

The Pembridge Association NEWSLETTER



The Newsletter of the Conservation Society for the Pembridge Conservation Area

June 2004



SUMMER GARDEN PARTY

SATURDAY
17th July 2004
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Pembridge Square Garden
Pembridge Square
London W 2

Members and Non-Members
are welcome to attend

Guests of Honour:
Deputy Mayor & Deputy Mayoress
of the Royal Borough
Cllr Dr Iain Hanham &
Cllr The Lady Hanham CBE

The Dawson Place Roundabout

Following from the success of the new designs for roundabouts that were installed in Chepstow Villas at the junctions

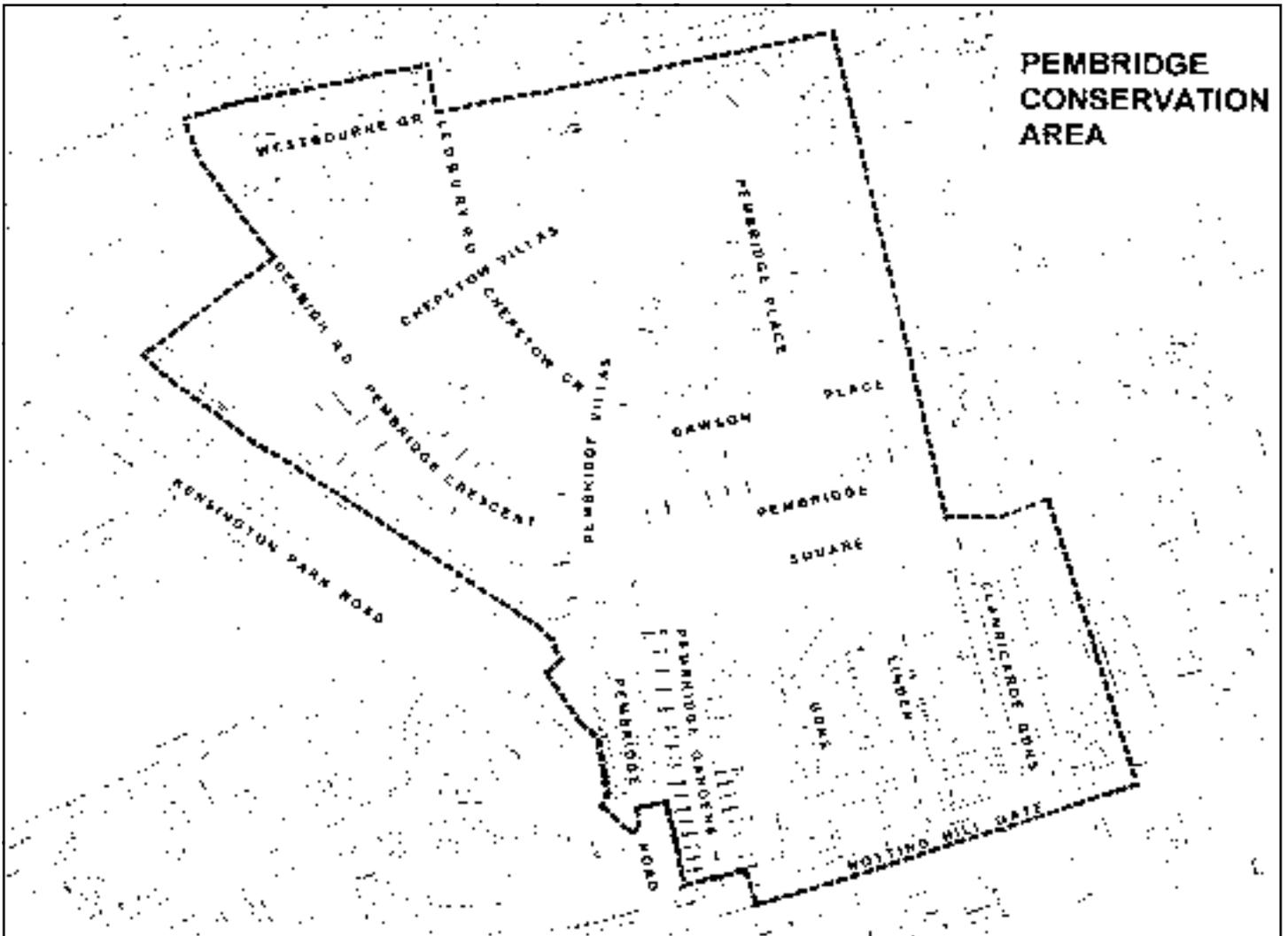
with Pembridge Crescent and Chepstow Crescent, the Council was persuaded to use the same design at the junction of Dawson Place and Chepstow Place; this is shown in the photograph [above] replacing the previous design [below].



