

THE KNIGHTSBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

June 2010

Dear Member

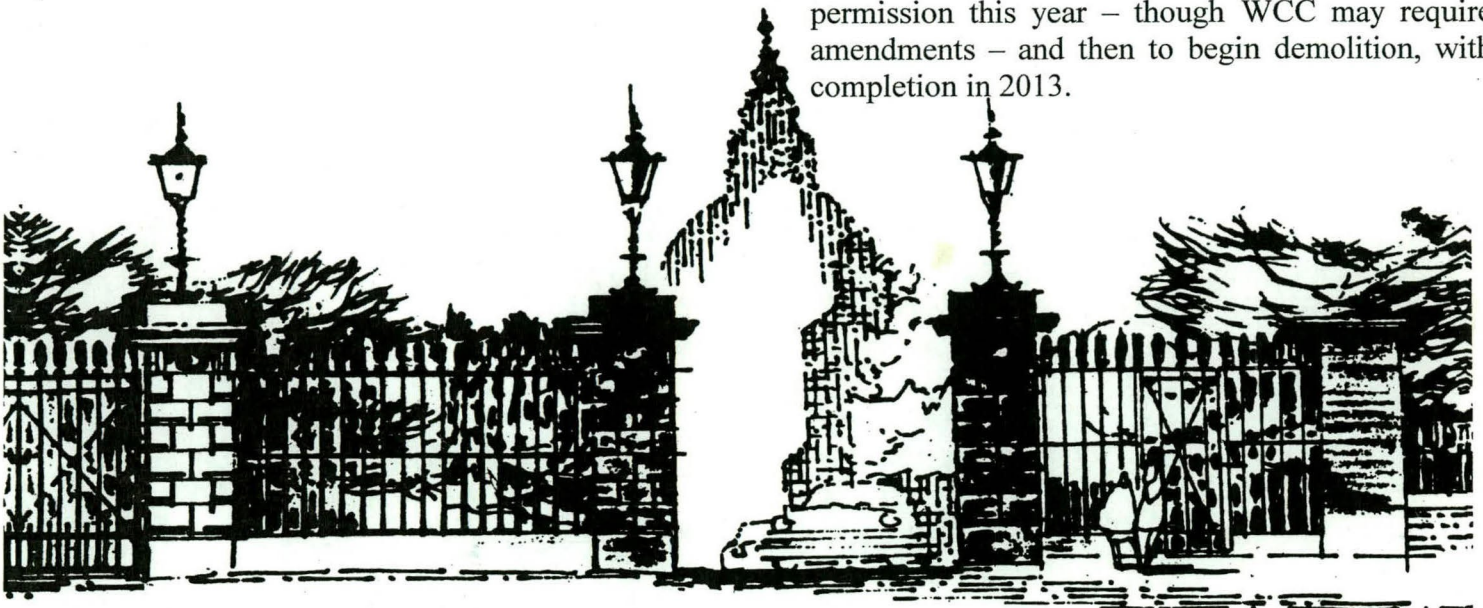
MAMOUNIA

KA members' response to our request for funds to meet the legal costs of our appeal against the late licensing hours RBKC have allowed the new Brompton Road Mamounia, has been simply terrific. Over 160 members have contributed, which in itself shows the strength of residents' feelings on the issue. However the appeal cannot be heard until early October 2010, when it is likely to take three full days. This legal delay provides us with a great advantage. Once the Mamounia opens, we will distribute leaflets to all residents in its vicinity, giving them advice on how to complain about noise, parking infringements and any other difficulties emanating from the premises. You need do nothing yet, but when the time comes follow our instructions – and you will greatly strengthen our legal case.

PLANNING AND CONSERVATION

55-91 Knightsbridge and 1-7 William Street

The planning application to redevelop this Edwardian block has now been lodged with WCC. The proposal is to retain the façade of 55-91 Knightsbridge, demolish the buildings behind, demolish 1-2 William Street for access to the site during construction, and subsequently to replace almost like-for-like. The new building will comprise shops, offices and residential apartments. There were two public exhibitions – before and after the Christmas break. We expect shortly to receive a full set of drawings to comment on in detail. Members of the public can view the plans at City Hall, or access them on WCC's website – the application numbers are 10/01744/FULL and 10/01745/LBC. We believe the plans look promising, but as always, the devil may be in the detail. The developers hope to receive planning permission this year – though WCC may require amendments – and then to begin demolition, with completion in 2013.



President: The Lord Marshall of Knightsbridge

Vice-President: The Lady Grade

Chairman: Winston Fletcher, *Vice-Chairman:* Edward Davies-Gilbert

Hon. Secretary: Carol Seymour-Newton, *Hon. Treasurer:* Phyllis Lusher.

159-166 Brompton Road and 35 Cheval Place

The developers submitted a third application earlier this year, again seeking to alter and extend the permission which RBKC, to the astonishment of many, granted last year. The KA and others again objected and the application has been withdrawn.

One Hyde Park

Work appears to be on schedule for the first apartments to be ready for occupation by the end of 2010. Edinburgh Gate will be opening in October. The Epstein statue will return to its new site in the Park in front of the flats at the end of August.

