

THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

March 2006

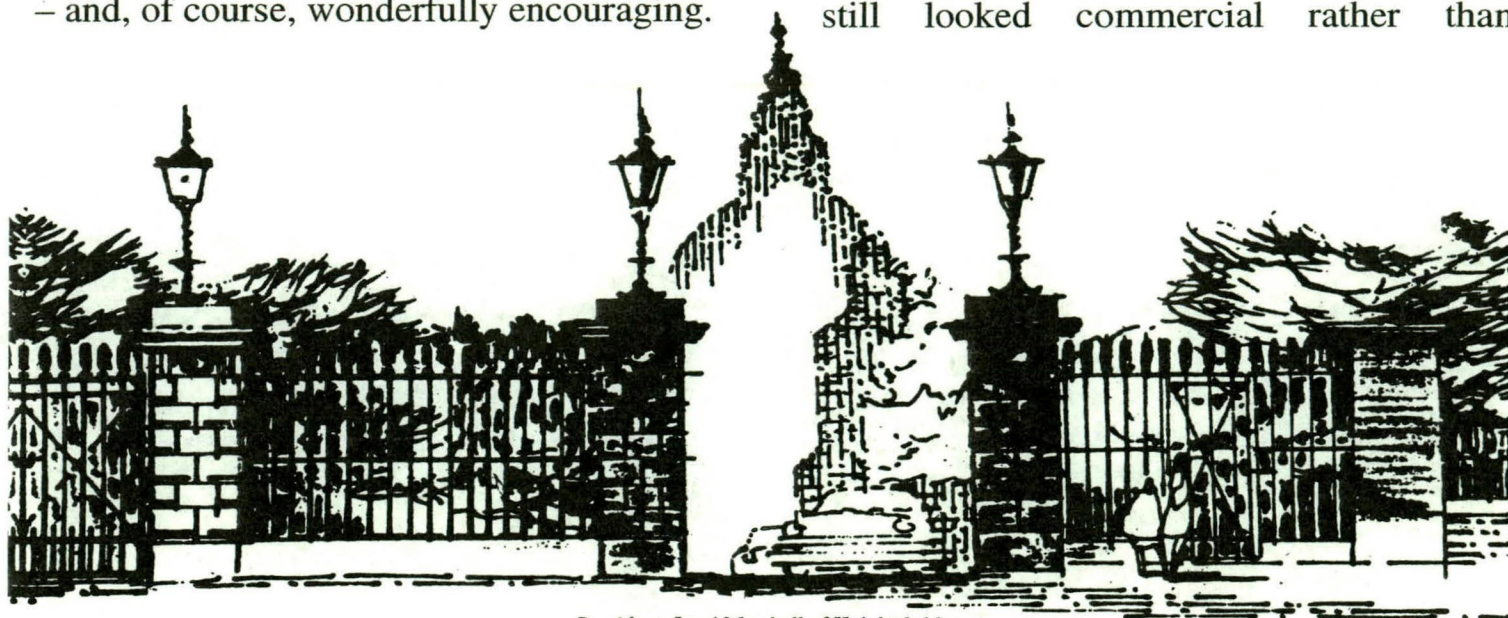
Dear Member,

One indication of the involvement of our members with the Knightsbridge Association's activities is the turnout at social events - and well over 100 of you came to last autumn's Bonhams evening. This has encouraged Bonhams to invite us to another generous pre-auction private view this year, on Monday September 18th, (invitations will follow). Meanwhile a record-breaking 200 or so members and guests have signed up to our St Paul's Cathedral History and Music evening on 15th March, and sadly we had to turn down a further 20 applicants, to all of whom I sincerely apologise. For a relatively small association such as ours these response levels have been astounding - and, of course, wonderfully encouraging.

Now to less social matters - planning and the environment, traffic, cleansing, lighting, law and order and all KA's other activities aimed at making life in the neighbourhood as good as it possibly can be.

Bowater House

Plans went before WCC's Planning Committee in December, at which the Committee called for a reduction in the new building's height - a request that had been strongly made by KA among others. We saw revised plans in January, and were pleased to see the new lower height, but were concerned both because the design still looked commercial rather than



President: Lord Marshall of Knightsbridge

Vice-Presidents: Lady Grade, Jonathan Charkham CBE

Chairman: Winston Fletcher, *Vice Chairman:* Michael Wright, CMG, FRICS, Edward Davies-Gilbert

Hon. Secretary: Carol Sevmour-Newton. *Hon Treasurer:* Christine Gilbertson

residential, and because the proposed steel louvre cladding will not be harmonious with the surrounding Knightsbridge brickwork. We raised these additional concerns with WCC, however the Council approved the plans at its February meeting, subject to some further queries concerning traffic flow, and so these plans look set to come into being.

Exhibition Road Project

The Royal Borough has submitted its Stage 1 bid for £25 million to the Big Lottery, and will learn the outcome in May. If it is successful, the Stage 2 bid will be made in January 2007, with a response by July 2007. RBKC are also applying to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £2-£4 million to improve the underground pedestrian tunnel, which would be most welcome. Currently RBKC is analysing the results of its recent public consultation on the Project, and is proceeding with more detailed designs, which will be shown to us in the spring.

Imperial College Redevelopment

Princes Gardens Southside buildings are now demolished and the new buildings will be ready for occupation by autumn 2007.

