

# The Pembridge Association NEWSLETTER



The Newsletter of the Conservation Society for the Pembridge Conservation Area

June 2005



## SUMMER GARDEN PARTY

**SATURDAY**  
**16th July 2005**  
**6:00 pm - 8:00 pm**

Pembridge Square Garden  
Pembridge Square  
London W 2

**Guests of Honour:**  
*The Rt Hon Sir Malcolm Rifkind*  
QC MP  
Member of Parliament for  
for Kensington & Chelsea

*Cllr Warrick Lightfoot*  
Mayor of the Royal Borough of  
Kensington and Chelsea

For Members and Non-Members

### All Change in Pembridge Villas

Just to prove that the concept of conservation areas does not mean freezing the existing buildings, as if in aspic, the

disappearance of the previous garage in Pembridge Villas (below) and its replacement by residential accommodation (above) is to be welcomed in principle as being more in keeping with the residential character of the area.

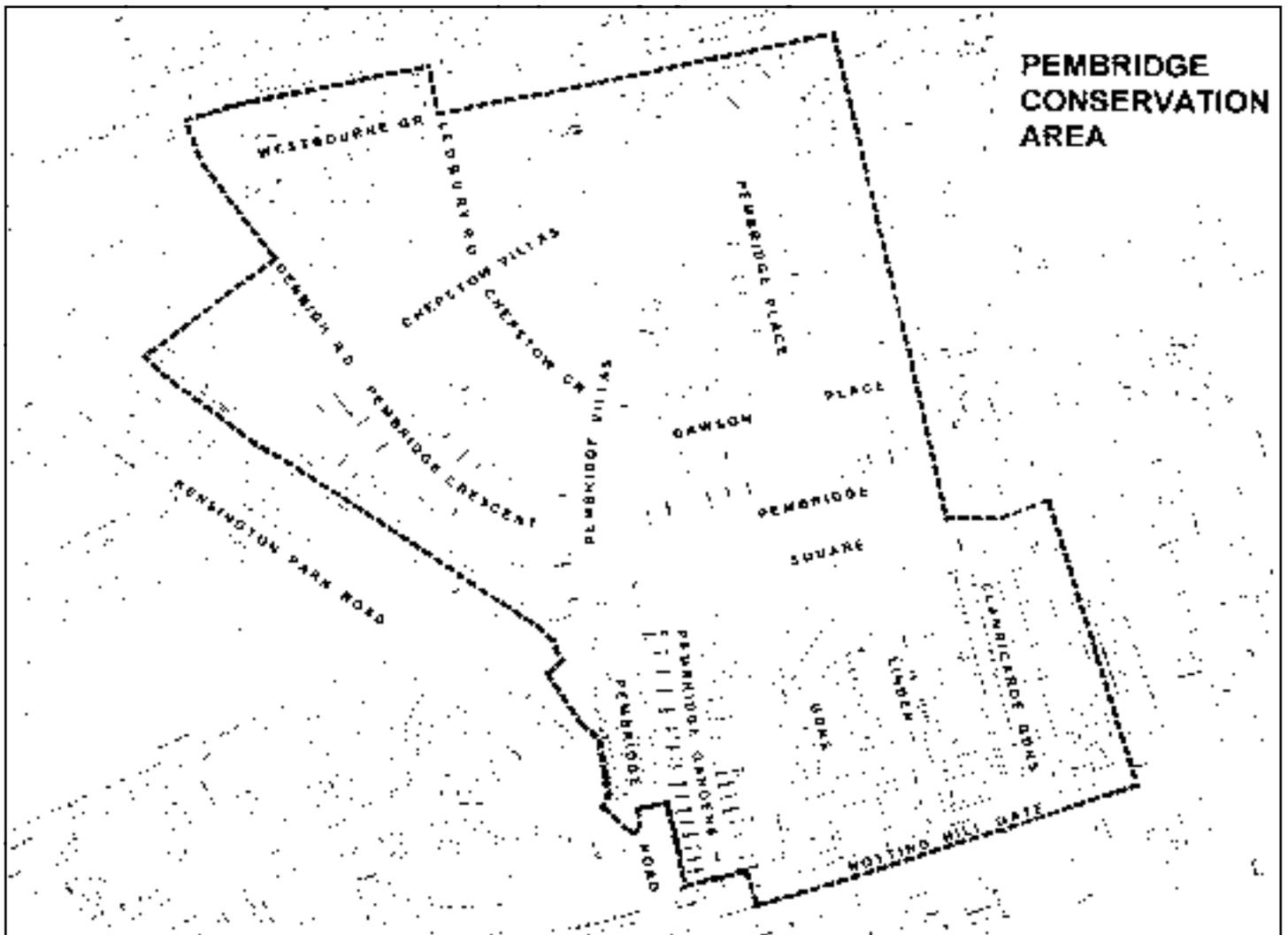


Nevertheless, the change has meant the loss of the amenity of a local garage, and follows a number of similar losses in the area, as there is no protection provided by the Borough's Unitary Development Plan for loss of garages.

Undoubtedly, the replacement buildings represent a considerable visual improvement for this part of the Pembridge Conservation Area but a closer

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inspection of the buildings leaves open to serious question the standard of architectural detailing that has been used. The black rainwater downpipes on the face of the buildings are contrary to the Council's normal requirement that they be situated inside the structure; it would not have been so bad if the rainwater pipes had been painted the same colour as the external walls; it is to be hoped that this can be rectified the first time that external redecoration takes place or if the Council can take action to deal with it before then.

The cornice is a poor imitation of the traditional classical detail and the lack of adequate provision for throwing off rainwater will inevitably result in pattern staining of the street elevation.

The appearance of the open access to the underground garage on the Pembridge Place frontage is visually unacceptable during the day and is even worse at night when internal lighting shows up the rough internal finishes to the walls of the garage access. We could have expected better design.

### From the Chairman's Desk

Property prices in the area continue on their upward spiral and there never seems to be a shortage of people who can afford not only to pay what twenty or thirty years ago we would have thought of as unimaginable and then also spend half as much again refurbishing the property.

