, car and coach parking in order to protect the residential community and manage the major visitor and shopping attractions.

It was decided to form the Knightsbridge Planning Forum which would include councillors and senior officers from both councils and representatives from the Knightsbridge Group and Knightsbridge Association.

The first meeting of the Forum was held in March when there was a wide ranging review of the progress and implications of the many developments, whether in hand or projected, within the area.

The Forum will meet at regular intervals in the future.



"Please do not leave your bike outside our house". One way of dealing with an intrusive bicycle.

Licensing

Seven day shopping, 24 hour supermarket opening, extension of music and dancing licences, have all had an effect on our environment, mostly for the worse in spite of claims that the residential community is protected. The report of the government task force on licensing has made recommendations to update liquor laws and make them more uniform and transparent. At present this is a judicial process with full legal powers of enforcement. The proposal to transfer this licensing to the local authority is controversial and a good case can be made for both sides.

The local authority now controls the planning and therefore the siting of these licensed establishments. It also issues music and dancing licences. Whilst the licensee may maintain premises that produce no objectionable noise and comply with all health and safety issues, trouble may start when customers leave - in the form of excessive litter and various kinds of rowdy loutish behaviour.

Multiplying the number of licensed premises inevitably increases traffic with its attendant noise and pollution, with slamming car doors and raucous shouting breaking into the peace of the late night.

Conditions are often imposed when licenses are granted, but enforcing them depends on the police, the local authority and the community working together. People are entitled to protection from intrusive noise through the small hours. When the new arrangements come before Parliament we must hope that licensing arrangements provide for better protection of the local community.

The Association and several other local amenity societies opposed McDonald's application to extend their opening hours to midnight for customers eating on the premises. At the hearing, McDonalds asserted that their uniformed litter patrol swept the surrounding area on an hourly basis from 7 am to 10 pm, which came as a surprise to the local residents, including those who visit Brompton Road on a daily basis.

Kensington & Chelsea's licensing council granted the extra hour but imposed strict conditions with regard to litter patrols and maintenance of the air filtering system. The Association is grateful to Dr Gordon Taylor of the Kings Road Association for representing residents' interests.

Leasehold Enfranchisement

It is a manifesto commitment of the government that enfranchisement would be simplified and Commonhold tenure introduced. The pre-election document, 'An End to Feudalism', also gave policy

undertakings which included the promise of a critical reassessment of the 'marriage value' concept.

The Consultation Paper originally due to appear in the Autumn of last year is however only now reaching final form.

Meanwhile, the delay has enabled landlords to establish a dominant position in the Tribunals. This is not a good time to proceed with either enfranchisement or lease extension; it is advisable to wait if possible until the new legislation is in place.

The Leasehold Enfranchisement Association will provide briefing on the government's proposals as soon as they are issued, and anyone wishing to be on the list for information should telephone 0171 937 0866.



The beautifully refurbished French Embassy.

The French Embassy

The French Embassy is such an important landmark in the main thoroughfare in Knightsbridge that it sets the tone in a very important way. As many residents know to their cost, keeping stucco buildings looking clean and lively when they catch all the pollution from a busy street is a continual problem.

Like the painting of the famous Forth Bridge the task never ends. It is pleasant to be able to report that France has risen to the challenge. The extensive works undertaken to refurbish the exterior were completed early in the year and their Embassy is once again a credit to them. May it long remain so.



Montrose Court

The additional floor, granted on appeal in 1995, has now been completed, together with the alterations to the Exhibition Road frontage. The proposed improvements to the appearance of Montrose Court were a factor in the Inspector's decision in favour of the developers. The combination of strong cornices (perhaps one too many) and rustication of the ground floor rendering, emphasises that the block is made up of a terrace of five units, rather than one amorphous block, as in the original design. The railings along the Exhibition Road boundary give the building a finish which it lacked in the past.



Day Study Centre

In January an application for a 350-student study centre at 61-62 Ennismore Gardens, formerly occupied by the Libyan government (and still owned by a Libyan company), was submitted to Westminster Council, to the consternation of local residents.

The building has been empty and neglected for a long time, but the proposal would have meant this quiet residential square being invaded by cohorts of adult students. This would have changed the residential character of the neighbourhood, which is already to some extent adversely affected by Imperial College Halls of Residence in Princes Gardens to the west. 190 local residents wrote letters of objection to the Council and, although the application was recommended for approval by the Council officer, the strength of local feeling persuaded the Planning Committee to reject it in June.

Although these listed Grade II buildings have established office use, the Association will

continue to press for them to revert to their original residential use.



23 and 25 Kensington Gore

Work on these two buildings has been completed. Number 25, formerly the Yugoslav Embassy, with a new mansard floor, has been extensively restored as a private residence. Numbers 23 and 24 have been rebuilt as a small block of flats in a combination of red brick and stone with bay windows, oriel and a small dome. Combined with the contemporary Jocelyn Stevens building round the corner in Jay Mews, these three buildings add interest to this part of Kensington Gore and contrast with the dark brown brickwork of the stark and much larger Royal College of Art building on the other corner of Jay Mews.

South Kensington Station

London Transport have signed up with Stanhope & Hutchison Whampoa, one of the largest property groups in the world, to carry forward the redevelopment of South Kensington station. In the light of current market conditions they will be looking again at the scheme which was granted planning permission in 1997 and they hope to be putting forward a redesign later this year.

Knightsbridge Tube Station

London Underground has acknowledged for several years the unsatisfactory nature of Knightsbridge station, particularly the periodic congestion at the Brompton Road end. A scheme has been developed to construct a new ticket hall in the basement with better facilities, and to improve access to street level. Lighting will be comprehensively improved and security measures will be enhanced throughout. Liaison is being maintained with key landowners, the Knightsbridge Association and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Work is planned to begin in the winter of 1998/9 and to be completed by the summer of 2000. Every effort will be made to minimize the inevitable disruption to traffic, residents, and shops in the vicinity. The reliability of the high frequency service is also being improved and the trains themselves refurbished; more than half have already been upgraded.



London Garden Square Day

Ennismore Gardens and Rutland Gate (lower garden) joined 40 other London private garden squares in opening to the public for the day on Sunday, 7 June.

Payment of £5 to the first garden visited gave access to as many of the other gardens as it was possible to reach on that day. Proceeds were shared between the participating garden squares and the sponsors (the London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust and the London Wildlife Trust). It proved extremely popular and it is hoped to make it an annual event.

Knightsbridge in Bloom

Residents and visitors alike will have been delighted this year by the colourful displays of flowers in many Knightsbridge streets. The imaginative displays in window-boxes, hanging baskets, urns, and containers of varying shapes and sizes have given immense pleasure - judging by the innumerable photos taken of them. What is more, they have been well maintained and watered even when there have been enough days without rain to have dried them out and ruined them, had they not been well tended. Although we have the parks so close at hand, the heart of Knightsbridge needs these splashes of colour to enliven and refresh; grateful thanks to all who spend time and money to give us all so much pleasure.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

The level of traffic flow seems to increase every year and it is to be hoped that some of the general proposals for traffic management in London being discussed by the government will soon be implemented and ultimately produce a more acceptable environment. The problems with traffic and parking are always at their worst in the months preceding Christmas with Sunday opening, but some of the recent actions by the local councils have gone some way to eliminate the problem.

The parking bays for residents are now reserved to their exclusive use seven days a week in the Knightsbridge area for the specified hours. Non-resident visitors need to be aware that enforcement can start as early as 0840 hours on a Sunday morning! The experimental additional extension to 2030 hours in the area between Exhibition Road and Queens Gate to protect residents' parking from Albert Hall events has met the needs of residents in the immediate area, but there are signs that it could be affecting parking in adjacent areas in the evening. This is being monitored and, if it has an adverse effect on these areas, a similar extension to 2030 hours will be sought. The Royal Parks propose to extend parking charges to weekends and Bank Holidays, albeit at a reduced charge, from January 1999. The Association, together with many others opposed this, citing amongst other things, the effect on areas adjacent to the Park. Again the consequences of this unilateral decision will need to be monitored.