The reason put forward was that not only was the new design more in keeping with the character of the Pembridge Conservation Area but the raised area of granite setts provided a rumble strip that would tend to slow down the traffic which was tending to ignore the white painted circle and carry on at high speed thus negating the reason for installing the roundabout in the first place.

Index to the Topics within this Newsletter

The Dawson Place Roundabout	1
Conservation Area Map	2
From the Chairman's Desk	2
The Millennium Project	3
Joseph - Westbourne Grove	4
Planning Report	5
Chepstow Place Proposals	6
Notting Hill Gate Improvements	6
The Association Web Site	7
Committee 2004/2005	8
Subscriptions	8
Aims of the Association	8



Continued from Page 1

It may be possible to claim some success for this since, as can be seen in the top photograph above, a pigeon has adopted the centre of the new roundabout as its safe feeding ground!

The new roundabout has a circle of cats-eyes surrounding it so that vehicles can see where it is and hopefully slow down at night. It is to be hoped that the new roundabout will help local residents who have for some time been very concerned about the speed of traffic in Chepstow Place.

The top photograph also shows No 3 Dawson Place, at the corner with Chepstow Place, which has been going through a long process of refurbishment and conversion from flats to a single family house. No 5 Dawson Place, next door to No 3, is now also going through a refurbishment process but in this case it will retain a number of flats.

Dawson Place has this year had a number of its cherry trees replaced which were dying.

From the Chairman's Desk

Due to a number of circumstances our Annual Newsletter was not produced last year. Firstly, I had an accident which put my right arm out of use just at the time when I should have been producing the Newsletter in time for the February AGM. Secondly, we were unable to persuade the then Pembridge Square Garden Subcommittee to allow us to use the garden for our Garden Party at a cost that we could afford.

Since the last Newsletter there has been a change of Officers on the Executive Committee with Bruno Giorgi taking over as Hon Treasurer from Jennifer Pinney, Roy Griffiths taking over as Hon Secretary Planning from Ian Webster and Sally Dixon-Brown taking over from Dori Schmetterling as Hon Membership Secretary. In an era when it is becoming increasingly difficult to get people to take on voluntary work, the Pembridge Association must thank them for taking on their new roles.

There has also been a further break with tradition in that the Association now holds its Annual General Meetings at the New Church in Pembridge Villas; we have been holding our Executive Committee meetings there for some years so it was a natural change to hold the AGM there as well, with the kind permission of the New Church.

My predecessor as Chairman, Vicky Butler, took on the continuing task of Project Co-ordinator of the Association's Millennium Project, reported elsewhere in this Newsletter, and I am very grateful to her for this especially as she and Paul have now moved to live in Norfolk.

Our membership has been slowly reducing over the years, as people move out of the area and new people come into the area; we now need to be more proactive in attracting new members to join the Association so we can more legitimately claim to represent local views on conservation matters.

David Campion
Chairman



The proposed Westbourne Grove Millennium Project Terrace in 2003

The Millennium Project The Project Leader's View

Over the years the Association has singled out certain parts of the conservation area for special attention.

The award winning Piers Gough designed public loos incorporating Wild at Heart, on the tree filled piazza in front of the Westbourne Grove terrace, is an example where it was felt a substantial improvement could be made if the existing portacabin loos were replaced with a service building of aesthetic merit - along with a carefully considered tree planting programme.

The Association wished to mark the Millennium with another big project and decided that the terrace of properties, 178 – 228 Westbourne Grove, between what was then the Texaco Garage and Winkworths could be greatly enhanced by a project that aimed to restore the missing architectural features to the upper elevations and, most importantly, rationalise and unify the terrace front boundary with an appropriate decorative iron balustrade running as a link throughout the entire length of the terrace.

We approached the RBK&C Planning Department, with the concept, to ask for their support and we immediately received their full co-operation.

We then canvassed interest among the Terrace tenants and owners, which was very positive.

The summary below records the progress that we have made since the report in our last year's Newsletter.

We have worked with the Planning Department to identify the details and reach agreement on various significant aspects of the Project, design, height and location. They very kindly produced a line drawing to illustrate the finished effect.

This all took some considerable time, added to which the terrace properties have been changing hands constantly since we started working on the project, so keeping abreast of that in itself has been time consuming.

However, we achieved the two thirds positive interest responses from the 26 owners and this enabled us to proceed with discussions with the Planning Department for the Association to submit one single planning application that covers all 26 properties.

