



THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

# NEWSLETTER

## SPRING NEWSLETTER 2017

Dear Members,

The year opened with a veritable welter of consultations and amenity society reviews in addition to KA's normal flow of business. The former included our response to RBKC's consultation on options presented by Cadogan Estate for "upgrading" Sloane Street. The first of three options involved pavement widening, road narrowing and the insertion of planters and tall trees. Consultation with members revealed a preference for as little change as possible.

The Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Consultation (a document of over 150 pages) articulated ten policies and a plethora of sub-policies covering Character, Community, Culture and Education, Public Spaces and Environment. Examination of this has been a major undertaking and is indicative of the effort that needs to be put in by an amenity society if its interests are to be reflected in future plans for the area.

KA's response to the Neighbourhood Forum's plan focussed primarily on planning policies for Knightsbridge Barracks; and transport and environment policies to enhance long-term amenity in the area, including air quality. This calls for remedial action over five to seven years in contrast to other of the Forum's

proposed policies whose time frames for realisation are more likely 15-20 years.

As populations cluster increasingly in large cities, air quality becomes a pressing issue, as featured in the KA's 2016 Annual Report. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that air pollution is one of the world's biggest killers accounting for one in ten deaths each year or some 6.5 million people. This is six times more than are killed by malaria and four times more than HIV/AIDS. About half these deaths are due to outdoor pollution in towns and cities. Poor air quality increases the risk of stroke heart disease, lung cancer and chronic respiratory diseases and the World Bank reckons that it costs the global economy around US\$225 billion a year in lost labour income.

On a brighter note, I am sure we are all pleased to see cherry blossom and incipient magnolia and camellia blooms in the garden squares presaging Spring's imminent arrival. Doubtless, an accelerated trickle of planning applications will follow shortly, for consideration by our ever-watchful Planning committee!

Melville Haggard  
Chairman

*Vice-President:* The Lady Grade

*Chairman:* Melville Haggard

*Vice-Chairmen:* Edward Davies-Gilbert, Carol Seymour-Newton

*Treasurer:* Olivia J Cox

[www.knightsbridgeassociation.com](http://www.knightsbridgeassociation.com)

# PLANNING AND CONSERVATION REPORT

*Edward Davies-Gilbert and  
Carol Seymour-Newton*

## **The Berkeley:**

Work for this development – 33-39 Knightsbridge - which will provide additional accommodation for The Berkeley hotel, has recently commenced based on the 2007 planning consent. A fresh application is being prepared for modifications to this consent, and it is the intention to consult neighbours shortly.

The preparatory works currently underway, including the internal strip out, are nearing completion. The scaffolding of the building, including provision of a gantry and pedestrian walkway on Knightsbridge, has been completed and the building is enclosed in protective sheeting. Shortly, the main demolition of the structure will be commencing.

A number of measures have been undertaken to minimise the impact of the demolition on the neighbourhood, the most visible of which is the acoustic protection around the loading bay in Old Barrack yard.

## **The Mandarin Oriental:**

The multi-million pound refurbishment is well under way. The scaffolding will be coming down in early Summer and the renovation works are scheduled for completion by Spring 2018, during which time, as members who attended the AGM will know, the hotel remains open and fully operational.

## **55-91 Knightsbridge – Wilton Place to William Street:**

The construction work for this development, which will provide a new mixed use building with ground floor retail, with office and residential uses above, continues slightly ahead of programme. Over the coming months a façade retention system will be erected on

Knightsbridge to support the retained façade during the demolition of the building behind. Scaffolding is also being erected at the rear. The main demolition work is expected to commence in May.

Concerns regarding the William Street crossing, raised at the Association's AGM, have been looked into with assistance from WCC officers. Additional signage to warn pedestrians and cyclists at the crossing will be provided in the short term, whilst a longer solution is found.

## **The Knightsbridge Estate, K1.:**

The K1 Site is one of the largest regeneration sites in Knightsbridge and is bounded by Sloane Street, Brompton Road and Basil Street. The Hooper's Court thoroughfare, which is at the western end of the development, has now closed for the duration of the works in order to secure access to the site. The first stage of the scheme requires demolition of the internal structures and a summary of the works to take place include: general site setup including enabling works; set up of welfare for site workers in the former Fire Station; introduction of scaffolding on Hooper's Court; structural investigations on all elevations; fit out works for construction site office at 37-49 Brompton Road; removal of internal structures and materials from 33-35 Brompton Road and; strengthening foundations for 33-35 Brompton Road. They will be holding quarterly liaison meetings and to receive an invitation, email [construction@cascade.depr.co.uk](mailto:construction@cascade.depr.co.uk) with your contact details and they will be in touch.