The implementation of the Priority (Red) Routes caused little change to the general situation along the Brompton Road and Knightsbridge, which was essentially controlled by double yellow lines prior to becoming a Red Route. The Association managed to convince the Traffic Director for



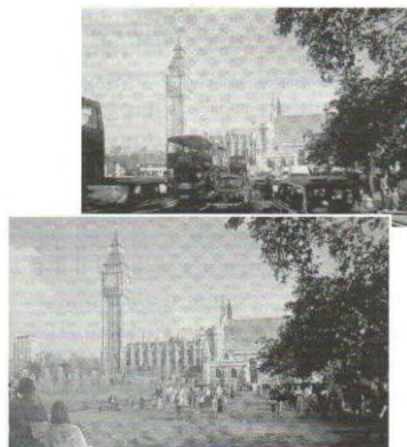
Re-routing the traffic flow around Harrods has resulted in improved safety for pedestrians.

London to provide a loading bay outside Parkside in Knightsbridge, which was a very welcome improvement on the situation prior to the Red Route coming into operation. There have also been benefits with the side entrance treatment at Hans Crescent and Hans Road and the reversal of the traffic flows in these streets which make it safer for pedestrians. We now look forward to the equivalent benefits from the implementation of the planned work for the junction of Montpelier Street with the Brompton Road when traffic lights will be installed.

With the increase in traffic generally over the years and the major developments planned for the area, there has been pressure to complete the installation of the experimental traffic management scheme in Montpelier and Trevor Square, the concept of which was first agreed in 1992. A recent survey by Westminster City Council showed continuing strong support for the principle of traffic management but the exact form that this will take is still to be resolved. The Association continues to try to help to reconcile the views of various interested parties and to achieve an acceptable solution.

PEDESTRIANISATION PLANS FOR WORLD SQUARES

Plans put forward by Sir Norman Foster to pedestrianise parts of Trafalgar Square and Parliament Square were backed by Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott. Westminster City Council have said that the proposals were not acceptable unless accompanied by wider measures aimed at reducing the volume of traffic within central London. John Prescott recognised the Council's legitimate concerns and undertook to work closely with it to ensure that local interests were addressed. Meanwhile, providing central government meets the cost, the Council will commission detailed designs for Phase 1 - Trafalgar Square.



Before and After: South side of Parliament Square in the future. The square would be linked to Westminster Abbey, as in the 18th century. A new public space accessible to all, with a dramatic water feature. Central London traffic would need to be reduced to avoid problems in the West End, Knightsbridge and elsewhere.

THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE INITIATIVE

Some years ago, Carol Seymour-Newton and Neville Labovitch conceived the idea that the Association should make a more concerted and positive approach to the idea of promoting improvements in the environment.

John Cox, whom we congratulate on his election as Westminster City Councillor, carried the idea forward. With the support of the Royal Borough, Westminster City Council and the Knightsbridge Group, his team have produced an excellent booklet that brings together a wide range of prospective and possible improvements.

Some of these lie fair and square in the hands of individual property owners or developers, but others call for a cooperative effort from all the parties concerned, including the Councils.

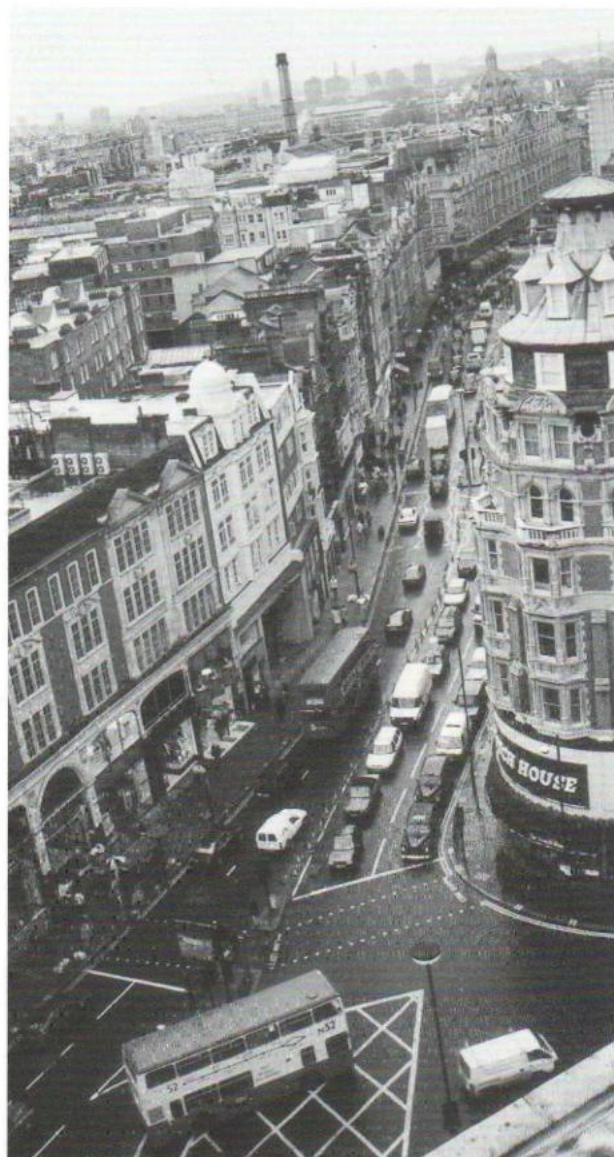
The next stage is implementation. A separate committee has now been set up - the Knightsbridge Improvement Committee (KIC) under AT Langford - to tackle the task. This has a broadly drawn membership including some who have special skills to offer from various walks of life. She will work closely with both Councils and the Knightsbridge Group, and of course with our Environment Committee. In the coming months the KIC will be seeking active cooperation from many sources.

With the uncertainty over the Prudential proposals for their Knightsbridge Green development and the unknown future of Bowater House, the early impetus slowed down. The publication of the brochure, which is now being distributed, has provided fresh momentum. A pilot project has been identified in the Brompton Road, the split level pavement area running west from Montpelier Street to the Cheval Place junction which is in desperate need of upgrading.

A detailed survey and perspective sketches are being prepared. When all the information is available the working group will concentrate on obtaining funding from both the private and public sector.

One central element of the scheme is the proposal for a public sculpture or monument at the centre of the Knightsbridge junction. A major equestrian statue occupied this site prior to the extension to the Knightsbridge Underground concourse in the 1930s.

The site presents a marvellous opportunity for a significant piece of public art, a principle supported by both local authorities and the government. For the moment this has to be put on one side whilst the future of Bowater House is decided and decisions are taken about future traffic flows round the junction.



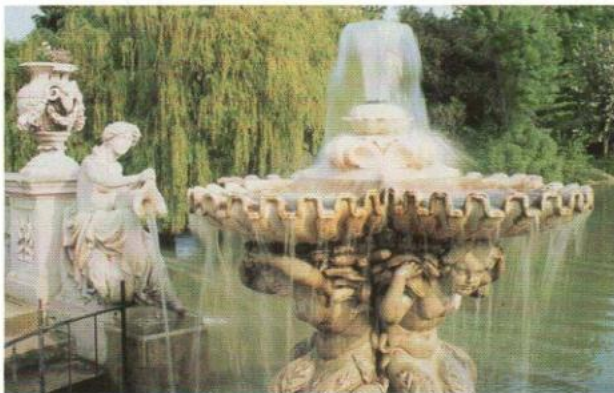
Above: Bird's eye view of Knightsbridge looking West down Brompton Road.