We recently received confirmation that a single application has been approved. The Association felt that this would greatly simplify the process and relieve all the owners of the problems of applying for individual planning applications.

In order to satisfy the requirements of the Planning Department for this type of multiple application, plans for each individual property must be submitted.

The Association set aside funds to use in support of the Project and believe that a fair and even handed way to do this is to fund the single application.

To this end we engaged the services of a local architect, David Rea, who is experienced in such matters and who has also had the professional services of our contracted land surveyor. They liaised with the Planning Department throughout their work to ensure that the plans submitted contained all the

necessary detail and conformed to the requirements of the Planning Department.

The Planning Department has confirmed that the success of this project will not affect the existing upper floor residents' rights relating to the use of their roof terrace areas.

During the development of the project there was a change in the Building Regulations that had an impact on the height and positioning of the railings. While this has had some effect on the design it has not radically affected the overall concept.

Individual property owners will need to satisfy the requirements of the Building Regulations in terms of the detailed design of the railings and the structural stability of the first floor roof terraces on which the railings will be supported. The Pembridge Association takes the view that its role in establishing the overall design concept has now been completed and it is up to individual property owners to take the scheme forward for their own buildings.

Vicky Butler
Project Leader



The sole current example of a railing along the Westbourne Grove Terrace

The Millennium Project The Architect's View

Apart from the relatively straightforward exercise of replacing render mouldings to elevations, the key challenge in this project, for us as architects, was to design a method whereby we could ensure that all sections of the proposed decorative railings, when

separately fitted by individual householders, perhaps over a number of years, link together at one consistent top rail height, running from one end of the terrace to the other.

From the street the top rail will be a highly visible line on the horizon, bonding and uniting all the various shop front styles. The human eye will be able to pick up any change in the rhythm of the individual balusters. The railings must therefore be set out to give a harmonious rhythm across all 26 properties.

It is perhaps too easy to imagine that this is an exercise in graphics or drawings.

The success of this aspect of the Project lies in 'buildability' – simple and ingenious construction details and a careful survey.

To achieve this a simple fixing detail has been developed that can be adjusted for



The railings will be carried along the whole Westbourne Grove Terrace if all property owners are prepared to co-operate with the proposals

differing heights and widths. This facility for adjustment will allow railings to line up from end to end even when they are fitted at different times by different householders over the next few years.

This is a contemporary solution for an old problem that we hope will simplify the realisation of this project.

David Rea
David Rea Architects

Josephs

When the hoardings came down this exposed to public view the new shopfront that had been erected for Josephs the fashionable clothes retailer.

It was obvious that this design was not that which received planning permission from the Council. Josephs submitted another planning application to regularise what they had built; this was refused permission so they appealed but lost their appeal. The Council has yet to deal with this situation.

It is often a ploy by property owners to build what they want and then challenge the local Planning Authority to get them to take enforcement action against which they then put in an appeal to the Secretary of State. Sometimes they get away with it but on other occasions they do not. This can make a complete mockery of the status of conservation areas.

At least the original developer of this original Texaco Garage site did the right thing by constructing the upper part of the building that made every attempt to "enhance" the character of the Pembridge Conservation Area. It is only a great pity that the developer could not be persuaded to erect the railings along the first floor roof of the property to get the Association's Millennium project off to a flying start.

David Campion



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.

During 2002 and 2003 we had a number of applications to consider, including those that are illustrated here.

One of the most contentious, from the point of view of principle, was the proposal to remove the front garden wall at 5 Pembridge Place for the purposes of providing an off-street parking place. The applicant offered to build a baluster



No 5 Pembridge Place
wall over the part of the garden wall that was not removed to provide access.

The Council took the view that the loss of an on-street resident's parking space was not acceptable and the planning application was turned down. The applicant appealed and won.

A more recent visual problem has been the erection of a timber screen at No 27 Pembridge Square (shown below) where the Council refused a retrospective planning application for the retention of this screen against which the owner appealed but lost the appeal.

This is typical of the problems that can be caused in a conservation area



where the owner of a property undertakes work without adequate consideration of its effect on the character of its local environment. Such treatment is totally inappropriate in Pembridge Square which is the centrepiece of the Pembridge Conservation Area.

59 Portobello Road

The Association had a long running battle to try to ensure that the proposal to refurbish No 59a Portobello Road was carried out in a sympathetic fashion.



