

# The Pembridge Association NEWSLETTER



The Newsletter of the Conservation Society for the Pembridge Conservation Area



## Planning Legislation to change?

The government has recently made proposals to change the legislation that controls the way that planning and conservation matters are handled by the various planning authorities.

Whilst the changes may originally have been aimed at trying to shorten the timescale and the procedures for dealing with major applications, such as the proposed Terminal 5 at Heathrow, for which the planning inquiry took many years and involved costs running into £millions, the proposals also cover planning applications at a more local level that may also affect local conservation societies.

The proposals are regarded as being anti-democratic in that a very high proportion of decisions will be delegated to the Council's permanent staff without the elected Councillors having any say in committee as they currently do. This

change is likely to be very strongly opposed by all those with an interest in their local environment and it is important that the case for continuing the best practices under the present procedures should be made.

While the aim of reducing the time that it takes to deal with planning applications is in principle one that most people would applaud, it is essential that this does not affect the quality of the decisions, the way that consultation is carried out and the ability of elected representatives to influence the decisions.

Many people have already come to the view that the proposed changes are the result of intense lobbying by commercial property interests and that this pressure needs to be strongly resisted by those with a keen interest in their environment.

If the proposals are likely to affect planning control in conservation areas, then those in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, who have spent many years trying to protect their local envi-

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY

27<sup>th</sup> February 2002

AT 8 PM

Pembridge Hall School  
18 Pembridge Square  
London W2

Guest Speaker: Leader of the Council  
Councillor Merrick Cockell

Nominations for Officers and Executive  
Committeeneed to be sent to the Hon  
Sec (see page 8) prior to the AGM.

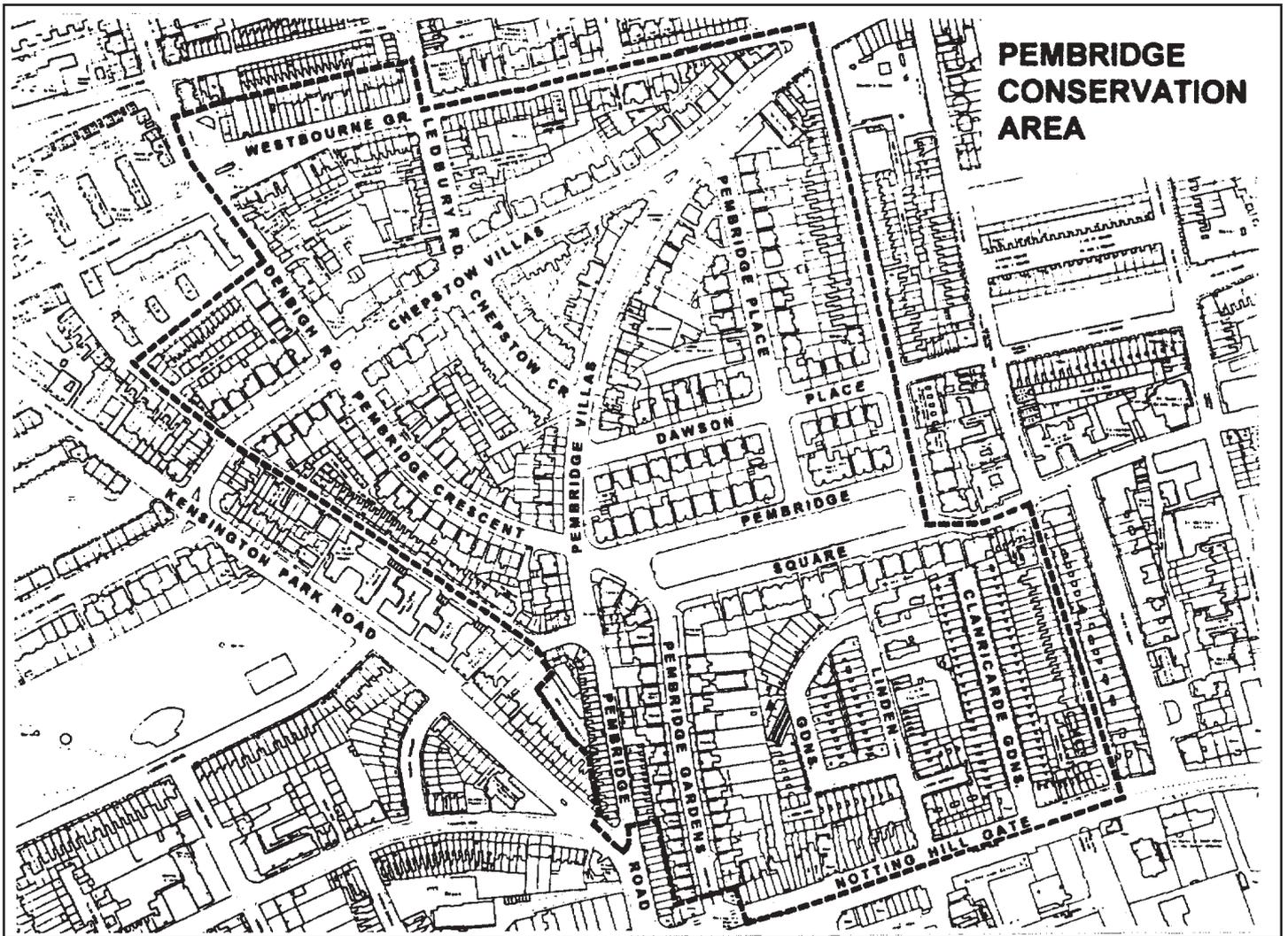
All residents are welcome - wine will be  
available after the meeting when you will  
also have a chance to discuss individual  
matters with Committee Members.