*Below: The pilot project.
The split level pavement between
Montpelier Street and Cheval Place.*





Kensington Palace surrounded by a sea of floral tributes to the late Princess of Wales.



Fountain in The Italian Garden.



The sunken garden, Kensington Palace.

HYDE PARK and KENSINGTON GARDENS

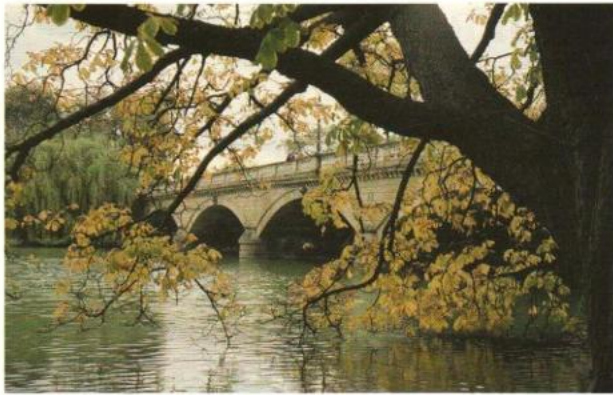
The wet summer was beneficial to Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens; the trees have never looked fresher nor the grass greener. Maintenance continued to a high standard in spite of the regular reduction in the government grant towards the upkeep of the Royal Parks. Because of these cuts the Royal Parks' Administration is continually searching for ways to make up the shortfall. This has regrettably forced them to allow the Royal Parks to be used for commercial ventures alien to their character. The Parks are renowned as the lungs of London. Commercialisation would destroy the very qualities of peace, quiet and informality for which they have been cherished by generations.

The Serpentine Gallery's major refurbishment

has been completed. This included construction of a large basement to provide workshops, stores and a plant room. The new extension to the south provides a new main entrance to the Gallery, a library, meeting room and administrative offices, and blends in happily with the original building.

The closure of South Carriage Drive on Sundays is of little, if any, advantage to those visiting Hyde Park, but a great disadvantage to motorists, especially when Hyde Park Corner underpass is closed for maintenance, causing long tailbacks. The issue of parking in the Royal Parks is covered in the report on Traffic and Parking.

Early in the year Lord Snowdon, in a newspaper article, suggested that the Coalbrookdale Gates should be moved from their present dead end



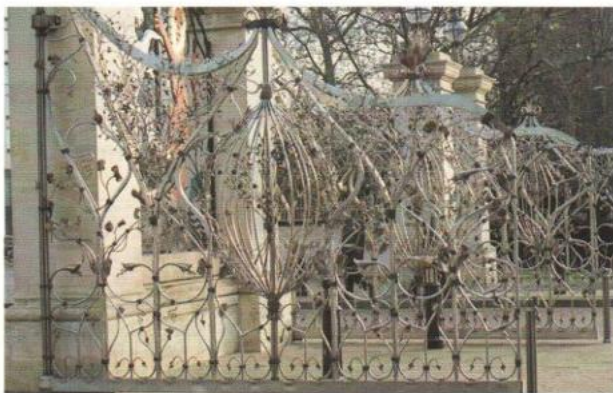
The Serpentine bridge in Autumn.



Prunus 'Kanzan', Hyde Park.



The Serpentine Gallery, refurbished and extended.



Contrasting styles: The Queen Elizabeth Gates....



... and the Coalbrookdale Gates.

location to a new site between the Albert Hall and the Albert Memorial, where they would be seen to advantage. This is a constructive proposal; these wonderful examples of Victorian cast iron work are wasted where they are now.

Tethered Balloon

Last year's report discussed the application to set up a commercial balloon operation in Hyde Park, adjacent to the tennis courts. This met strong opposition from all the surrounding residents and amenity associations. Early in the year the proposal was rejected by Westminster's Planning Committee. In July a fresh application was submitted, this time for a site to the north west of the Serpentine Bridge in Kensington Gardens.

Meanwhile the balloon operators lodged an appeal against the Council's refusal of the previous

application, with the proviso that if the Council approved the application for Kensington Gardens, they would withdraw the appeal.

Again, residents both north and south of the Parks were united in their opposition. Support came only from non-local residents and organisations such as the Tourist Board. In October, Westminster's Planning Committee refused permission for this alternative site. It has now been confirmed that the applicants will be appealing against both decisions. Both appeals will be determined by public enquiry sometime early in the new year.

There are many reasons why these applications have been opposed, but the most significant is the danger of creeping commercialisation which will disturb the peace and tranquillity that the parks have always provided.

LAW AND ORDER

The Law & Order Committee has continued to meet throughout the year in pursuit of its aim of ensuring that Knightsbridge remains as crime free an area as cooperation between the community and the police can make it.

The biggest single contribution to the neighbourhood security will undoubtedly be the closed circuit television system, shortly to become operative in Knightsbridge, for which the recently retired Committee Chairman, Gordon Shingleton, has worked untiringly over recent years. He deserves the thanks of all residents for his tenacity in the face of many setbacks; the greater safety in Knightsbridge which will surely result, will in large measure be due to his efforts.

The immediate result of CCTV will be the deterrent effect in the areas covered by the cameras. Secondary results will be the diminished likelihood of criminals exploring the quiet streets nearby and the greater likelihood of their being caught should they do so. A year ago a resident was attacked on entering her building and relieved of a valuable ring by thieves who came and went on a motorcycle. Should that happen today, either they would be caught immediately, were someone able to make an instant phone call or, failing this, the police could get the number of the cycle from their TV scanning of the escape routes, a good start to pursuit of the culprits.

In general, crime in the area has not increased



PC Clive
Coleman

possibly owing to stiffer sentences being handed out, and in the area around Harrods street traders have been deterred, partly as a result of Harrods itself paying for a trading standards officer.

The safety of the area lies, to a great extent, in the hands of the residents. For this reason the police, with the encouragement of the Committee, make every attempt to inform the public of the risks and remedies. Police Officer Clive Coleman, who sadly has had to give up the home beat for health reasons, has given much of his own time to organising Newsletters and 'Crimenights' - which deserved bigger audiences than they got - and we take the opportunity to thank him warmly for all his efforts on behalf of Knightsbridge. We have also said good-bye to Inspector John Grigg and home beat officer Steven Haywood, who have likewise given tremendous support. John Grigg has been replaced by Inspector Anthony Harington, and we continue to be advised on crime prevention by Dave Pullan. Both have likewise given unstintingly of their spare time.

HELP BEAT THE CRIMINALS

Knightsbridge is a low crime area. With residents' cooperation it could be lower still, so here are some "do's and don'ts" for those who want to beat the criminals, who are becoming more violent.

Double Locking: Always double lock your door on the inside when you come home. You may think your home is burglar-proof because you cannot open the door from the outside, but a burglar can do so very easily unless you double lock.

As always, never open either your street door or your flat door, or allow anyone else to open it, to anyone you do not know or whose credentials you have not checked.

Panic Buttons: If you feel vulnerable, install a panic button by your door and preferably a second one further down your hall.

Windows: Do not leave a window open near a drainpipe. Burglars can climb even vertical drainpipes. If you have ground floor sash windows which burglars can reach by stepping from street railings, use window inhibitors.

Do not leave small windows open thinking no burglar could get through. Burglars use children for such purposes.

Keys: If you have had work done on your building necessitating workmen having keys, change your locks once the work is complete. Keys can be copied in a few

minutes and gangs have been known to simply walk into refurbished houses where this precaution was overlooked, with severe consequences.

Letter Boxes: Protect these with wire. They are often used by slim-banded intruders to open the door.

Security Guards & Other Offers: Check with the police any security firms offering services, also any 'antique dealers' who call, however respectable superficially.