Knightsbridge Palace Hotel

Work on the new hotel is on schedule with construction due for completion at the end of 2011, with the opening being early in 2012 – in time for the Olympics.

Natural History Museum

The KA and other local organisations and residents were invited to a presentation of the Museum's draft Grounds Strategy in February. All were dismayed that the Strategy not only positively encourages events year round on the East Lawn, but now proposes to pave over most of this area to facilitate them. Many of the activities have little relevance to the Museum or its ethos. The garden – an important green space which is integral to the setting of this Grade I listed building – is simply seen as a money-making vehicle.

Most alarming is the proposal to allow temporary structures in front of the main facade of the Waterhouse building up to first floor sill level, and to allow structures twice as tall to the east of the museum and in front of the 1970s Palaeontology Building. Structures of this height on the East Lawn will block the iconic view of the Museum from Exhibition Road and mar the setting of one of the finest Victorian buildings in the country.

Four local civic societies – the Kensington Society, the Brompton Association, the Earls Court Society and the KA have signed a joint letter to the new Director of Planning and Development at RBKC requesting a meeting.

Imperial College SE Quadrant, Exhibition Road

When the new proposals for the redevelopment of the south eastern corner of Exhibition Road and Imperial College Road went to WCC's Planning Committee in December, the College was asked to give further consideration to various aspects of the scheme. The College then withdrew the application, and that is where matters rest.

Serpentine Gallery

This year's Summer pavilion has been designed by avant-garde French architect Jean Nouvel, described as brilliant and unpredictable. The 10th in

the gallery's series of temporary summer buildings designed by leading international architects, it is a bright scarlet structure which will house the Gallery's summer talks, events and fund-raising party. It will delight some and offend others, but these pavilions have become part of the summer season's entertainment – and they are temporary.

Memorial to Bomber Command

Long overdue, at last a plan for a memorial to Bomber Command.

However, the proposal submitted to WCC was so monumental that it dwarfed all other memorials at Hyde Park Corner. KA and several other consultative bodies wrote to WCC fully endorsing the principle of a memorial, but arguing what was proposed was totally out of proportion.

Swag and Tails

The much missed Swag & Tails in Fairholt Street, which closed last year, has changed hands and an application was submitted for a much larger building/restaurant, open 7 days a week. The old restaurant/pub was very much a local venue. It attracted little taxi or car trade and closed at weekends. The proposal for a much larger gastro/pub is a different proposition. It would become a 'destination' quite unsuited to a small street in this area. KA and a considerable number of local residents objected and the proposal has been withdrawn.

31 Brompton Square

Little to report on this beleaguered house since the March newsletter. The erstwhile owner is awaiting trial on around 15 charges. Work at 29 Brompton Square has come to a halt, no doubt due to the recession.

El Arez2

In response to complaints by KA, enforcement action was taken by WCC against the café in Brompton Road to remove the tacky plastic side panels they had fixed to their canopy. Subsequently the owners submitted a planning application which is being vigorously opposed by KA. It seriously degrades this part of Brompton Road and might be copied by the other nearby cafes.

Cycle Docks

They are coming! The Mayor wants them, and cycling is considered a 'good thing'. KA has opposed some which it felt were wrongly sited – one outside the Russian Church in Ennismore Gardens (dropped), one in Rutland Gate (dropped) – and raised questions about others. These bicycle schemes have not always proved successful in other European cities. There is a concerted move by our colleagues in WASF (Westminster Amenity Societies Forum) to get the government to introduce a Road Traffic Act which includes cyclists, so a

code of behaviour can be enforced.

Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens:

The Senior Playground - Fame At Last!

Never in its history has KA received so much publicity! The new Senior Playground in Hyde Park was opened by the Mayor of Westminster on 19 May, and generated a mass of publicity for the Association and for local residents, on television, radio, in the national and local press – and indeed throughout the world. The coverage was unbelievable! A large number of our members attended the opening, and promptly became media stars (albeit unpaid). The playground is at the Exhibition Road end of the Park, by the tennis courts. If you haven't been there – it's well worth a visit, and it's free!

Huge congratulations and thanks go to Madeleine Elsdon for having made all this happen.

Events June onwards – look out for road closures

20 June Exhibition Road Music Day

25-27 June Hard Rock concerts, Hyde Park Parade Ground

1-4 July Wireless concerts, Hyde Park Parade Ground

10-11 July Music Village, the cockpit Hyde Park

18 July 'Race for Life', Hyde Park

24-25 July World Triathlon championships

25 July Arts Village, Kensington Gardens

28 August Steel band competition, Parade Ground, Hyde Park.

TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

Double Yellow Lines

Westminster City Council completed the implementation of the new double yellow lines scheme in April. There was thorough consultation beforehand which included advertisements on lamp posts. In the KA's view, WCC undertook a thorough public consultation and took proper account of any objections received. Many people have said they are very pleased with the result although a few have expressed concerns. We have passed our thanks to our three Councillors for supporting this important project as part of the Ward Funds initiative.