ronment, will feel very sad and disappointed.

*David Campion*

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## PEMBRIDGE CONSERVATION AREA

### From the Chairman's Desk

The year 2001 was a very busy one. The cycle of development continued unabated, with the three prominent sites, Texaco Westbourne Grove, Texaco/ Jet Pembridge Villas and the Westbourne Grove Church on our boundary, all having our focus of attention.

The ongoing problems with the relocation of the unacceptable outcrop of industrial extraction and air conditioning plant on the rear elevations of the Westbourne Grove terrace have been energetically addressed and it seems that at last a way has been found to bring some order and consistency of policy to the present chaotic situation.

The trend persists for local homeowners to apply for permission to remove their front boundary walls and pave their gardens for personal off street parking use. Both the RBK&C Planning & Conservation Department and the

Pembridge Conservation Association are vigorously resisting these applications.

I feel that I must underline our conservation policy, which is to preserve and maintain the green parts as well as the architectural parts of our area.

Damaging and detrimental change will be resisted in order to conserve the essential and unique character of the area.

However much of a convenience it may be for an individual householder to have safe personal front garden parking, not only does the local street scene suffer from the loss of garden and wall parts, but also the loss of street parking bays, be they residents or public ones, because of the legal requirement to incorporate vision splays to any vehicular access to a forecourt is damaging to the whole area.

Living in a conservation area is a responsibility, I'm afraid, and it is necessary to look at the larger picture when

considering making any fundamental changes.

The Association welcomes your comments on any local conservation matters about which you may be concerned - so please let us know your views on such matters.

And now, to finish on a personal note, I have come to the end of my stint as Chairman of the Pembridge Association, a task that I have much enjoyed, and will be handing over to a successor who will be appointed at the Annual General Meeting on 27th February.

It will be a bit of a watershed for the Association because none of its current honorary officers will be putting themselves forward for re-election this year.

My personal thanks to Pippa Latham, for her many years service as Hon. Treasurer, and Ian Webster, as Acting Hon. Secretary.

*Vicky Butler*  
Chairman



## Westbourne Grove Church Centre

Work has now started on the Westbourne Grove Church Centre, on the corner of Ledbury Road and Westbourne Grove. Originally, the developers, Manhattan Loft Company, were planning to demolish the whole building and to start from scratch. However, the interest in retaining the existing church building was so overwhelming from local residents and Pembridge Association energetic objectors that Westminster Council was forced to reconsider their initial recommendations and the Church façade was saved.

In fact, when the development is completed at the end of this year, we will see the restoration of the Church's two small spires on the front elevation of the building as well as continuing to enjoy the warm texture of the buildings stonework in contrast to the stucco and brick facades that are more evident in the area.

The developers are hoping that the work will be complete around Christmas 2002.

There will be 11 apartments and 2 retail units as well as a central meeting hall for the Church community. The main change to the Church building externally will be the large windowed apartments at the top, creating the effect of a glass roof.

Although this building is on the border of the Pembridge Conservation area and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, it has a significant influence on the outlook of all buildings in Ledbury Road and those situated on Westbourne Grove from Chepstow Corner to the Portobello Road.