Watches: Do not wear an expensive watch, particularly a Rolex or valuable jewellery that may be visible when you go shopping. If you must wear an expensive ring, turn it round or wear a glove.

Cars: If you have a car, particularly a valuable one, secure it; preferably fit it with a tracker device.

Safes: Fit your safe with a silent alarm which the burglar cannot hear but which alerts the police.

Personal Safety: Always be on your guard as you walk home, particularly from shopping or the bank, and avoid dark or lonely routes. If at any time you see anything suspicious such as someone loitering or cycling round in circles, ring 999. Finally, it is a good idea to carry a 'screamer' alarm with you.

RUBBISH AND LITTER



Security in some parts of Knightsbridge means no litter bins.



The public's casual attitude to the disposal of litter.



Pavement picnickers amidst their debris.



Fast food customers fill the streets with litter, particularly in summer months.



Overflowing litter bin in Knightsbridge.

There have been radical changes in the Cleansing Department of Westminster City Council. We have been fortunate in Knightsbridge with our cleansing monitor since he has been performing the duties which have now become statutory for all monitors in Westminster. They now constitute a team of 32 street based officers whose responsibility is the investigation and resolution of all 'on street' environmental issues in association with other Council services. Examples - blocked gullies, broken or damaged street furniture, damaged footpaths, dirty streets, dumped rubbish, fly tipping, faulty street lights, illegal skips, missed refuse collections, temporary structures, tables and chairs.

The following activities are enforced by the Environment and Planning, Licensing Business Unit, but the Street Environment group will assist them in such areas as part of their 'on street' management - street markets, illegal street trading, estate agents' sign boards, and A Boards.

This is a very tall order and will require a team of intelligent and dedicated people with areas of a size that is realistically possible to cover. So long as Knightsbridge is able to retain its exceptionally

able monitor, who is familiar with our area and its problems, we shall not suffer from changes in structure. We are also fortunate in our contractor, Onyx, since we have a capable and conscientious leading hand at Relton Mews and a full complement of competent sweepers.

The story of the Royal Borough is somewhat different. Their cleansing department had considerable trouble with its contractors, BFI, following a takeover by SITA shortly after the new contract was signed in April. Towards the end of September a meeting was called by Councillor Joan Hanham, Leader of the Council, to try to sort out the problems. SITA management attributed the difficulties to transitional problems which they hope to surmount (staff changes, shift differentials, and poorly designed collection machinery). The Royal Borough's Office of Waste Management will be closely monitoring progress which will be reviewed at the end of December. We hope that the problems will be speedily resolved and that we shall be able to see a well-swept Exhibition Road, Cromwell Road, Brompton Road, South Kensington Station and refuse bins regularly emptied.

SOCIAL EVENTS AND THE AGM



Some of the members and guests at the 1997 Annual General Meeting in the Royal College of Music.

Once again we had a record turn out for the Annual General Meeting, held for the first time in the Concert Hall of the Royal College of Music. Guests included the Rt Hon Peter Brooke CH MP, Councillor Frances Blois, Deputy Lord Mayor of Westminster, Councillor Edward Hess, Mayor of Kensington & Chelsea, Mr Tony Lear, Director of Environment & Planning at Westminster, and Mr Michael French, Executive Director of Planning & Conservation at Kensington & Chelsea.



Sir Robin Gillett, guest speaker at the Annual General Meeting.

Sir Robin Gillett, a former Lord Mayor of London and a founder member of the Association, spoke eloquently on some problems he foresaw in the plans for the future governance of London.

Tea & Tour of the Royal Albert Hall

The tour of the Royal Albert Hall was over-subscribed, to the disappointment of many. The hundred or so who went were conducted in small parties by the excellent stewards to various parts of

the hall, including the dressing rooms and the Queen's Box - all against a background of flashing lights and booming sounds as the hall was prepared for a pop concert in the evening. The brave spirits who climbed the stairs to the roof were rewarded by a superb view of the Albert Memorial which Her Majesty the Queen had unveiled the previous evening. The tour was followed by a copious tea, during which there was an introduction by the Chief Executive David Elliott and a comprehensive account of the refurbishment programme by Bob Older.

Annual General Meeting Tuesday, 1 December

For the first time ever, the Annual General Meeting moves this year from Monday to Tuesday of the first week in December. This is to accommodate Councillors from the Royal Borough whose schedule of internal meetings in recent years ruled them out for the first Monday in December. The meeting will again be held in the Concert Hall of the Royal College of Music. We are delighted to welcome as our guest speaker, Mr Nick Raynsford MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department of the Environment, Transport & the Regions with special responsibility for London and Construction.

Future events

Various plans are afoot for the coming year including a dinner at the House of Lords in May. Members will be advised in due course.

RECEPTION BEFORE THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING *December 1997*



Incoming Chairman Jonathan Charkham presenting retiring Chairman Neville Labovitch with a magnum of champagne.



The Deputy Lord Mayor of Westminster, Councillor Frances Blois, The Rt Hon Peter Brooke CH MP and Carol Seymour-Newton.



Doreen Whewell and the Mayor of Kensington & Chelsea, Cllr Edward Hess.



Ravi Bulchandani and Mita Bannerjee.



Paul and Kathleen Gane and Rosemary Lambert.



Claudia and Nicholas De Yong.



Frances Rice and Dr Gordon Taylor.



Paul Fizia, Mary and David Brockett.



Neil Barbour, Ellie and Leo Brook.



Tony Lear, Cllr Melvyn Caplan, Leader of Westminster City Council, and Cllr Nicholas Paget-Brown.



Nikki Freedman and PC David Pullan.



Frances Phillipps and Dr Diane Clementi.



Sally and Peter Grootenbuis.



Beverley Haynes and Hazel Laurie.



Richard Rice and The Hon. Miriana Winterbottom.



Superintendent Brian Crosbie, Gordon Shingleton, Inspector John Grigg, Superintendent Denis Laurie and Inspector Paul Richardson.



Stephen Watrehouse and Maddie Elsdon.



PC Clive Coleman and Georgina Cero.



Lady Grade and Rebecca Churchward-Viggers.



Ray Dyer and Gillian Zanetti.



Pouran Shirazi and Penny Berkut.



PC Stephen Haywood and WPC Rosemary Drewery.



Sandra and Jeffrey Davis.



Celia Hensman, Monty and Anne Berman.

GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Most of the Ministers appointed by the incoming government last year to those Ministries with whom the Association has dealings, remain in place.

John Prescott is Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Environment, Transport and the Regions, Chris Smith is Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, and Nick Raynsford is Parliamentary Under Secretary of State with special responsibility for London and Construction at the Department of the Environment.

In local government, Councillor Melvyn Caplan continues as Leader of Westminster City Council, and Councillor Alan Bradley remains Chairman of Environment and Planning.

Councillor Alexander Nicoll has taken over as Chairman of the Traffic Sub-Committee and Councillor Catherine Longworth as Chairman of the Environment Committee.

At Kensington & Chelsea, Councillor Joan Hanham continues her vigorous leadership. Councillor David Campion has taken on the Chairmanship of the Planning and Conservation Committee. Councillor Mary Weale remains Chairman of Environment Services, Councillor Daniel Moylan, Chairman of Environmental Health

& Leisure, and Councillor Tony Holt, Chairman of Highways and Traffic.

The Lord Mayor of Westminster is Councillor David Harvey and Councillor Dr Jonathan Munday is Mayor of Kensington & Chelsea. The Association is grateful to officers of both local authorities for their continuing patience and cooperation.

FINANCE

The policy of the Association for many years has been to keep subscriptions modest. We have managed to keep them at their current level for some years and we are not proposing an immediate change. The committee will need to review them early in the new year in the light of rising costs.

