

# **THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION**

**6 Montpelier Street, London SW7 1EZ  
Tel: 0171 - 823 9103 Fax: 0171 - 581 3130**

## **UPDATE**

**June 1999**

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 PRUDENTIAL SITE:** Two schemes, each by a different developer are under consideration for this site. The Prudential are continuing with their piecemeal proposal - almost complete redevelopment of 195 Knightsbridge; refurbishment of 1 Knightsbridge Green including new façade for 2 storey Brompton Road frontage; a new building on the Brompton Road/Lancelot Place corner. Planning permission has been obtained for all three proposals, designs for the Brompton Road façade will be considered by the Council shortly. In parallel, a proposal by City & West End Developments for the comprehensive development of the site, including Silver City House, has been referred back to them by the Council for further consideration on a number of points. Which development goes ahead will depend on whether the Prudential proceed or come to an arrangement with City & West End.
2. **DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES MEMORIAL:** At the end of last year the Chancellor's Memorial Committee issued a statement proposing that this, with regard to the Parks, should take the form of:
  - a) improvements to the children's playground, to the north of Kensington Palace and
  - b) a memorial walk linking Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, Green Park and St. James's Park. These proposals are currently being developed by the Royal Parks Agency and further consultation will take place. The 27-acre memorial garden and 200 ft. waterspout in the Round Pond have been dropped.
3. **COMMERCIALISATION OF THE ROYAL PARKS:**

Ministers decided without adequate consultation to encourage more commercial activity and this July there will be at least nine pop concerts. North Carriage Drive will be shut for some weeks. The reasons for the change of policy are partly financial, though the extra money raised will be a drop in the ocean, partly to bring a wider range of people into the Parks, although anyone who uses the Parks regularly knows that they already give pleasure to people of all ages from many places. The Association is deeply concerned about the effects on the environment. There is plenty of noise elsewhere in the capital, and the Parks have traditionally been oases of peace. There is a huge gulf between the traditional bandstand and an amplified pop concert for which a tract of ground must inevitably be mauled for stands and other infrastructure. We are working with other Associations to contain the damage.
4. **TETHERED BALLOON IN THE PARKS:** Having secured an alternative site, the operators decided to withdraw their appeals against the refusal by Westminster City Council of permission for the sites in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens.
5. **THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE INITIATIVE:** Following the production of a plan and sketch of the proposed improvements to the split-level pavement between Cheval Place and Montpelier Street, the Association has been seeking support from the freeholders and ground floor tenants. The Royal Borough is prepared to fund the major part of the costs provided the local business community contributes about 25% of the total. Initial response from the freeholders and frontagers has been extremely positive.
6. **HARRODS:** Plans for Harrods' Hotel appear to be on hold. There is talk of replacing the proposed hotel by flats. On completion of the *Crown Court* development Harrods' plan to transfer various staff facilities from the top floors of the main building and convert the vacated area to a Function Room with associated lounge, bars and roof terraces. The Association has objected on the grounds of the detrimental effect of late night functions on the adjacent residential area. The Association also objected to a proposal for a helicopter-landing pad on the main roof of the store.
7. **IMPERIAL COLLEGE:** Plans for a Sports Hall, improved fitness facilities and 3 floors of flats for academic staff to be built above the swimming pool in Princes Gardens, were submitted in April and are still under consideration by Westminster City

Council. At a public meeting the proposals came in for much criticism. The Association has objected to the height, bulk and site coverage, the effect on the adjacent residential property, and some aspects of the design.

8. **VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM:** Daniel Libeskind's controversial Spiral extension at the V & A won planning permission from the Royal Borough at the end of 1998. The Museum hopes to complete their funding package this year, which may include an application to the Arts Council of England for Lottery money. Building would start in 2001 and be completed in 2005. Transformation of the British Galleries, already underway with the help of Lottery funding, should be completed by 2001.
9. **THE SCIENCE MUSEUM:** The Wellcome Wing is taking shape; the main structural work is nearing completion, final opening date is June 2000. Revised proposals for the Seminar building in Queen's Gate were recently submitted for planning approval and, once again, the Association commented adversely on the design which was considered to be inappropriate for this site.
10. **THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL:** Progress continues both inside and outside. The deep excavation and piling on the Prince Consort Road frontage appears to have been completed and there are now signs of new construction within the excavated area. Work should be completed in 2001.
11. **KNIGHTSBRIDGE UNDERGROUND STATION:** The Association has been pressing for a long time for improvements to the Hans Crescent entrance and concourse to relieve, at times, dangerous congestion both at street level and in the concourse. Work started in April on a new and enlarged ticket hall under the Hans Crescent/Brompton Road junction. The entrance will be moved to the Harrods side of Hans Crescent. Hans Crescent will remain closed for about 12 months and the entire project is scheduled for completion by 2001.
12. **SOUTH KENSINGTON STATION REDEVELOPMENT:** Further thought is being given to the design of the scheme and the optimum use of the site to meet changing market conditions. The revised design will incorporate proposals to improve pedestrian and vehicular movement in and around the site.
13. **TRAFFIC & PARKING:** An incomprehensible decision to close both west and south carriage drives in Hyde Park to coincide with the closure of one carriageway in Brompton Road created a complete logjam in Knightsbridge over Bank Holiday weekend. *Montpelier & Trevor Square Barriers:* Negotiations are continuing between Westminster City Council and Harrods, to facilitate the phasing of the Depository development into two parts. This would enable Harrods' vaults, under the pavement in Trevor Square, to be reinforced and the barrier scheme to be implemented.  
  
The Royal Borough is about to undertake a survey of residents in the Queen's Gate area to seek their views on extending the hours of parking control to match Westminster's in the immediate area of the Royal Albert Hall.
14. **LAW & ORDER:** The CCTV Scheme in Brompton Road is proving a great help in reducing street crime, but mugging in the residential areas is a continuing problem. Residential burglaries in Knightsbridge are significantly down. It is pleasing to report that due to the combined efforts of the Police, RBK & C enforcement officers and the Knightsbridge Association, the illegal traders appear to have been successfully banished from Brompton Road. Police are targeting beggars (mostly from eastern Europe), prostitute carders who deface phone boxes, and windscreen washers at Hyde Park Corner.

15. **CLEANSING:** Brompton Road and the side streets continue to defy the efforts of the Councils. Litter and black bags accumulate; cigarette ends remain after sweeping; chewing gum spatters the road and pavements; graffiti is on the increase. To the general public, the world appears to be one vast litter bin and monitoring by the Councils is, on the whole, ineffectual.
16. **NEW MEMBERS:** The strength of the Association lies in its membership. Please help us to recruit new members by giving us the names and addresses of any local friends or newcomers who might be interested in joining. A membership form is included with this newsletter.
17. **SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Please make sure that you have renewed your subscription or increased your Banker's Order.

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

**will be held on**

**Monday, 13th December 1999 at 6 p.m.**

**in the Concert Hall of the Royal College of Music.**

***Useful Telephone Numbers:***

**Westminster City Council:**                      **0171-641 6000**

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