*Ian Webster*

## The Association's Millennium Project

The project, which aims to install decorative iron balustrading and restore the missing architectural features to the upper elevations of 178-228 Westbourne Grove, has been progressing, albeit slowly.

Due to the substantial numbers of individual parties that are involved, freeholders, leaseholders, tenants and agents, it inevitably takes time.

We now have a good proportion of the terrace occupiers who have shown an interest in taking part.

Once it is started then there will be clear visual evidence of the enhancement of this charming but somewhat neglected architecture.

*Vicky Butler*

## Garden Party July 2001

We were very lucky again last year to have near perfect weather for the Garden Party with what seemed like a record number of people who came to enjoy it.

Pembridge Square Garden was looking lovely and well cared for in the sunshine and, once again, we would like to thank The Pembridge Square Garden Committee for very kindly allowing us to use their garden for our Annual Garden Party.

Our committee members prepared the excellent food and many of our local retailers donated the extremely generous prizes for the Grand Prize Raffle.

It was with great pleasure that we welcomed His Worship the Mayor of the Royal Borough, Councillor Tony Holt, as our Guest of Honour.



The Mangrove Steel Band played music for us and gave exactly the right atmosphere to the evening.

All in all, the 2001 Garden Party was an evening to remember. We hope that this year's Garden Party, scheduled to be held on 13th July, will be a similar pleasurable date in our calendar and we look forward to seeing you all!

### GRAND PRIZE RAFFLE 2001

Grateful thanks to all our generous contributors for their splendid gifts which demonstrate the high quality of products that can be found locally:-

#### Notting Hill Gate

Chalmers & Gray, Discount Books  
Frontiers, Lea & Sandeman  
Tylers Homecare, Virgin

#### Westbourne Grove

Dinny Hall, Fairman Carpets  
Parsons Skött, Sheila Cook

Wild at Heart, Emma Hope, Issues

### **Ledbury Road**

Nick Ashley, The Shirtsmith  
Paul and Joe, Lulu Guinness, Joseph

### **Elgin Crescent**

Graham & Green, Mr Christian,  
DR Evans Pharmacy

### **Denbigh Road**

Wall, Ann Wiberg

### **Ladbroke Grove**

Le Leon, Virgin Records

### **Portobello Road**

The Edwardian Butcher

### **Harrow Road**

Virgin Records

Come to this year's Garden Party!

*Sally Heilbut*

## **Planning Report**

One of the major activities of the Pembridge Association is to monitor all planning and conservation related applications submitted to the Council of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea for change of use and changes to buildings within the Pembridge Conservation Area.

Between January 2001 and December 2001 there were 69 planning applications in the Pembridge Association part of Pembridge Ward.

25 of these applications were granted, with or without conditions, 5 were refused and the balance have still to be decided.

We have seen 2 local petrol stations disappear in the last year. Our loss of the facilities that these 2 local petrol stations offered, reflects the national trend. The Texaco garage in Westbourne Grove has been developed into 6 flats and 3 retail units, soon to be occupied by the Joseph fashion retailer.

The Jet Station in Pembridge Villas is currently being converted into 5 houses and 6 flats. Whilst these developments appear to be of a high standard architecturally, there is mounting pressure on these types of local services.

The Head of Development Control for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Planning Department has confirmed that email is a valid form in which the public can respond to planning application notifications. Whilst we have been reliably advised that these emails are printed and then placed on the relevant planning file, this has not been our experience in practice and even our own emails appear not to have reached the files in some cases. We will raise this issue with the Executive Director of Planning and Conservation for clarification.

During discussions with the arboricultural department at the Council, our Association has discovered that it is not always necessary for a separate tree application to be submitted for the felling of a tree in the circumstance where it is already covered by a planning application relating to a building. This means that, theoretically, permission can be granted for tree felling without the public having been properly notified of such intentions.

*Ian Webster*

## **Litter & Rubbish**

Our planning secretary, Ian Webster, has over the last year energetically addressed the provision of more rubbish bins for visitors tidily to dispose of their litter. It has been quite depressing to live in certain of our busier streets because of the overwhelming amount of litter.

But what do we have to do to discourage residents from taking the convenient but completely antisocial route of disposing of their unwanted household and commercial items on the streets?