This year we have introduced life subscriptions for those who prefer them. This policy means that although the funds are adequate for all normal business they need supplementing from time to time for major issues where, for instance, expensive professional advice is essential.

It is gratifying to be able to report that there have been occasions during the year where groups of members have been sufficiently appreciative of our efforts on matters that were of direct concern to them that they have voluntarily contributed generously to us to help defray our costs.

The maintenance of our funds is in the capable hands of Christine Gilbertson, our Honorary Treasurer. We welcome as our Honorary Auditor, Jim Butler, who retired a short while ago as head of KPMG. Our warm thanks to his predecessor, Fred Maddock, who has retired after 13 years with us.

APPRECIATIONS

I would like to pay especial tribute to Michael Wright, Vice Chairman of the Association, who chairs the Environment Committee with the help of his able team. They handled the vast majority of the cases, large and small, of changes to property and major developments, and approach the work in a positive spirit of progress.

The Environment Committee often has difficult judgments to make, and some proposals are controversial - the 'Boilerhouse' building at the Victoria and Albert Museum for instance.

One look at the model on show at the Royal Academy during the Summer Exhibition made it clear why there is grave disquiet. (The Association's aim is not to preserve Knightsbridge in mouldering aspic, but to use its powers of persuasion in the cause of maintaining and improving the environment for those who live or



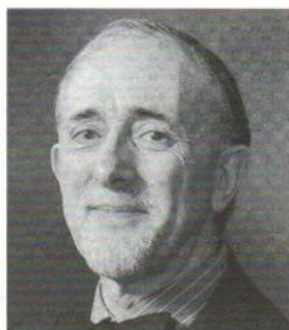
*Mr Nick Raynsford MP,
Parliamentary Under
Secretary, Department of
the Environment.*



*The Rt Hon Chris Smith MP,
Secretary of State for
Culture, Media and Sport.*



*Cllr Catherine Longworth,
Chairman of Westminster
City Council's Environ-
ment Committee.*



*Cllr David Campion,
Chairman of Kensington &
Chelsea's Planning &
Conservation Committee.*

work here and who visit the neighbourhood. Taste changes; the shocks of today are sometimes the commonplace of tomorrow - but not always.)

The Environment Committee links with the other specialised committees and their hard working Chairmen, Robert Morris (Traffic), Frances Rice (Rubbish and Litter), and Elspeth Parkes (Law and Order). The Association is greatly indebted to them all.

AT Langford has taken over as Vice Chairman of the Environment Committee in succession to Lesley MacDonagh, who has done sterling work for us, and I am delighted to say remains on the Committee. During the year we welcomed three new members to the Environment Committee: Stuart Corbyn, Chairman of the Knightsbridge Group, Dr Klaus Leist and Dr Yoram Goren, an expert on pollution.

Jeremy Mackay-Lewis, to whom we are grateful for his expert advice over the years, and who recently chaired our Imperial College Sub-Committee so successfully, retired from the Committee to concentrate on several major projects. Sarah Wills has retired from the Main Committee on which she served so helpfully for over 20 years, but remains on the Environment Committee.

Robert Morris took over the chairmanship of the Traffic Committee from Kevin Gardner, and now joins the Main Committee.

The Social Committee is chaired jointly by Lady Grade and Peggy Walmsley and they have an interesting programme in mind for the coming year.

Colin Marshall and his family have lived in Knightsbridge for many years and are longstanding members of the Association. We all learned with great pleasure that he had been elevated to the peerage and taken the title of



Lord Marshall of Knightsbridge, the Association's new Patron.

Lord Marshall of Knightsbridge. He has accepted an invitation from the Committee to become a Patron. His enormous breadth of experience will be invaluable. We are also delighted that his daughter Anna Birkett has joined two of our committees.

I would like to conclude by paying the warmest possible tribute to our Hon Secretary Carol Seymour-Newton. To many people she is the Knightsbridge Association and the amount of work she gets through on its behalf is astonishing - and always with the greatest good humour and charm. We all owe her a great deal.

*Jonathan Charkham
December 1998*

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The Hon Sarah Wills

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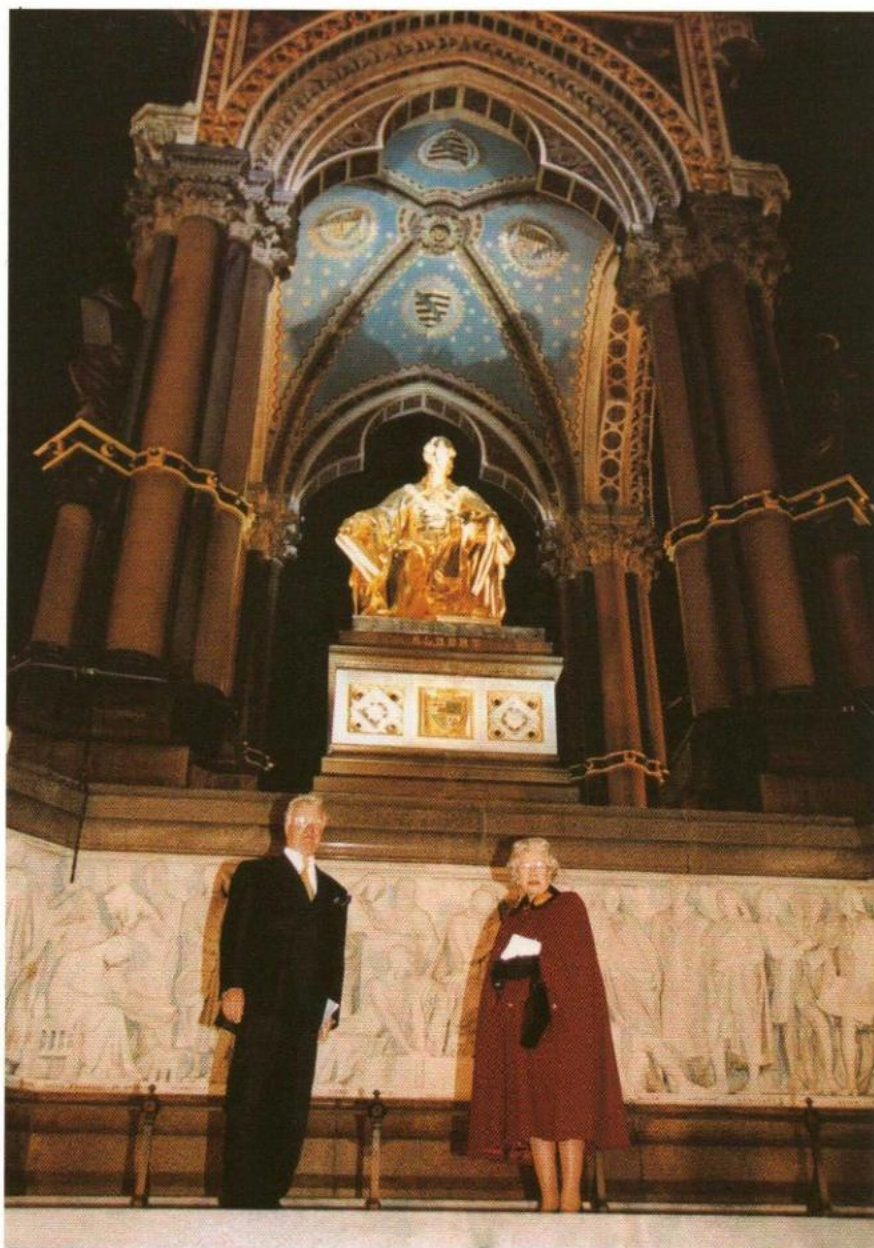
Ingrid Shaker

SOCIAL AND EVENTS COMMITTEE

Joint Chairmen: Lady Grade Peggy Walmsley

Jean Lyell

Pippa Thornton



ASSOCIATED PRESS PA

Sir Jocelyn Stevens CVO, Chairman of English Heritage, and Her Majesty, the Queen at the unveiling of the newly restored Memorial to Prince Albert, the Queen's great great grandfather.

