

THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

6 Montpelier Street, London SW7 1EZ

Tel: 020: 7823 9103 Fax: 020 7581 3130

UPDATE

June 2000

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. **HARRODS HELIPAD – Public Enquiry, Tuesday 11th July, 10am**
Kensington Town Hall, Hornton Street: A proposal to use the roof of Harrods as a helicopter-landing pad for the store's chairman is a cause of great concern. Harrods have applied for a Certificate of Lawful Use. The Royal Borough maintains that planning permission is required, Harrods advisors say it is not, and the matter is to be settled at the Appeal. The danger of a proliferation of rooftop landing facilities for helicopters is very real, and is not only for London but also of national significance. The Association fully supports the Council's action to protect residents from the intolerable noise that would result from Harrods helipad. **Members of the public are invited to attend, but may not speak. Interruptions are counterproductive. However, a good turnout will indicate to the Inspector the level of concern. Please also write to the Planning Inspectorate as soon as you get this newsletter – see attached sheet for details.**
2. **THE GREATER LONDON ASSEMBLY**
In May Ken Livingstone became the first Mayor of London and 25 other members were elected to the Assembly. Angela Bray is the member for the West London constituency. The GLA's full powers come into operation on 3rd July and we wait to see how these will affect local matters.
3. **PRUDENTIAL SITE:** The sale of 195-199 Knightsbridge (facing the Barracks) saw the end of City & West End's scheme for the comprehensive redevelopment of this important area bounded by Lancelot Place, Knightsbridge, Brompton Road and Knightsbridge Green. The new owners of the Knightsbridge building are currently deciding whether to build the Pru's approved scheme or to submit a new application. Meanwhile the Pru are proceeding with the refurbishment of 1 Knightsbridge Green, in Brompton Road. Activity on this site is welcome as its recent run down appearance has cast a blight on this premier shopping street. The retail units should be ready by late 2000 and work completed by 2002. Redevelopment of the Lancelot Place building depends on vacant possession being obtained. It is anticipated that the Post Office will relocate to a site on Knightsbridge Green. Boots are also looking to relocate.
4. **THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE INITIATIVE:** Work has at last begun on the first phase of the improvements to Brompton Road, the raised pavement between 132-188 Brompton Road, on which the Association and the Royal Borough have been working together. The Association has received pledges from enthusiastic owners and frontagers towards the overall cost, the major part of which will be born by the Council. Thames Water began relocating their mains in May. The Royal Borough hopes to complete the work by early Autumn. This should greatly enhance this part of Brompton Road.
5. **NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM:** Phase I of the Darwin Centre, to the west of the Waterhouse building, was "topped out" on 18th April. The new building will house the Museum's 12 million zoological specimens and give public access to this important research they support. Phase 2 involves the construction of a further new building, replacing an existing one, to house entomology and botany collections, laboratories and a new public atrium. The Wellcome Trust have announced an award of £10 million towards this phase. Construction to commence in summer 2002.
6. **SCIENCE MUSEUM:** The Wellcome Wing which will greatly increase the amount of exhibition space and includes a suspended IMAX cinema will be opened by the HM the Queen, accompanied by HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, on June 30th. Construction of the new seminar building on Queen's Gate will begin in the Autumn. Completion is scheduled for 2002.
Creating Sparks - the sciences meet the arts for 3 weeks in September, 6th-30th when all the local Museums and Institutes collaborate to create the South Kensington Festival. Free programmes are available from July from the institutions.