The negative aspect of this is that many growing families who have lived in the area for many years are having to move out to find cheaper larger accommodation.

The positive aspect is that the new money coming into the area is resulting in the restoration and improvement of properties to the benefit of the architecture of the conservation area.

The Council has contributed to the improvement of the area by repaving parts of some streets, e.g. Pembridge Gardens, with York stone as an alternative to concrete slabs. The argument is that although York stone itself is a lot more

expensive it will last much longer and therefore be cheaper in the long run.

The problem for the Council is balancing the higher initial cost with the need to restrain increases in Council Tax

Our total membership has dropped still further during the last year as previous members move out of the area and new people come in who we then fail to recruit as new members.

As I said last year, we need to be more proactive in attracting new members to join the Association so that we can more legitimately claim to represent a wider range of local views on conservation matters.

This issue covers a number of typical planning situations which have been encountered during the last year in order to give members an idea of what we encounter.

Finally, a personal thank you to the members of the committee who have supported me and the Association during the last year.

**David Campion**  
*Chairman*

## Planning Report

The primary activity of the Pembridge Association during each year is to monitor all planning and conservation-related applications, including tree 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 2004 our industrious Planning Secretary, Roy Griffiths, scanned the weekly list of planning applications received from the Council, visited the Planning Office at the Town Hall to see the drawings and wrote formally to the Planning & Conservation Department where the Pembridge Association felt that its comments were necessary.

During the year 91 planning applications and 52 tree applications were seen by the Planning Secretary and of these the following were considered to be those that concerned the Association the most:

### **30 Ledbury Road**

Demolition of existing two storey office block to be replaced by retail shop.

### **13 Portobello Road**

Permission to trade on Sundays.