THE ALBERT MEMORIAL SAVED

~ with grateful acknowledgement to English Heritage ~

Sir George Gilbert Scott's Memorial to Prince Albert was unveiled in 1876. It was only one of seven that had been submitted in the Gothic style.

In his Recollections he says that his intention was "to give to an architectural structure the character of a vast shrine expressive of the value attached to the statue it protects". Albert is portrayed holding the catalogue of the 1851 Great Exhibition of the Industries of all Nations.

'All Nations' are represented by the marble continents groups around the base of the Memorial. The marble groups of the Industrial Arts, Engineering, Manufactures, Agriculture and

Commerce, link the marble frieze of artists on the podium with the allegorical figures of the Greater Sciences above. The arts are conceived as the foundation of culture on the podium frieze and reign supreme in the gable mosaics.

The pillars which support the unbuttressed vault and arches of the canopy are as slender as possible to reveal the central figure. The whole structure is tied together by an unseen wrought iron cross-girder which supports the cast iron core of the spire. The lead cladding to the iron structure was not designed to accommodate thermal movement and soon split and leaked, rusting the iron inside,



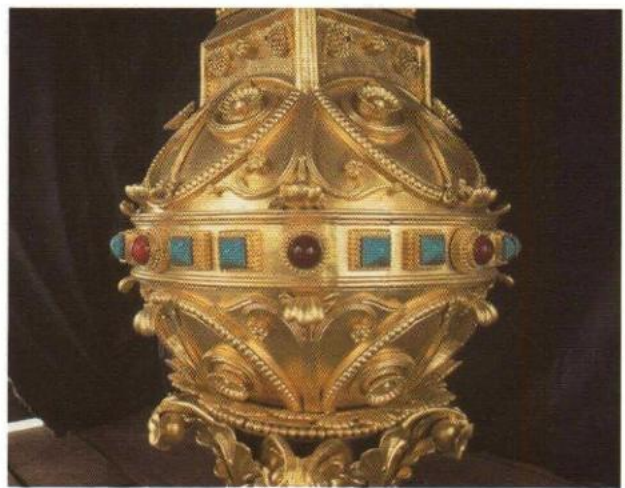
The upper angels, who stand at the very top of the Memorial beneath the Orb and Cross.



Gilded details and jewels at the foot of the spire.

which expanded and widened the splits. Dismantling the roof and spire was essential to stop this process.

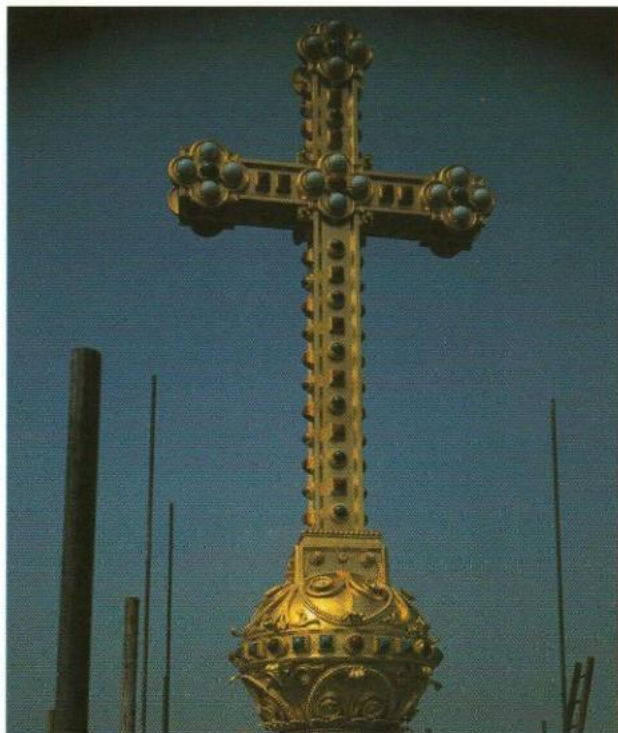
In 1983 a large piece of leadwork fell from the gable on to the steps in front of the Memorial and it was closed to the public. Inspection later revealed the extensive nature of the problems and the failure of previous attempts at repair. In 1990 the familiar enveloping scaffolding was erected, after it had been ascertained that the statue itself could be left in place. The other copper and bronze statues were taken down and stored in sheds on site. The condition of all parts of the



The exquisitely detailed Orb.

Memorial was assessed and trials made of possible techniques of repair.

Work did not start until 1994 through lack of funds. The Chairman of English Heritage, Sir Jocelyn Stevens CVO, offered £2m on the understanding that the Department of National Heritage provided a further £8m. The balance would be raised by the Albert Memorial Trust of which Sir Jocelyn is Chairman, HRH the Prince of Wales is Patron and Neville Labovitch LVO MBE is a Trustee. The Rt Hon Peter Brooke CH MP, the Secretary of State, placed the responsibility for the management on English Heritage. It was to be



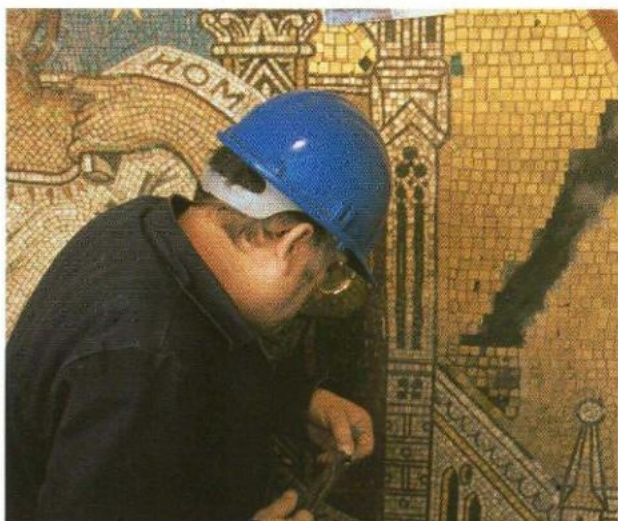
MARK HENNINGSEN/ENGLISH HERITAGE

The Orb and Cross from the very top of the Memorial.



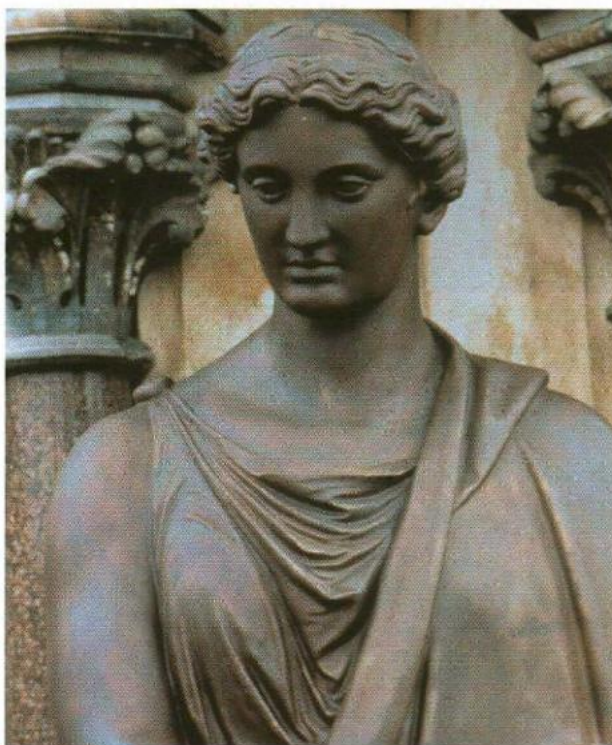
ENGLISH HERITAGE

Head of Prudence with hair in form of the face of Michelangelo.