The before [above] and after [below] views show the result. This property is on the border with the Ladbroke Conservation area which runs down the middle of Portobello Road



13 Chepstow Villas

This property was previously on the Council's "Buildings at Risk" Register, which lists all those buildings which have either fallen into a serious state of disrepair or are not maintained in a state that respects the area in which they are situated. No 13 was a prominent eyesore in Chepstow Villas. Many years elapsed in trying to trace the previous owner to encourage work to be carried out and the matter was finally resolved with the sale of the property.



The new owner has carried out extensive refurbishment to restore the property to a fit state [below] and this has now much enhanced the character of Chepstow Villas



36-44 Chepstow Place



The most important planning application considered by the Pembridge Association during 2003/2004 has been the proposal to restore this terrace in Chepstow Place to a semblance of its original design. The photo above illustrates the terrace as existing and the photo below as proposed after enhancement.

The planning application was refused by the Council's Planning Services Committee on the basis that the Pembridge Conservation Area Policy Statement shows this terrace as one where an additional storey should not be allowed.

The Association's Executive Committee supported the application, specifically in the context of the improvement to the Chepstow Place elevation, as it was considered that the new mansard storey would hardly be visible and the adjacent buildings differ in height anyway.

The Association recognised that the effect of the additional mansard storey at the rear was not favoured by residents of Pembridge Place, who were concerned about privacy and loss of light, but as a result of modifications made to the design it was not thought that these objections would in themselves have led to a refusal.

The planning application is currently the subject of a planning appeal.



Chepstow Villas Tree

The lovely plane tree that used to enhance the part of Chepstow Villas between Portobello Road and Kensington Park Road has had to be removed because it was causing subsidence. The Council is intending to plant a new tree on the pavement.



