

THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

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UPDATE

June 1997

This is a brief note to bring members up-to-date on some of the main topics the Committees have been dealing with during the past few months

1. **PRUDENTIAL SCHEME:** The consensus of members who attended a presentation of the revised scheme in April was that the architecture was uninspiring and unworthy of such an important site in the centre of a major capital city. On 8th May Westminster City Council's Planning Sub-Committee was asked to give preliminary views on principle aspects of the scheme such as land use, overall architectural design, etc. Land use, car parking and the design of the bulk of the Knightsbridge building were considered to be acceptable subject to further consideration of the top floors and potential impact of the combined Health Club / increased retail floor space. The design of the Brompton Road building was described by the Chairman of the Planning Committee as "wholly unacceptable" requiring complete reconsideration by the architects. Further information was sought to justify the Prudential's decision to drop the proposed underground link to the Tube Station.
2. **HARRODS:** Harrods' development proposals for the redundant Knightsbridge Crown Court in Hans Crescent, mentioned in our last Annual Report, have been given planning approval. It is understood that Harrods propose to go ahead with this development before the conversion of the Trevor Square Depository into Harrods Hotel.
3. **SOUTH KENSINGTON STATION:** Permission has now been granted for the redevelopment of the Underground Station. Council officers are working on fairly radical traffic circulation proposals to cope with the anticipated increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic, something the Association has been pressing for. Consultation will be undertaken at the appropriate stage.
4. **ROYAL ALBERT HALL:** The phased upgrading of the Hall continues. A planning application has now been submitted for the major works to Albert Steps, pedestrianisation, traffic circulation and provision of parking. Residents will have the opportunity to comment to the Council. The Chief Executive and his staff are to be congratulated for the way in which they have consulted residents and kept everyone informed of their proposals and the progress of the work.
5. **SCIENCE MUSEUM:** Two buildings are involved; one, the Wellcome Wing, an extension of the west end of the existing Museum, and the other, a Conference Centre to be built on the Queen's Gate frontage of their site. In January, Committee members and local residents attended a presentation of the plans when the design for the Conference Centre came in for much criticism. The Association and residents of Queen's Gate objected vigorously on the grounds that the Conference Centre design was totally unsympathetic to the Queen's Gate streetscape. In May Kensington & Chelsea's Planning and Conservation

Committee gave it's approval to the Wellcome Wing but called for fresh designs for the Conference Centre.

6. **VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM:** In January the architect presented his amended designs to local residents and groups; they were little different from the original design and did nothing to persuade the majority of those present to support the proposals. The view expressed by the Association's Environment Committee to Kensington & Chelsea's Executive Director of Planning can be summed up by this extract from their letter "the Libeskind building lacks dignity and grace; it goes out of its way to break with tradition and is intended to shock rather than to please". Plans have not yet been submitted to the Local Authority; it is understood that the Museum is still seeking the necessary lottery funding.
7. **KNIGHTS ARCADE RESTAURANT:** Plans for a 300 seater restaurant at Knights Arcade were opposed by the Association and local residents on amenity grounds; the detrimental effect on residents in Park Mansions and adjoining buildings and the additional pressure on parking in the residential areas. In spite of objections, the proposals were approved by the Council but with strict conditions attached..
8. **TRAFFIC BARRIERS - MONTPELIER SQUARE AND TREVOR SQUARE (Experimental Scheme):** Some design problems have arisen with the Trevor Square barrier. The Council is currently trying to overcome these, but it will not be possible to go ahead with the scheme until the problems are resolved.
9. **IMPERIAL COLLEGE:** A planning application for redevelopment of the tennis court site in Princes Gardens is imminent. A presentation will be arranged for members.
10. **FRENCH EMBASSY:** Agents for the Embassy have written to the Association to say that extensive surveys and consultations have been carried out and renovation and redecoration works will start in June.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THESE OR
ANY OTHER LOCAL MATTERS**

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