## **Sloane Street Proposals:**

As mentioned in the Chairman's opening remarks, RBKC together with Cadogan Estates have been consulting on proposed changes to Sloane Street. The main thrust is to increase the number of trees and to introduce extra planting, which could be accommodated by changing the pavement width and having

one lane in either direction. Whilst we are not against the idea of extra planting, we are not impressed by the need to make the roadway narrower. We are also concerned at the suggestion of introducing benches as past experience has taught us that this can lead to a litter problem. Local people have been let down by the experience of the pedestrianised Hans Crescent and feel not all change is for the better.

### **South Kensington Estates:**

They have lodged an application for 197-205 Brompton Road – between Beauchamp Place and The Bunch of Grapes, to convert the space from several smaller units to a single large one. We would prefer to see smaller units retained for local amenity shops, in particular Boots. We are extremely concerned to learn that this will go in two years time when the lease comes to an end.

### **Natural History Museum:**

The major renovation of Hintze Hall should be completed in the summer and is due to reopen to the public in July. The Blue Whale skeleton, that was formally in the Mammals gallery for 81 years, will replace Dippy the dinosaur. The front gates in Cromwell Road are now closed while work to the entrance is being carried out to the garden side, ramp and steps. Entry to the museum is from either Exhibition Road or Queens Gate via the Darwin Centre. On the western side temporary railings are in place while the original railings have been removed for restoration and the stone footings are undergoing repairs. The museum has applied to the National Lottery Heritage fund for a grant for the Grounds Project and they will hear shortly whether their bid has been successful.

### **Science Museum:**

The Museum has new expanded galleries in the pipeline for their world class medical exhibits. They are proposing to move them from the 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> floor levels

and to use the space created for lectures, conferences and some corporate entertainment. There would be a small kitchen on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. The top floor, with a larger kitchen would be able to cater for 450 diners. The Exhibition Road façade would be completely glazed, with acoustically attenuated glass and screens that at night would prevent light pollution.

At the presentation of the plans residents expressed concern that corporate dinners would bring a large number of chauffeur driven cars, sitting outside with their engines running. Ian Blatchford, the director, said that it was not their intention to have many corporate dinners, and that companies preferred to hold their dinners/ meetings on the lower floors amidst the displays.

Residents who live opposite the museum are concerned that they will be overlooked. Other doubts are why two entire floors are being surrendered to commercial activities rather than remain as exhibition space.

We recognise the ever-increasing pressure on all museums to generate funding, which inevitably leads to a much greater reliance on corporate entertainment. However, it has to be kept within limits to mitigate the disruption to residents. The plans have now been submitted to RBKC's Planning Department.

Plans are also afoot for converting the former Royal Mail sorting office and loading bay on Imperial College Road into a new Supporters' Centre.

### **V&A**

**New Director appointed:** In January, Dr Tristram Hunt, formerly MP for Stoke on Trent Central, was appointed Director, replacing Dr. Martin Roth who stepped down in September, and has now taken up his post.

**Courtyard Project:** This major project is nearing completion. The scaffolding along Exhibition Road has come down and the

partially restored Aston Webb screen, forming the entrance to the courtyard, has now been re-instated.

The re-opening is due to take place in July.

### **Royal Albert Hall:**

The Great Excavation project at the southwest corner of the hall to form underground plant and heating space is now underway. When completed it will allow the existing heating boilers to move from the main building freeing up valuable space within the hall. It will take until December 2018 to be completed. They are intending to have a dedicated webpage on [www.royalalberthall.com/thegreatexcavation](http://www.royalalberthall.com/thegreatexcavation) with the latest information on progress.

### **Imperial College:**

Post office building, Exhibition Road: Plans are progressing to convert the building for the Dyson Business School. An application will shortly be submitted to RBKC.

### **3-11 Lancelot Place:**

Plans for redeveloping this site were approved last year and a new application has now been submitted to WCC. The earlier plans were felt by the developer to be out of keeping with the recently approved scheme for 15 Lancelot Place – 1 Trevor Walk. The Knightsbridge Association felt that the new plans make it look like a block of flats, not a terrace of individual town houses, the whole façade being a bit flat. Although the footprint and overall height has not been increased over the approved application, they have managed to add an extra floor. Materials for the building have not been decided on but we would favour London stock brick to reflect the Trevor Square houses. Red brick, or tiles (one of the choices) seemed to be taking its colour from the hard red of the modern 10 Lancelot Place block opposite. The recessed windows look rather blank, lacking definition and the framed windows, as in the approved plan,

were preferable and should have clear, low ion glazing. The first floor ‘balcony’ railings are too fussy. The developer assured us that the extra storey had not affected the daylight/sunlight to either the Trevor Square houses, or to 10 Lancelot Place.