7. **VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM:** The V & A have raised roughly half the £80million needed to complete the not universally admired Spiral building. An application is currently being put together to obtain Lottery funding. If successful work would commence in 2001 and be completed in 2005. The Museum is carrying out a number of research projects to ensure that the building, if constructed, and its contents fulfil its expectations.
8. **THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL:** Work continues on the upgrading of the interior and the major works to the South Porch and South Steps. Proposals to pedestrianise the concourse surrounding the Albert Hall and to narrow Kensington Gore have been strongly criticised. Further consultation will take place.
9. **ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY:** The RGS plans for building extra space under part of their garden, providing improved access from Exhibition Road and a single storey pavilion along part of the Exhibition Road frontage were submitted to Westminster City Council in January. The Association commented on a detail of the design but raised no other objection.
10. **IMPERIAL COLLEGE:** a) Plans for the Sports Hall development above the swimming pool in Princes Gardens appear to have stalled since the Council granted planning approval, subject to a series of conditions, in October. b) Objections have been raised to the effect conversion of Montpelier Hall to 18 residential flats with underground parking would have on access to and amenity of Montpelier Mews and on parking in the Montpeliers.
11. **THE ROYAL PARKS:** Both the Princess Diana Children's Playground, in Kensington Garden, and the Memorial Walk linking Kensington Gardens, Hyde Park, Green Park and St. James's Park will be completed in time for the official opening on June 30th. Improvements along the walk include planting and repairs to gates and monuments. No concerts are planned for Kensington Gardens this year, and slightly fewer, the Prince's Trust Concert, the 'Proms in the Park' and some half dozen smaller concerts are planned for Hyde Park. This reduction is welcome but not enough. Cycling: much to the anger of local amenity groups and the Friends of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, and in spite of recent assurances from the Minister that no change was planned, the historic ban on cycling in Kensington Gardens is to be lifted for a trial period, limited to morning rush hour, due to pressure from the parliamentary lobby group. The Royal Parks say that consultation will take place. **Free buggy** rides round Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens are provided for the elderly, disabled and infirm by the Hyde Park Appeal 'Liberty Drives' service from May to October. Tel: 07767 498 096 for further details.
12. **HARRODS:** The Crown Court development proceeds apace. Objections have been raised to a proposal to convert the Georgian restaurant to a banqueting suite. Intensification of use and the extension of hours of use would be unacceptable to local residents. Plans to convert the Depository in Trevor Square and 100 Brompton Road into a Hotel appear to be on hold.
13. **KNIGHTSBRIDGE TUBE STATION:** The new entrance outside Harrods is due to open at the end of July and the remainder of the works will be completed during Autumn of 2001.
14. **SOUTH KENSINGTON STATION SITE:** The Royal Borough has confirmed that a new planning brief is being prepared with public consultation likely to take place in the autumn.

15. **TRAFFIC & PARKING:** Due to construction work on the reconfiguration of Knightsbridge Tube station, it is unlikely that Hans Crescent will reopen much before the end of 2001. The Royal Borough will be consulting on traffic options for the area which could include the possibility of keeping Hans Crescent permanently closed and partly pedestrianised. The Royal Borough will also be consulting on a revised draft for the South Kensington traffic management scheme, originally linked to the redevelopment of the South Kensington Station site. *Montpelier and Trevor Square barriers:* the Council is currently waiting to hear the outcome of discussions between Harrods and BT on the relocation of cables necessary before works can take place to strengthen the vaults under pavement between Trevor Square and Lancelot Place.
New Parking Regulations: From 24th July Kensington and Chelsea are increasing the hours in which residents' parking bays operate to 10 pm from Monday Friday only. Single yellow lines, pay and display and parking meters in the Borough will continue to operate to 6.30 pm, as at present. There is an urgent case for Westminster to do likewise in this area to protect residents from the ever-encroaching 24-hour city.
16. **LAW & ORDER:** A concerted effort by the Police appears to have almost removed the East European women and children beggars from Brompton Road. Now that summer is here members are reminded to take special care not to wear visible expensive jewellery in public places.
17. **LONDON GARDEN SQUARES DAY:** Over 50 private garden squares and 5 public squares, including Ennismore Gardens and Rutland Gate Lower Garden, opened to the public on 4th June. Organised by London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust, this popular occasion has now become an annual event. Proceeds help squares and green charities care for London's garden heritage.
18. **SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Please make sure that you have renewed your subscription and/or that your Banker's Order is up-to-date.
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| Single: | £10 |
| Couples/families | £15 |
| Corporate | £40 |
19. **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.
20. **SOCIAL EVENTS:** The Old Bailey- tour and black tie dinner, **Wednesday 13th September.** See enclosed sheet for details.
21. **HISTORY OF KNIGHTSBRIDGE:** Published by English Heritage, *Knightsbridge*, the latest volume of the Survey of London, will be published later this year. Leaflets and full details will be sent out with the AGM papers. Members will be able to purchase copies at a reduced price.

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

Will be held on

Monday 11th December 2000 at 6 pm

in the Concert Hall of the Royal College of Music Prince Consort Road