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Repairing the mosaic of Poetry.



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Philosophy restored.

completed by the end of 1999 and to cost no more than £14m.

Work began on 31st October. A large mobile crane was used to lift substantial pieces in and out through the top. The upper part of the Memorial was dismantled into 6000 or so pieces which were individually barcoded and entered on a database with a video still record of their condition before, during and after conservation. The glass jewels and gilding on the leadwork were cleaned with the newly available pulse laser. The ironwork was cleaned by a system for collecting rust without the use of water; this had been developed for toxic waste and radioactive material. The stone and

marble were cleaned by a system which used a minimum of water to dissolve dirt and chemical poulticing.

Most of the original materials were still available. Replacements for the glass jewels on the spire were eventually supplied by the original manufacturers (who simplified the technique used to make them). Fortunately the jewels on the stonework moulded from glass-making slag did not need replacing. Replacement pieces of coloured glass mosaic were obtained from Italy as was the Carrara marble for the statuary. Badly matching replacements to the paving around the Memorial were renewed in the original stone where



Head of the mosaic of Architecture.

available. The Swithland slate was not, and the best alternative was obtained with great difficulty from a quarry in Killoran County Tipperary that is no longer worked.

To have attempted to restore the Memorial fully to its original appearance would have damaged the original fabric and been much more costly. The brief was to ensure structural and aesthetic integrity and facilitate maintenance using modern access technology.

The Memorial now reflects Scott's original intentions better than at any time since the turn of the century; architectural coherence has been restored. The gilding of bronze sculpture and ornament, removed in the Great War, has been renewed. Damage from the Second World War has been properly repaired. Lost detail in the sculpture and mosaics has been replaced to preserve its meaning.

The railings and gates around the Memorial have been returned to their original colour scheme and generously gilded.

A new architectural lighting scheme has been provided comprising 48 lamps; some are concealed in the Memorial and some are mounted on the Royal Albert Hall. The copper coloured housings of the main lamp clusters will be left to develop a green patina naturally and so merge with the landscape. The lighting is designed to respect the character of Kensington Gardens which



Gable finial in glory.



The Albert Memorial unveiled at last.

are closed at night - and to avoid disturbance to the local fauna, human and otherwise. Some lights will remain on all night for security.

The landscape around the Memorial has been enhanced. The grassed areas have been re-laid with special turf which will allow them to be close mown to form a transition between the paving and the meadow grass beyond the paths which have been resurfaced with golden gravel. The Royal Parks used the same team that had been working on the Memorial to repair Queen's Gate comprehensively and return it to its original rich red bronze colour.

The Memorial was originally unveiled 15 years after the Prince's death; it has taken the same period to restore it from the time its dangerous condition came to notice. The work was completed a year ahead of schedule and for 80 percent of the original budget.

The gates are to be kept closed to prevent damage, but the Royal Parks are arranging guided tours - which can be booked by calling 0171 495 0916 between 10am and 4pm. They have converted the disused police post at the north west corner into an information and refreshment kiosk for visitors.

The Memorial is once again one of London's prime attractions.