### **Sports Pavilion Hyde Park:**

wants to expand the catering facilities and we are concerned that this might become a major food and beverage outlet. In our view it should be ancillary to the sports club and operate with certain conditions as to opening hours and it must not be allowed to become an evening events venue.

### **25 Kensington Gore:**

An application for change of use from residential to hotel. It will be small with only seven bedrooms, facilities include extensive reception rooms, a swimming pool and spa. It has set the alarm bells ringing as it could become a late night events venue. Parking could become another issue for local residents.

### **Private View for Local Residents at the Natural History Museum: The New Hintze Hall and Whales Exhibition**

This summer the spectacular Hintze Hall will re-open with extraordinary new specimens from across the universe, ranging from the dawn of time to today, each with their own story to tell. The evening will be an opportunity for local residents to see the transformed Hintze Hall and the upcoming *Whales* exhibition out of hours, with all profits supporting the Museum. (Thursday 27th July, 19.00–21.00, £40 per person)

### **The KNIGHTSBRIDGE BARRACKS**

*Simon Birkett*

The Household Cavalry is as iconic to Knightsbridge as Harrods and the Royal Albert Hall. The possible sale of the Hyde Park Barracks made front page news therefore in the Evening Standard after the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Forum

flushed the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) (an agency of the Ministry of Defence) out into the open with its statutory consultation on the draft neighbourhood plan. The Forum is proposing several planning policies to protect and enhance the Hyde Park Barracks site. The Knightsbridge Association has said, for many years, that there should be no increase in height, bulk or footprint if the site is ever developed. The DIO is seeking ideas from developers in March 2017 that would meet the Army's needs with the aim of starting the sale process more formally in Spring 2018. It is very important that the KA supports the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan as it progresses to a referendum in the autumn or winter of 2017/18 if we are to have a say in the future of this important site. Meanwhile, the DIO faces several hurdles including the need for primary legislation and the likely public backlash to the threat to privatise part of Hyde Park.

## **LICENSING**

*Paul Meitner*

**V&A:** Another contentious application, including the operation of an open air café with music, facing onto Exhibition Road, to be open until 11 PM six nights a week. The application was vigorously opposed by several residents' association, including the KA, resulting in a full page article in the Evening Standard on 11 January – the same night as the KA's AGM at the Mandarin Oriental hotel. At the time of writing a final decision has yet to be announced by RBKC.

## **Wellington Club:**

This involved the re-opening of a night club on Knightsbridge with an appalling record of anti-social behaviour, including noise and disturbance, loud vehicles and fighting in the street. The application included the possibility of 'live entertainment' on the premises, which would have exacerbated the problems

previously experienced and led to a further deterioration in the quality of life of local residents. A large number of objections were lodged, and the application was rejected by WCC at a hearing on 26 January on the grounds that the shadow licence did not comply with the Licensing Objectives and would have had the effect of grandfathering terms that were out of line with current policy, including Core Hours. Special thanks to Chris Barrass and his colleagues at 199 Knightsbridge for their support.

## **TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT**

*Marc Winer*

### **Air pollution action by London Government:**

According to information from TfL, a new emissions surcharge will take effect on 23 October 2017. Vehicles registered before 2005 may be subject to an additional £10 daily fee on top of the Congestion Charge. To learn whether you will be affected, go to the Compliance Checker on [www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk).

### **To improve safety:**

and convenience in the neighbourhood, the K.A's Transport & Environment Committee is working with authorities in the areas noted below. Residents noticing violations or problems in these areas should use the "Report it" functions on the Westminster and Kensington websites. In case of a lack of results, please let us know at the email address below.

### **Cleanliness of streets and pavements:**

Repeated efforts to bring more attention to inadequate street cleanliness and accumulations of rubbish are beginning to have an effect. Earlier in January, KA joined a CASSA "walk-about" with Tom Woods, WCC Inspector – Knightsbridge and Belgravia, Residential services to see what more could be done to repair

blocked street drains and replace broken paving stones. One of the most sensitive areas remains the border between Westminster and Kensington territories.

### **Pedestrian safety:**

Very recently, three spots of dangerously loose and raised paving blocks were identified and have been reported.