The council will collect any items that are 'too big for the bin' if they are contacted. There is a small charge but the benefit to the environment we so cherish is huge.  
*Vicky Butler*

## **Pembridge Library**

Cllr Barbara Campbell has been leading a group to encourage greater use of the Library and one of the new attractions are talks by well know people. (See leaflets in the Library for who will be coming shortly).

## **Graffiti & Flyposting**

The Council's campaign to deal with the environmental damage caused by graffiti and flyposting, has resulted in a lessening of the problem and a quicker response to dealing with it. However, the battle has not yet been won as is evi-



denced by the picture at Kensington Park Gardens!

*David Campion*

## **Notting Hill Gate Improvements Group**

Although the Pembridge Association is not directly involved with the work of NHIG, we are consulted on matters that relate to the Pembridge Conservation Area.

Councillor David Campion, Chairman of NHIG, was one of the founder members of the Pembridge Association and was himself a past Chairman of the Pembridge Association having served continually on its Executive Committee since its inception; he represents the views of the Association on the NHIG Executive Committee. He now also chairs the Council's new Notting Hill Gate Advisory Group which aims to co-ordinate the aspects of the Gate which are directly under the Council's control.

The Pembridge Association wishes to be closely associated with the improvements that NHIG has striven to achieve as a result of the drive of John Scott as the NHIG Project Co-ordinator. The "greening of the Gate" has resulted in a vast improvement.

Further information about NHIG can be obtained from its web site:

[www.nhig.co.uk](http://www.nhig.co.uk)

*Vicky Butler*

## Planning for Peace

The modern retail developments that have been taking place in the Pembridge Conservation area have led to a proliferation of large air conditioning units. As well as being unsightly, these units are also noisy and their increasing numbers have contributed to an unacceptable rise in background noise levels. This type of development has been especially noticeable in Westbourne Grove, but it is also a troubling issue throughout our conservation area.



Following on from our lead story last year about this issue, our Chairman and Honorary Planning Secretary have met with Councillor Campion and the Executive Director of Planning and Conservation Council to discuss strategies for future planning consents. These strategies should enable the Council and developers to cope with both the noise and unsightly effects from industrial plant in a much more cohesive and clear-cut manner.

The Executive Director of Planning was sensitive to our concerns and agreed in principle with the suggestion that air-handling plant should be positioned internally in circumstances where retail units have already been developed to the full extent of a property. In the other circumstance it was agreed that the air-handling plant should be positioned at garden level, out of sight of neighbouring properties.

As a result of the proposed changes in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea unitary development plan, the Council will in future be able to consider the cumulative effect of air-conditioning units at a number of adjacent properties.

Since these discussions took place, the Planning Services Committee have re-

jected an application by Fresh and Wild to retain air-conditioning units at 208-210 Westbourne Grove. An enforcement notice has been issued requiring that the equipment be removed. In circumstances where retail units do not comply with enforcement notices, they are liable to prosecution.

It seems that the Council may finally be putting in place a mechanism that aims to protect the amenity of local residents. This is a significant improvement in planning policy and the Pembridge Association applaud the Council for their recognition of these issues.

*Ian Webster*

## Roundabouts for Conservation Areas

The designs for roundabouts at street junctions in Conservation areas need to be carefully considered so that they complement the architecture of the adjacent area and do not detract from it as a result of fairly crude road markings.

The roundabout at the junction of Dawson Place and Chepstow Place was installed some years ago primarily with the intention of trying to slow down the traffic and it used the then common approach by marking a white painted and slightly raised circle in the middle of the junction.



*Junction of Chepstow Place and Dawson Place*

The same design was then used at the junctions of Chepstow Villas/Pembridge Crescent/ Denbigh Road and at the junction of Chepstow Villas/Chepstow Crescent/ Ledbury Road.

The latter did not prove to be a detriment to the speed of some drivers who just ignored the markings. I therefore suggested to the Director of Transportation

and Highways that what we needed was a rougher raised surface that would act as more of a deterrent to speeding traffic. The Council responded to this challenge by rebuilding these two roundabouts using granite setts.

The first one was installed at the Chepstow Crescent junction but I took the view that the pointing around the granite setts was flush with them and did not make the surface rough enough. The one at the junction with Pembridge Crescent was then constructed with adjacent granite setts slightly raised and lowered and the pointing recessed. This has made a rougher surface that gives vehicles more of a rough ride if they go over the top.

However, the granite setts are not clearly visible at night and traffic travelling fast may not see the roundabout until too late in spite of the roundabout warning signs that have been erected.