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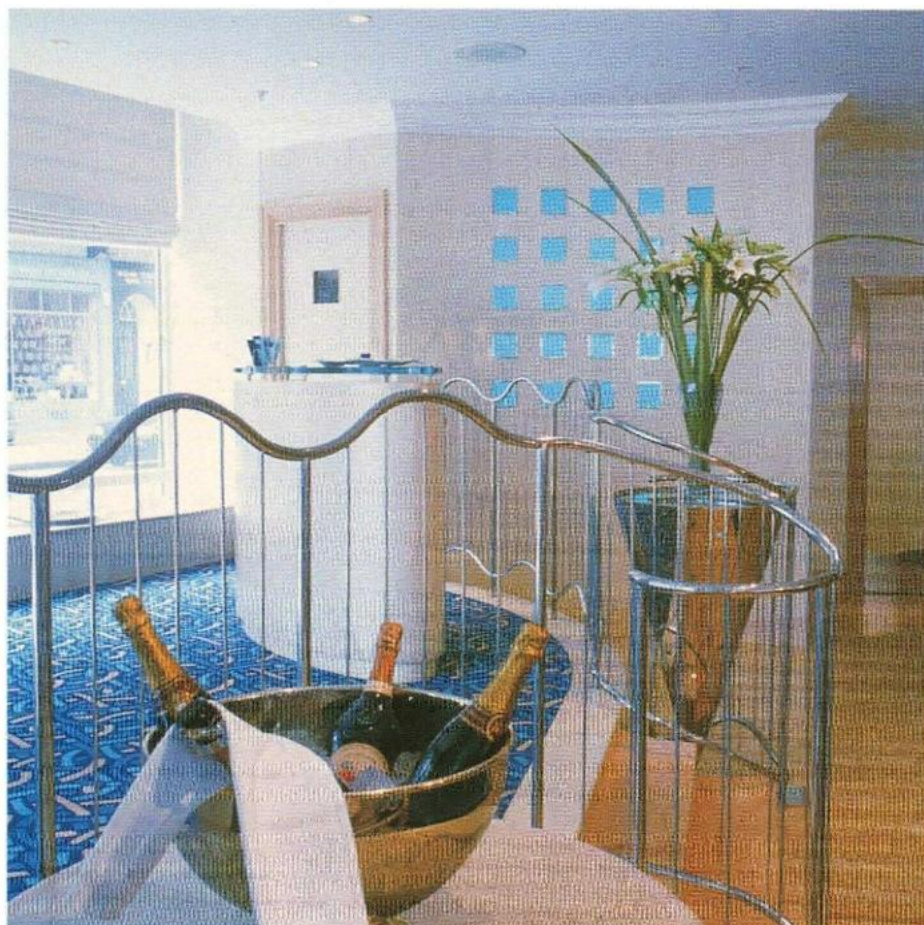
*The rooftop swimming pool
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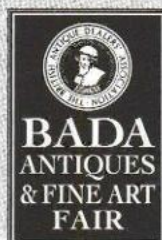
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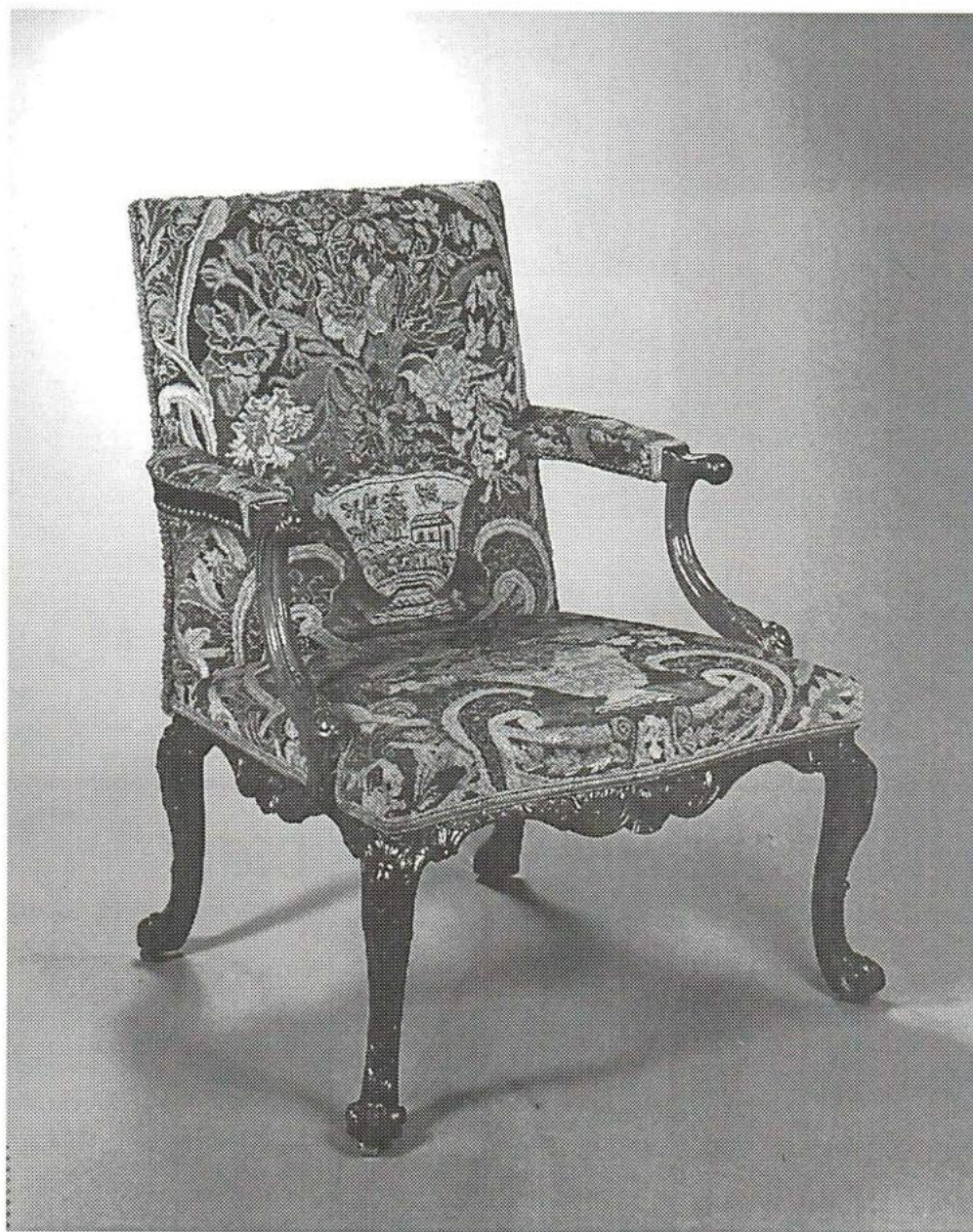
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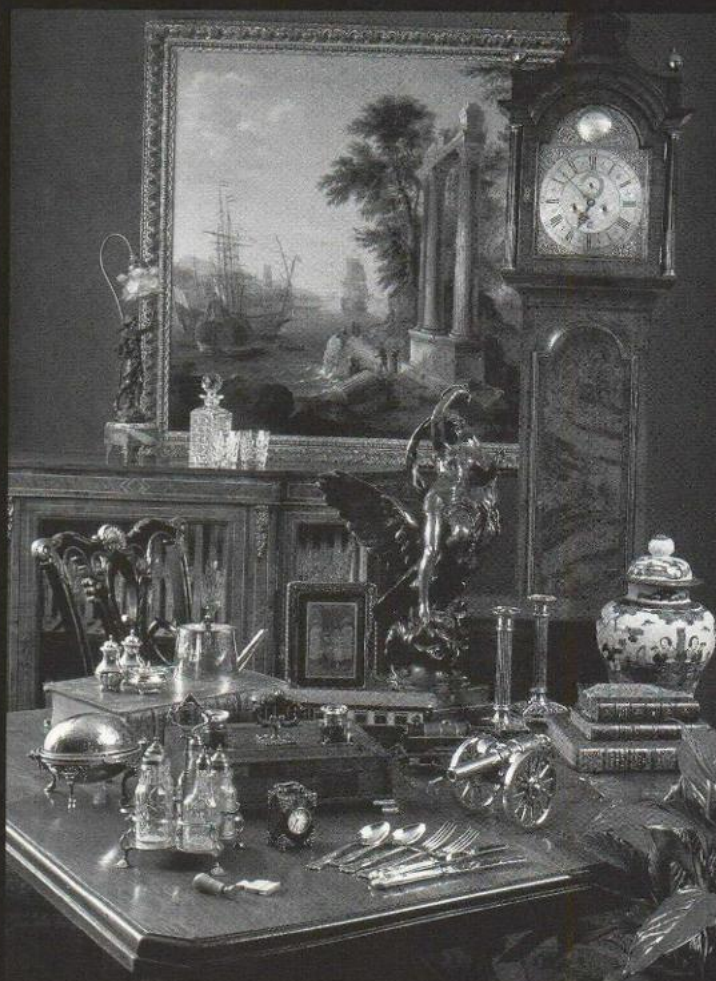
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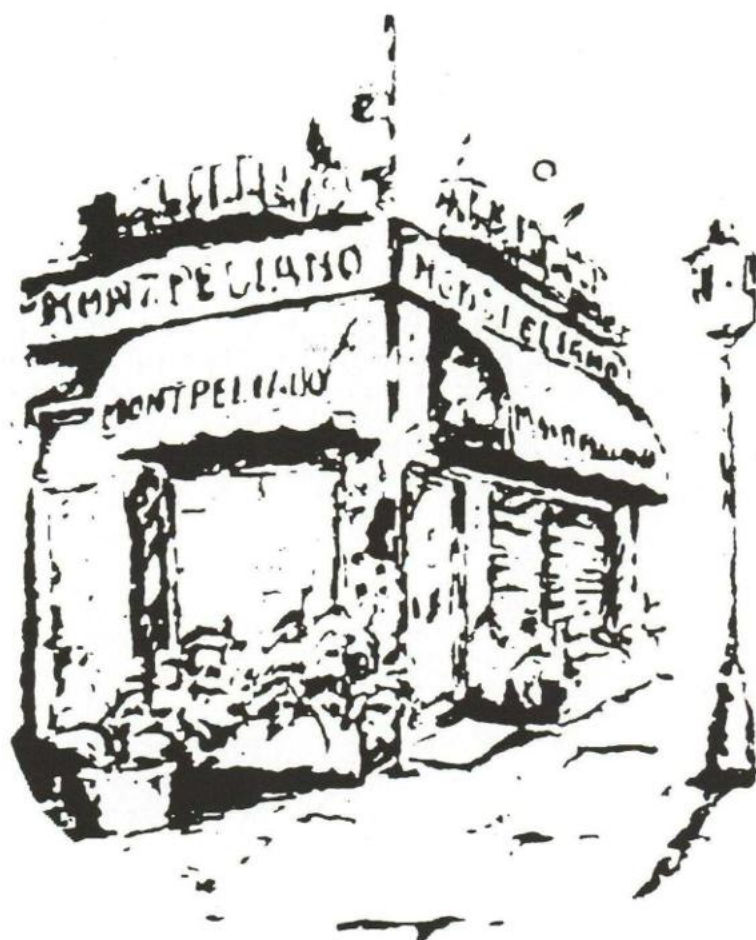
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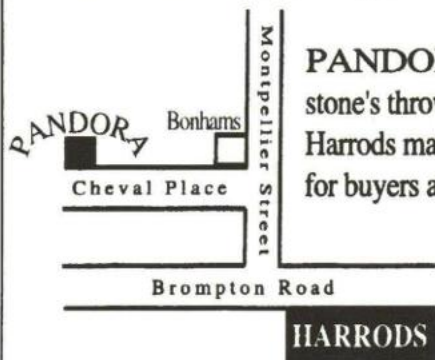
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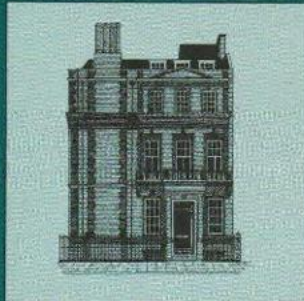
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