### **Large lorries:**

With Westminster and TfL, we are pursuing more effective means of keeping large lorries out of Montpelier Street and the Trevors and, where photographic evidence is available, pursuing them where HGVs cause damage to pavements.

### **Gridlock / ease of access:**

Traffic on Brompton Road is often bumper-to-bumper, making it extremely difficult for residents, police, fire, ambulances and taxis to enter or leave Knightsbridge via Brompton Road. After achieving the "Keep Clear" zone at the bottom of Montpelier Street, we have now petitioned for two more of these zones, one at the bottom of Lancelot Place and one at Knightsbridge Green. These will assume particular importance once the two large redevelopment projects on Lancelot Place commence (see below).

### **Speeding and Noise:**

In contrast, at night, it is super car speeding along Knightsbridge, Brompton Road and Sloane Street that continues to affect the neighbourhood and we have indicated to TfL that more needs to be done to reduce it.

### **Lancelot Place redevelopment:**

Demolition of five houses (3-11 Lancelot Place) mentioned earlier is now set to begin in April, with scaffolding and hoarding. Initially, two parking spaces in the street will be lost. More will be taken away later. Pedestrian walkways are to remain in place and, as the project intensifies, we will watch out for its effect

on residents. In case of major problems, please let us know.

[transportandenvironment@theknightsbridgeassociation.com](mailto:transportandenvironment@theknightsbridgeassociation.com)

## **LAW AND ORDER**

*Madeline Elsdon*

### **ROUGH SLEEPERS**

At our last meeting in February an officer from The Home Office outlined his role for immigration enforcement on abuse by European Area Nationals in relation to freedom of movement. In January 2014, the Home Office reinterpreted the directive to include rough sleeping. The Policy was changed to treat rough sleeping by EA nationals as an abuse of their freedom of movement rights. On 1 February 2017 new EA regulations became effective which means that rough sleeping is now capable of being treated as a deportation abuse and an EA National can now be considered for deportation as it is cheaper to fly people home than accommodate them. A return ban can be applied for 3-5 years or indefinitely. They can also be liable to administrative removal powers, which is less protracted than deportation. The intention is to use deportation in relation to rough sleepers very sparingly, in cases of low level criminality and other forms of abuse, and keep the approach to rough sleeping as an administrative removal measure. Westminster is a rough sleeping hotspot but rough sleeping on the Brompton Road has been significantly reduced due to the hard work carried out by our local neighbourhood police officers, sometimes supported by Romanian officers. The local Immigration Compliance Enforcement Team goes out on a weekly basis in London looking at rough sleeping in concert with local authorities and outreach workers. Discussions are taking place as how to improve the management of vulnerability such as substance, alcohol abuse and mental health issues to ensure that they are managed carefully and supported

through the enforcement process. Immigration Enforcement detain approximately 3,000 per night in detention centres throughout the country.

### **CYBER-CRIME**

Fraud and cyber-crime is an increasingly serious issue and a new unit has been set up with a specially trained team to tackle online crime. Our neighbourhood teams visit schools and kindergartens to raise awareness of online dangers.

### **THE ROYAL PARKS**

An extra two million people visited Winter Wonderland this year. In total, there were 145 reported crimes, many of them pick pocketing. You may have seen a large group of around 200 teenage cyclists coming along The Mall, through Knightsbridge and on to Hyde Park, causing chaos. Officers are trying to identify the organisers and deter them. If you see them on their way here please call 101 and report their location.

### **CCTV**

The meeting was told that due to “the cuts” WCC are no longer monitoring their CCTV cameras. Tri-borough, Hammersmith and Fulham have over 1,000 cameras, RBKC have 58 and Westminster none, although there are still some police monitored cameras. Although this is due to a limited budget, the Committee hope that after consultation a solution will be found to reinstate them in full working order as we believe CCTV is a useful tool in the prevention and solving of crime.

### **PEDICABS/RICKSHAWS**

We wrote to the Minister of Transport asking for regulation of pedicabs in the forthcoming Modern Transport Bill and received a reply that the Department of Transport is committed to regulating in this area and is working with WCC and TfL over the detail of the proposed regularity system. They are aiming to introduce the necessary primary legislation at the earliest opportunity.