Prolonged Roadworks in Brompton Road and Cromwell Road

Brompton Road and Cromwell Road are due to be part of the Olympic Route Network in 2012 to facilitate the movement of competitors and officials quickly around London. With major replacement works needed for gas pipes along those roads, this work is being undertaken over the next 12 months

or so. We expect lane and even road closures and have been told Transport for London will make special effort to publicise these events. Please watch out for them.

Scotch House Corner

Road closures are also planned around Scotch House Corner as part of the final works before the opening of the One Hyde Park development in October. One lane of the carriageway eastbound is due to be closed in each of Knightsbridge and Brompton Road at Scotch House Corner from 7 August to 26 September in 'off peak' hours with the exception of one week when we are likely to see the full closure of one lane in each carriageway.

Western Extension of the Congestion Charging Zone

The Mayor has said he will launch a statutory consultation on the proposed removal of the western extension of the congestion charging zone (WEZ) in May. We are most concerned by his proposals which are expected, by Transport for London, to increase congestion in our area by between 10 and 20% and hazardous emissions by between 4 and 8%. Please watch out for the consultation and respond opposing the removal of the WEZ, as the KA will do. If the WEZ is removed, KA considers it essential an inner low emission zone is put in its place.

LAW AND ORDER

The Knightsbridge and Belgravia (K & B) and the Brompton Safer Neighbourhood Teams both continue to fight crime in Knightsbridge. Public confidence in policing is crucial and so both teams engage with the KA Law and Order Committee to exchange information regarding local problems. Residents are encouraged to contact this committee if they have any concerns which might interest their Team.

Eastern European Beggars

In April the Group Dispersal Zone surrounding Harrods was renewed for the third time by RBKC following representations from us and the police. Tough powers have again been granted for the next six months to enable the police to crack down on aggressive begging in some of our top retail streets. This makes a massive difference, and has improved the life both of residents and businesses.

Don't Feed the Habit

There are still rough sleepers in the Brompton Road and an aggressive busker in the Hyde Park Underpass. Free accommodation has to be offered and refused before action can be taken. They are mostly hard drinkers and drug addicts. Our Safer Neighbourhood Teams regularly remind local

retailers that street drinking is illegal and they should not sell to vagrants.

No Knife Crime in Knightsbridge

Knife crime fell last year but there appears to have been an increase in teenage violence. A recent pre-planned attack involving schoolchildren resulted in the murder of a boy at Victoria Station. The police have assured us that neither of the gangs involved came from Westminster schools. Police responded instantaneously, and with the help of CCTV arrests were made quickly. Some people dislike CCTV, but CCTV can be an invaluable tool in bringing criminals to justice and eliminating innocent suspects.

Illegal Cycling

Cyclists continue to use pavements as cycle tracks, but since the K & B team has been deterring cycling on the pavement, the number of complaints has diminished.

Motor Vehicle Crime

The police regularly patrol on foot and on mountain bikes. Near the Royal Albert Hall thieves were smashing rear windscreens and taking items from the boot. Patrols have stopped this. Safety Packs containing an interference free tax disc holder and lint for removing the SatNav mark have been distributed in the areas where motor vehicle crime is highest. Always remove items of value from your car, even if they are out of sight.

Residential Burglary

There have been few burglaries this period but the Teams still patrol the hot spots, offering crime prevention advice. They have undertaken street briefings where property marking using ultra-violet pens, smart water kits and the use of websites are demonstrated to residents. If scaffolding is erected nearby you, check that your windows and doors are secured by effective locks. Though not a legal requirement, builders can be asked to install a scaffolding alarm to prevent burglary.

Business Crime Prevention Advice

Crime prevention training is given to local shop staff. Top Shop has opened a new flagship store on Brompton Road and the K & B Team will work with their Security to deter shoplifting, pick pocketing and the theft of unguarded handbags and property within the store.

Unfortunately, violent robberies from jewellery and high-end shops in Knightsbridge and Central London continue. In Westminster a new specialist unit will deal with such crime and the police are having great success in apprehending the robbers.

Planning for the Olympics

Public order policing is always under scrutiny and review. With the Olympics coming we are attending meetings to ensure support mechanisms are in place to minimise the impact on local residents and businesses, when huge numbers of visitors will enter the area.

Vroom Vroom

Since we raised awareness of high performance cars cruising locally during summer months, the Police now undertake operations to ensure these cars are legal and their drivers properly insured. Enforcement against anti-social behaviour should help ensure residents have a peaceful summer.

Please Note this Non-Emergency Telephone

Number: 0300 123 1212.

IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS CALL 999.

Social Events

Serpentine Boat trip: 8 Sept. Hopefully under a full moon, this will be a repeat of our extremely popular evening Serpentine boat trip, with drinks and canapés in the boat house.

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 14th December, 6pm

Concert Hall, Royal College of Music.

Other Events

London Garden Squares Weekend: 12-13 June

Well over 100 private gardens will be open to the public, tickets and info. available from www.opensquares.org Ennismore Gardens and Rutland Gate South Garden open Sunday 10-5 only.

After such a lousy winter I hope you have a warm and enjoyable Knightsbridge summer.

With best wishes



Winston Fletcher, Chairman

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