

THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

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UPDATE

June 1998

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. **THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE INITIATIVE** - Formerly the Knightsbridge / Brompton Road Improvement Scheme. Brainchild of the Association, this is a joint project with Westminster City Council, Kensington & Chelsea and the Knightsbridge Group to instigate a series of improvements to this famous thoroughfare. A brochure to promote the scheme will be printed shortly. All members will receive a copy. The Association will be seeking partnership funding from the public and private sectors.
2. **VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM EXTENSION** - Renamed the "Spiral". A planning application has now been submitted to Kensington & Chelsea. The design is extremely controversial and would have a significant impact on the local scene. **Members are urged to visit the exhibition of drawings in the lobby of the Exhibition Road entrance to the Museum, and to view the model itself on display in the Architecture Room at the Summer Exhibition at the Royal Academy.** Those who feel strongly about the design should comment in writing to:-

**The Executive Director of Planning & Conservation,
Town Hall, London W8 7NX.**

3. **DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES, MEMORIAL GARDEN** - Though sympathetic to some form of memorial near Kensington Palace, the Association, like many residents, is alarmed at the sheer scale of the proposal as described to date in the Press. In the light of the impact that a sixteen acre Memorial Garden promoted worldwide as a tourist attraction, is likely to have - tourist coaches, traffic congestion, litter, fast-food outlets, public lavatories - the Association has written to both the Chairman of the Memorial Committee, the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, and the Chief Executive of the Royal Parks expressing these fears and seeking an assurance that there would be full public consultation before any decision was taken. **A Meeting is being held at KENSINGTON TOWN HALL on MONDAY, 15th JUNE at 6.15 p.m. so that local views can be canvassed and these will be passed on to the Chancellor's Committee.**
All members are invited.
4. **PRUDENTIAL SCHEME** - Following the rejection by Westminster City Council in May 1997 of amended proposals for the design of the Brompton Road buildings, a revised scheme was presented to the Association in November. The ultra modern design was heavily criticised by members of the Association and was again turned down by the Council's Planning Committee. Further developments are awaited.
5. **TETHERED BALLOON IN HYDE PARK:** - The proposal to tether a helium filled balloon in Hyde Park, adjacent to the tennis courts, and use it to take sightseers up to a height of 400ft, was strongly opposed by the Association, local residents and other amenity societies. The application was subsequently rejected by Westminster City Council. A revised application is expected for an alternative site in the Park.
6. **IMPERIAL COLLEGE** - Following rejection by Westminster City Council of the combined Hall of Residence / Underground Sports Hall proposals in Princes Gardens, it is understood that the architects are now working on a scheme for a smaller Sports Hall above the existing Swimming Pool, with some private flats above. An application will be submitted to the Council in the near future. Development of the tennis court site as a Hall of Residence is thought to be some four to five years away. Significant refurbishment and improvements to Southside are scheduled for the year 2000 and a planning application for several Mews houses on the north side of Princes Gate Mews will shortly be submitted to the council.

7. **ROYAL ALBERT HALL** - Progress continues on the most extensive phase of modernisation of the Albert Hall. Currently the Albert Steps have been removed to allow excavation for the new underground service yard. The Steps, terraces and monument are to be back in place in 2001. A temporary pedestrian crossing has been installed in Prince Consort Road.
8. **THE ALBERT MEMORIAL** - Repairs are nearing completion, in May some of the scaffolding came down and the newly gilded cross and spire at the top of the canopy can already be seen. The Queen will formally unveil the restored Memorial in October. The Association and the Victorian Society lobbied hard to get the Government and other bodies to take responsibility for the restoration. From the outset the then Chairman of the Association has been a member of the Albert Memorial Trust. Congratulations to English Heritage on completing the job under budget and a year ahead of schedule. The Association sponsored the restoration of the podium sculpture of George Gilbert Scott, architect of the Memorial.
9. **THE SCIENCE MUSEUM** - Work is progressing on the Wellcome Wing. The architect is working on a new design for the facade of the proposed seminar building in Queen's Gate and a planning application will be submitted shortly.
10. **KNIGHTS ARCADE RESTAURANT** - Work is in hand on this 300 seater restaurant due for completion towards the end of the year. An application to extend the opening hours to 1 a.m. is being vigorously opposed.
11. **SOUTH KENSINGTON STATION** - A development team has now been appointed by London Underground Ltd., and detailed design work has commenced with a view to an early start on construction. Improvements in this area for both pedestrians and cars is long overdue and the Association welcomes the Royal Borough's promotion of a traffic management scheme for this area.
12. **HARRODS HOTEL** - Redevelopment is not anticipated for at least two years pending the completion of the Crown Court development in Hans Crescent / Basil Street.
13. **EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC BARRIERS, MONTEPELIER & TREVOR SQUARES** - The Council is progressing the supply, installation and maintenance of the barrier system and is seeking quotations from a number of suppliers. Site investigations have been carried out to establish the location of underground services that could affect the installation and are being assessed. The experimental scheme is expected to be in service by the end of the year.
14. **RED ROUTE, CROMWELL ROAD / BROMPTON ROAD / KNIGHTSBRIDGE** - Implementation is progressing. The major reversal of the traffic flow in Hans Crescent and Hans Road (either side of Harrods) will take about four weeks to complete and is to start shortly. Planned improvements to the Montpelier / Brompton Road junction is now a reserve proposal and will only be implemented when spending on the more major road safety schemes is known. The Association was influential in getting a loading bay provided outside Parkside for residents and businesses.
15. **SOCIAL EVENT**: The Association is arranging a dinner for members at the ROYAL ALBERT HALL on FRIDAY, 2nd OCTOBER, preceded by tours (in small groups) to see behind the scenes of this national monument of great architectural significance. Full details will be sent to members nearer the time.

**The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
of THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION**

will be held

on

Tuesday, 1st December

at 6 p.m.

in

the Royal College of Music

Concert Hall

Useful Telephone Numbers:

Westminster City Council: 0171 - 641 6000

**The Royal Borough
of Kensington & Chelsea: 0171 - 937 5464**