The **Sport Centre** on Princes Gardens north side began a phased re-opening in January, but the Centre will not be open to members of the public or Friends of Imperial until a review of usage is carried

out after six months, which we find most disappointing in view of the College's earlier commitments.

The **Nursery School** at 8/9 Princes Gardens is planning to double in size, and will move to temporary accommodation before eventually moving to the rebuilt Linstead Hall. KA has objected to the planning applications for the two possible temporary sites, as both would have a detrimental effect on adjacent residences, and their location next to a major building site will expose children to significant dangers.

At the **Exhibition Road / Imperial College Road** site the College will start demolishing the post-war building in September 2006, subject to planning permissions, and will probably hold an architectural competition for a new Aeronautical Engineering, Research and Teaching faculty there.

South Kensington Station

KA has strongly supported the Brompton Association's proposals for a conservation-led redevelopment. First published in 2004 these proposals have now been further developed in an attractive new booklet: 'South Kensington – The Way Forward'. Having (happily) terminated their agreement with the previous development companies, London Underground are working on a new brief in conjunction with RBKC and English Heritage, both of whom have (also happily) expressed considerable support for the Brompton Association's ideas.

The Mayor

Mayoral Powers: In January we were asked to comment on the Government's proposals to give the mayor of London additional powers. KA opposed the transfer of local boroughs' planning responsibilities to the mayor and GLA, as they lack the depth of local knowledge and contact with residents to do the job properly.

London Plan: Meanwhile the mayor wishes to update his 2004 London Plan, again seeking additional powers, but more particularly emphasising the need to deal with anticipated climate change problems. We await more details.

Congestion Charging: Though public consultation resulted in overwhelming opposition from local residents and businesses, the mayor has decided to extend the zone westward, scheduled to start February 2007.

Miscellany

***Normandie Hotel** – the new plans, on which KA has commented in detail, are expected to go before the WCC Planning Committee in March.

***Montpelier/Trevor Square Traffic Barriers** – following a public consultation a report was submitted in January by WCC to its Cabinet Minister for Transport, which recommended that the present barrier-free traffic flow should continue. As KA members are so divided on this issue, we have remained neutral, but await the Cabinet Member's decision with interest.

***Brompton Estates** – plans have been submitted for changes to some shop fronts on Brompton Road. KA will oppose both any loss of convenience shops there, and also strongly oppose the proposal to open shops in Egerton Gardens Mews.

***Hyde Park** – Mark Camley, the Royal Parks' new Chief Executive, gave an extremely helpful speech at our AGM, welcoming KA's closer involvement with activities in the park. A WCC report on park events in 2005 details the need to reduce the impact of large events on local residents, and shows there has been some – but in our view not yet enough – improvement in this matter.

Crime and Security

Iain Walker has stepped down as Chairman of KA's Law and Order Committee, and his place has been taken by Madeline Elsdon, with Ray Dyer coming in as Honorary Secretary. We are greatly indebted to Iain for everything he has done as chairman – and delighted that Madeline, with Ray, will be taking over the reins of this hugely important committee.

The Committee meets regularly with the local Police and with Police Community Support Officers, as part of the Safer Neighbourhoods Initiative, to identify our concerns and focus on the main issues affecting the Knightsbridge area. The Committee also works closely with Neighbourhood Watch operations and the Councils to reduce burglary, street and motor vehicle crime, and addresses such 'quality of life' issues as rough sleepers, aggressive begging and pick-pocketing, as well as criminal activities such as dog theft, identity fraud and the increased terrorist threat.

If you feel you could participate in this vital activity, and make a significant contribution to law and order in our community, please contact

Madeline Elsdon on 020 7589 4006

or

e-mail elsdonmv@aol.com.

Social Events

As well as the St Paul's and Bonhams events mentioned in the opening paragraph, Lillemor Gardener, chairman of KA's Social Events Committee, has lined up the following splendid occasions, about which more will be circulated later:

House of Lords Party and Buffet Dinner – Thursday May 25th, with an address by The Lord Guthrie of Craigiebank, who many of you will know is an outstanding speaker.

Reform Club Dinner – Wednesday October 25th, our annual black tie dinner, with an address on the history of the Club by its current chairman, Roger Billis.

AGM – Monday December 11th, at the Royal College of Music.

In addition, by quoting membership of The Knightsbridge Association, members can obtain free entry to the following

Penman Art and Antiques Fairs:

Kings Road Antiques Fair, Chelsea Old Town Hall, March 24-26

Chelsea Art Fair (contemporary art), Chelsea Old Town Hall, April 20-23.

Further details of both can be obtained from:

www.penman-fairs.co.uk, or
telephone 0870 823 9103.

And remember that if you have e-mail you can obtain occasional free tickets to Royal Albert Hall performances. Let us know if you are interested.

Finally, it remains to me to remind all members who pay their KA subscriptions by standing order to check that their orders are up-to-date (single members £10, couples or families £15, corporate members £40), and to urge those who pay by cheque in April to please pay promptly (reminders will be sent). Our subscriptions have not been raised for 8 years – but they can only be held at their present low level levels if members help us by ensuring their subscriptions come in smoothly.

With spring almost upon us, I hope you will enjoy strolling through our magnificent local squares, and Hyde Park, all burgeoning with their delightful flowers and blossom.

With best wishes.



Winston Fletcher

The Knightsbridge Association
6 Montpelier Street London SW7 1EZ

www.knightsbridgeassoc.org.uk

Tel: 020 7823 9103

Registered with the Civic Trust