### **THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE NEIGHBOUR - HOOD FORUM PLAN – UPDATE**

The deadline for responses to the Knightsbridge Neighbourhood Plan Pre-submission (Regulation 14) consultation launched on 8 December 2016 closed on 15 February 2017. Responses were received from WCC, the Knightsbridge Business Group, Defense Infrastructure Office, Imperial College and the KA, amongst others. These are being evaluated with the aim of submitting a revised Plan to WCC for initial approval in June. This will be followed by WCC’s Regulation 16 consultation and scrutiny by a Planning Examiner prior to WCC approval. A Referendum then follows, likely to be in the autumn / winter the outcome of which determines the adoption of the Plan.

It is very important that members of the KA **respond** to the **Regulation 16 consultation** and, most important of all, **vote** in the **referendum**. KA will produce a one-page guidance note highlighting key policies and relevant web links to assist with the interrogation of what will be, inevitably, a long consultation document.

### **IN ADDITION**

#### **WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL**

In May, Cllr Nickie Aiken was elected to replace Cllr Philippa Roe as Leader.

**Leader's Breakfast:** Your Chairman attended a breakfast meeting at St James's Market to hear Cllr Nickie Aiken, the new Leader of Westminster City Council, announce her plans and priorities for the year ahead. Her three priorities are “to put civic leadership and responsibility at the heart of what we do....to promote opportunity and fairness across the city....and set the standards for a world class city.”

At the practical level she undertook to work with the GLA and TfL on air quality; launch a refreshed Licensing regime that aims to name and shame premises that abuse licence conditions; and to strike a

balance between the needs of business and residents. The event concluded at 9.00 am and was well attended by Amenity Society and Neighbourhood Forum representatives, councillors, and representatives from business and charities.

## **RUTLAND GATE UPPER GARDEN – INQUEST**

The conclusion of the inquest into the death of the Philippino housekeeper in 2014, was that *“high winds caused by Hurricane Gonzalez contributed to the tree falling and the collapse of the concrete pillar and railings which killed her. Evidence indicated that the tree was in bad condition. There was wholly inadequate maintenance by the owners of the Upper Garden where the tree was located. The Police assessment and the subsequent dynamic assessment was insufficient as it failed to recognise the full danger to pedestrians in the immediate area of the fallen tree and the structures it was resting on.”* **Verdict: Accident**

Natural justice would seem to be for the family to take action against the owner for negligence.

## **THE RUSSIAN CHURCH, ENNISMORE GARDENS**

Your Chairman attended a lunchtime Reception and guided tour of the recently refurbished Russian Orthodox Church in Ennismore Gardens on Saturday 25 February. Welcomed by Father Joseph and addressed by Archbishop Elisei, we were led to see the extensive refurbishment that included the re-hanging of church bells and installation of a new altar screen. The Archbishop encouraged people to visit the church now that the scaffolding had been removed.

This year celebrates the tercentenary of the establishment of the Russian church in Britain. The present Church was acquired from the Church of England in 1956. The previous church, located off the Buckingham Palace Road, suffered severe bomb damage during World War II and was demolished to make way for the Victoria Bus Station.

## **EVENTS**

### **EATON SQUARE CONCERTS**

The Spring season of evening concerts at St Peter's Eaton Square begins on 30 March

and concludes on 4 May. Welcome to Marlaine Fielding who is looking into ideas for membership events.

### **HYDE PARK Schedule of Events**

These kick off with Barclays British Summer Time, a series of concerts and other events on Friday 30 June and run through to Sunday 9 July.

### **AGM**

Plans will be announced later in the year and is likely to be in January following the success of our recent AGM.

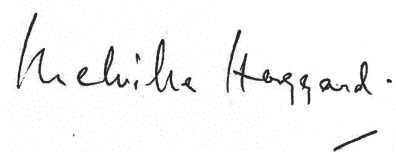
### **SALVETE**

We are delighted to welcome **Juliet Ho**, an architect and former Egerton resident who has agreed to serve on KA's Planning committee.

### **VALETE**

**Maddie Elsdon** has announced her intention to stand down from the KA and the chairmanship of the Law and Order committee. She has been the driving force behind the committee for ten years, forging links with key officers within the Met, its affiliated bodies and the two Councils. She achieved significant attendance at L&O meetings by bringing senior, well-informed speakers to comment on topical and well-prepared agendas. Thank you Maddie for a great contribution: you will be much missed. We are now scouting for a successor and, for anyone interested in discussing the role, please contact Carol or Melville.

**Gill Weavers** announced her intention to stand down from the KA at the end of 2016 but agreed, heroically, to organise our AGM in January 2017. We are very grateful to her for making this such a successful event; and for her work handling the Annual Report's advertising over many years with great skill and effectiveness. Thank you, Gill for making a very real contribution to the KA's relations with the wider world.



Melville Haggard, Chairman  
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