It is now proposed to put cats eyes around the edge of the roundabouts so that they are more clearly visible at night.

It is my personal view that these new roundabouts fit in well with the environment of the conservation area and do make a positive contribution to the streetscape. Whether we like it or not there are national laid down standards for the painted markings on streets so it is not possible to avoid some of the worst excesses although it must be re-



*Junction of Chepstow Villas and Denbigh Road*

membered that these are intended to provide greater safety albeit to the possible detriment of environmental quality in conservation areas.

The pattern may well be adopted for use elsewhere within the Borough as a result of this pioneering experiment.

*David Campion*

## All change!

As those of you who have read previous Association newsletters may remember the feature printed in our February 2000 edition that described and illustrated some of the historical background to the site of the Jet (ex Texaco) petrol station in Pembridge Villas.



*Texaco Garage site in Pembridge Villas ready for redevelopment*

The situation regarding the future of the site, that was originally a magnificent house and studio, No 7 Pembridge Villas, home to W P Frith RA, seems now at last to be resolved to the satisfaction of the neighbours and other local residents, including The Pembridge Association.

The tragic demolition of No. 7 in the 1930s, was followed by some decades where the site completely lost its residential occupation, having been developed for occupation as a garage dealership. The replacement building was in the typical architectural style of the 1930s, but was unfortunately, in this case, a bland building without any merit.

After some 50 years or so the garage became a Texaco petrol station, with all the usual antisocial servicing activities that are necessary to sustain the supply of fuel to the underground tanks. Changing brand title to Jet in the 90s the appearance of the site went into a steep decline. The value of the site increased to such an extent that maximising its commercial potential became inevitable.

Several planning applications for various alternative development schemes have been refused for sound reasons but now the latest application has been passed as acceptable. It is for residential development.

We all hope that this development will truly enhance this prominent site that has been neglected for too long.

*Vicky Butler*

## All changed!

Memory of the previous Texaco garage at the corner of Westbourne Grove and Colville Road may now have faded but those who used it for many years as their local filling up point now have to go further afield to find an alternative petrol station.



*Texaco Garage site in Westbourne Grove before redevelopment*

We hope you will agree that the recently completed development has made a huge difference to the character of this part of our conservation area.

It has recreated the original architectural continuity and strengthened the appearance of the adjoining terrace elevation.