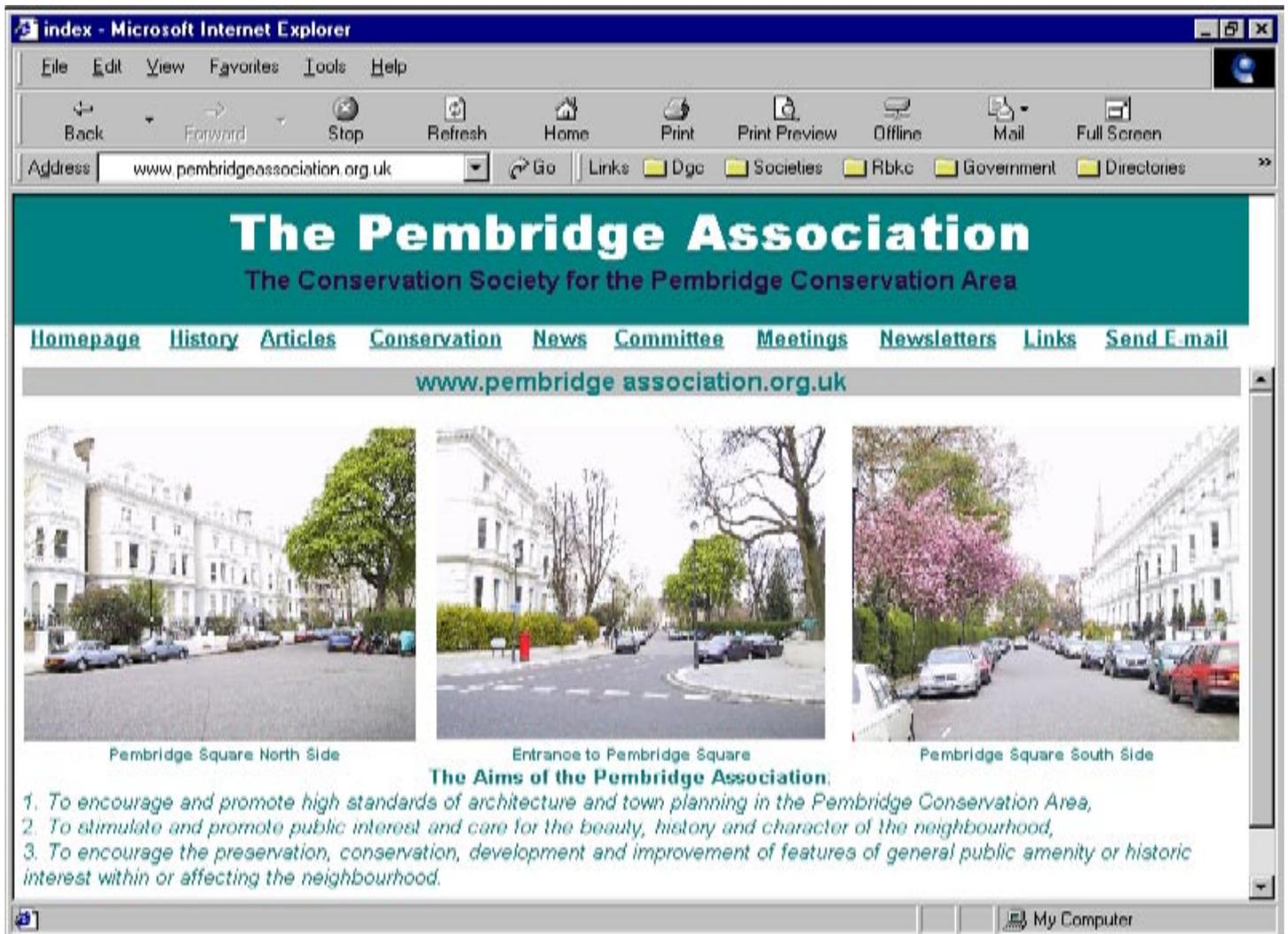
Notting Hill Gate Improvements Group

The Pembridge Association has been closely associated with the improvements that the Group has striven to achieve over the last decade under the leadership of John Scott, its Project Co-ordinator.

The photos below and right illustrate some examples of what has been achieved in an attempt to add interest to what is now regarded by many as the fairly banal architecture of the 1950s.

Further information can be obtained from the web site: www.nhig.co.uk





The Association's Web Site

The Pembridge Association Website, created in 2000, provides a means both for publicising the work of the Association and 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

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 & Decisions
- * Planning Appeals & Results
- * Enforcement Actions

which are currently retrievable at the Ward level but will in due course also be accessible by conservation area. It is hoped that tree applications and decisions will be added as well.

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 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 accessible from the Homepage of the Council's website:

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 **cabinet.coordinator@rbkc.gov.uk** 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.

You can subscribe to the Council's E-mail Notification Service

www.rbkc.gov.uk/emailnotification and get selected weekly details of all planning applications affecting them by Ward, Street or Postal District; shortly, selection will also be possible by Conservation Area as well.

David Campion

COMMITTEE 2004/2005

CHAIRMAN

Cllr David Campion

13 Rodney House
12/13 Pembridge Crescent, W11 3DY

HON TREASURER

Mr. Bruno Giorgi

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HON. SECRETARY - Planning

Mr Roy Griffiths

14 Denbigh Road, W11 2SN

HON SECRETARY - Membership

Mrs Sally Dixon-Brown

2 Chepstow Villas, W11 3RB

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Mrs Vicky Butler

2B Ledbury Mews North, W11 2AF

Miss Rosemary Buttar

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Cllr. Barbara Campbell

25 Pembridge Gardens, W2 4EB

Mr. William Clarke

13 Pembridge Gardens, W2

Miss Sally Heilbut

17 Pembridge Crescent, W11 3DX

Mr. Dori Schmetterling

11a Dawson Place, W2 4TD

Dr Elizabeth Shaw

The Limes, Linden Gardens, W2

Mr Leigh Tapper

21 Pembridge Crescent, W11

Cllr. Doreen Weatherhead

15 Clanricarde Gardens, W2 4JJ

Ms Jan Brown (co-opted)

60 Chepstow Villas, W11 2QX

The elections for the Committee took place at the Annual General Meeting on 26th February 2004

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 Chairman 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 whose name and address is shown at the top left of this page.

GARDEN PARTY

The Pembridge Association was, with very great regret, unable to hold its annual Garden Party in Pembridge Square Garden in July 2003 because it had been advised by the Secretary of the Garden Square Subcommittee that permission would have been refused if a formal application had been submitted.

In the early part of 2004 we were advised that we could have permission to use the Garden for a fee of £1,000; we had in previous years made an annual donation of £50 for the privilege of using the Garden and indicated our willingness to increase this to £100.

As a result of a change of some officers of the Garden Square Subcommittee we now have permission to hold the Garden Party on Saturday 17th July 2004 from 6pm to 8pm with a donation of £100.

Newsletter was edited and the art work was set up by David Campion using Aldus InDesign 2.0.1

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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

c/o 13 Rodney House, 12/13 Pembridge Crescent, W11 3DY

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 address.

To: The ManagerBank/Building Society

Address

Please pay £ (pounds) to "The Pembridge Association" at NatWest Bank, 46 Notting Hill Gate, London W11
Account No: 13467221 (Sort Code 16-00-82)
with the first payment on (Date)
and annually thereafter until cancelled.

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(BLOCK CAPITALS)

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The minimum subscription is £3, the average paid is £10; however, some Members subscribe £20, £50 and even £100 to support our activities.