*Texaco Garage site in Westbourne Grove after redevelopment*

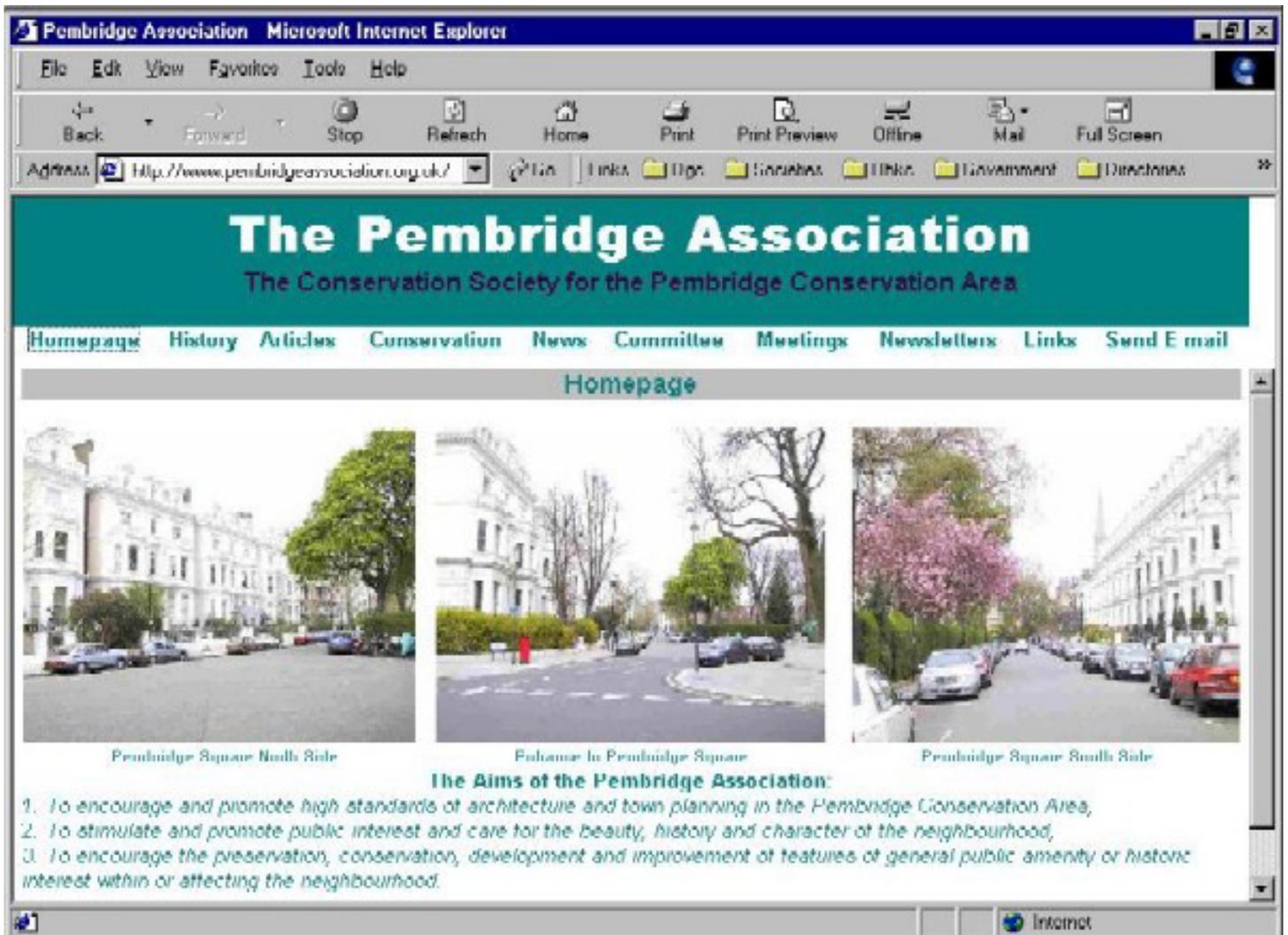
The Association applauds the RBK&C Planning & Conservation department for ensuring that the development was carried out in accordance with the permission granted. We look forward to the retail parts being occupied in the near future.

The original approved application has been complicated by the agents representing Joseph, the fashion retailer, who have pursued an application to remove the condition that was attached to the original permission that the three retail units be occupied separately.

The Association has always worked to preserve the scale of the unique retail quality within our area and took the view that to allow three units to be used as one would set an undesirable precedent and could certainly pave the way in the future for a 'chain' or even a supermarket to move in.

After much discussion the Council's Planning Services Committee agreed to lift the condition but only for Joseph retail for which a 'personal permission' was granted. Any future usage will be restricted to three separate units. There have as yet been no plans submitted that illustrate the intentions of Joseph regarding the appearance of the facades; however, it is understood that three separate entrances should be retained and the three interiors must be clearly defined. We will wait and see!

*Vicky Butler*



## The Association's Web Site

The Pembridge Association Website, created in 2000, provides both a means for publicising the work of the Association and a means for recording information that is accessible to a wider public with an interest in conservation matters. The web site may be accessed on the Internet using the following URL:

**[www.pembridgeassociation.org.uk](http://www.pembridgeassociation.org.uk)**

The Pembridge Association is keen to encourage the further development of its website with contributions from local residents who have access to historical information that may be of general interest to others.

While it would be possible for the Pembridge Association to include details of all planning applications on its website that affect the Pembridge Conservation Area, this would be very resource intensive and the decision has been taken to deal with this by a link to

the Royal Borough's own website which now contains a wide range of planning and conservation details. These include:

- \* Planning Applications
- \* Planning Decisions
- \* Enforcement Actions

which are currently retrievable at the Ward level but will in due course also be accessible by conservation area when the new Graphical Information System is more fully integrated with the wide range of contents on the Council's website.

The Council's new constitutional structure, using the Leader and Cabinet model, has a procedure whereby "key decisions" are taken by "cabinet members" each of whom has a "portfolio" of responsibilities.

In the case of planning and conservation decisions, other than decisions delegated to the Executive Director of Planning and Conservation by the Council, and planning decisions that go before the quasi-judicial Planning Services Committee, these are taken by Councillor Barry Phelps as the cabinet member

concerned. The Council is legally required to publish a rolling Forward Plan of Key Decisions each month, covering a period of up to three months ahead, and these are now accessible from the Homepage of the Council's website: [www.rbkc.gov.uk](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk)

The Pembridge Association website contains, on its "links page", a direct link to the parts of the Council website relating to planning and conservation matters. Anyone who is interested in receiving details of Key Decisions can now get in contact with the Cabinet Co-ordinator and ask to have their name put on a Key Decisions E-mail notification system which is published daily and will be forwarded to them on their own E-mail address.

It is hoped that details of planning applications etc will form part of this system in the future as part of the Council's Implementing Electronic Government Strategy.

*David Campion*

# COMMITTEE 2001/2002

## CHAIRMAN

Mrs Vicky Butler 2B Ledbury Mews North, W11 2AF

## ACTING HON. SECRETARY

Ian Webster 190 Westbourne Grove, W11 2RH

## HON TREASURER

Ms Pippa Latham 4 Chepstow Crescent, W11 3EB

## HON SECRETARY - PLANNING

Ian Webster 190 Westbourne Grove, W11 2RH

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mr Ian Butchoff 220 Westbourne Grove, W11  
Ms. Rosemary Buttar 1 Chepstow Villas, W11 3EE  
Cllr Barbara Campbell 25 Pembridge Gardens, W2 4EB  
Cllr David Campion 13 Pembridge Crescent, W11 3DY  
Mr. William Clarke 13 Pembridge Gardens, W2  
Mr. Bruno Giorgi 28 Pembridge Square, W2 4DS  
Ms. Sally Heilbut 17 Pembridge Crescent, W11 3DX  
Mr. Dori Schmetterling 11a Dawson Place, W2 4TD  
Cllr Doreen Weatherhead 15 Clanricarde Gardens, W2 4JJ

The 2002/2003 elections for the Committee will take place at the Annual General Meeting on 27th February 2002. The Chairman, Hon Secretary & Hon Treasurer will not be standing for re-election to these posts so nominations for these three officer positions are invited. We are also seeking additional members to serve on the Executive Committee.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

If you would like to support the Pembridge Association please complete this Banker's Order Form and send it to the Membership Secretary:

Mr Dori Schmetterling, 11a Dawson Place, W2 4TD

If you would prefer to pay your subscription by cheque, or charity voucher, please complete the name and address section below and send this form with your remittance (payable to "The Pembridge Association") to the above Membership Secretary.

To: The Manager .....Bank/Building Society

(Address)  
.....

Please pay £ ..... ( pounds) to "The Pembridge Association" at the Royal Bank of Scotland, 78 Notting Hill Gate, London W11 Account No: 13467221 (Sort Code 16-00-82) A/C No 13467221 with the first payment on ..... (Date) and annually thereafter until cancelled.

Signature: ..... Date: .....

Name: ..... Account No: .....  
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Address: .....  
.....

## THE AIMS OF THE PEMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION

1. To encourage and promote high standards of architecture and town planning in the Pembridge Conservation Area,
2. To stimulate and promote public interest and care for the beauty, history and character of the neighbourhood,
3. To encourage the preservation, conservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity or historic interest within or affecting the neighbourhood.

These aims are pursued by charitable means only and the Association has no affiliation with any political party.

**Our job is to show that conservation is important, and to provide a channel for the views of the community. To do this effectively we need your active support!**

Membership is open to all those who are interested in the aims of the Pembridge Association. Anyone who is interested in becoming more closely involved with the work of the Association should initially make contact with the Hon. Sec. and will be welcome to attend a Committee Meeting,

*If you have a point of view you would like to express about Conservation matters or issues raised in the Newsletter, write to the Chairman or the Hon Secretary whose names and addresses are shown at the top left of this page.*

## GARDEN PARTY

The Pembridge Association is holding its annual Garden Party in Pembridge Square Gardens on Saturday 13th July 2002 from 6pm until 8pm (by permission of the Garden Square Committee).

In the past, many residents attending the Garden Party have expressed their delight at the great opportunity that this gives to meet other people living in the area, whom they might not otherwise have come across.

Non-Members are welcome to come to the Party to support the Association.

The Garden Square Committee do not allow dogs to be brought into the Square and this must be respected.

**13<sup>th</sup> JULY 2002**

*Newsletter edited by Vicky Butler. Art Work set up by David Campion using Aldus PageMaker 6, on an Elonex PTX-6450 Microcomputer, and printed on a Lexmark Optra E310 Laserprinter.*