### **33 Pembridge Square**

Alterations to front garden area.

### **54 Chepstow Villas**

Change of use of lower ground floor for market use and continued use of garage and forecourt for siting of market stalls.

### **Guesthouse West**

#### **163-165 Westbourne Grove**

Possible breach of planning control through installation of decking and large umbrellas in front garden. Application for restaurant, dining room, club and bar to be used by general public as well as hotel residents.

### **14 Pembridge Place**

Demolition and reconstruction of rear extensions, roof, main stair and structurally defective walls and floors.

### **2 Pembridge Place**

Demolition of existing two storey villa until recently used as an embassy to be replaced by four storey single family dwelling.

### **Home Cottage**

#### **41A Pembridge Villas**

Erection of single storey ground floor kitchen extension.

## 2 Pembridge Place

Much concern was expressed by local residents about the planning application involving the proposal to demolish the existing 2-storey building at No 2 Pembridge Place and replace it with another building similar in design and height to No 1 Pembridge Place.



This posed a dilemma for the Council on the basis that planning legislation requires it to approve planning applications unless there is very strong reason for objecting to them.

In this case the Council could hardly object to a replica of No 1 Pembridge Place being constructed next door as the proposal could be said to enhance the quality and consistency of the street scene in spite of the fact that the existing building could be regarded as being of historic interest. A case similar to the judgement of Solomon?

## 30 Ledbury Road

It is a real challenge whether this 1960s building should either be demolished and rebuilt to respect the Victorian character of Ledbury Road or refurbished to enable the unsympathetic brick elevation to be more acceptable. The unsympathetic proposal for a glass clad modern



building was refused by the Council, following strong representations from both the Pembridge Association and local residents, and the developer has now submitted a planning appeal against the refusal.

Since planning appeals are currently taking well over a year it is always possible that the existing building may just be refurbished and let out as an alternative to demolition and rebuilding.

## 54 Chepstow Villas

This has been a long running saga where the developer acquired the whole property and was refused planning permission for change of use of the basement for retail purposes linked to the adjacent shop at the rear in Portobello Road.



In spite of the refusal, the developer has converted the basement for retail purposes and the Council has had to take enforcement action which is now the subject of a planning appeal.

There is strong local opposition to what has happened because if the basement is used for non-residential purposes this would result in very early morning noise and disturbance by the stall holders delivering goods ready for opening to Portobello Road shoppers.

The Pembridge Association has objected to part of this residential property in Chepstow Villas being used for commercial purposes because Portobello Road between Chepstow Villas and Westbourne Grove is not designated by the Council as part of the market. The developer is claiming that the garage at the rear has acquired commercial use-rights and is appealing against the refusal of the Council to accept this.

## Pembridge Place

It does happen, from time to time, that property owners decide that they need to carry out extensions to buildings to provide improved accommodation or where the building has suffered serious subsidence and the only option is to carry out demolition and rebuilding.

Where this situation arises it is important for the Council to satisfy itself that the work carried out is consistent with the provisions of its Unitary Development Plan and the local Conservation Area Policy Statement.



A case in point is No 14 Pembridge Place where it would appear that the whole of the building behind the front facade has been demolished.

While the rear elevations of such properties are not visible to the general public, they are normally visible from other buildings adjacent to the rear and do need to be rebuilt to respect the character of the conservation area. Some streets can be ruined by modern rebuildings.

It is generally more acceptable, if a property in a conservation area has to be rebuilt, as here, for the front elevation to be retained rather than for a totally modern elevation to be imposed on the existing character of the street. It is a matter of sensible civic design and good neighbourliness.

It is clearly the duty of a conservation society, like the Pembridge Association, to press for a responsible attitude to such situations on the part of both the Council, as the Local Planning Authority, and the property owner, as the guardian of the historic interest of the fabric of the local environment for the time being.

## Pembridge Square

The generally very impressive Victorian buildings around Pembridge Square, apart from those that have in the past been altered unsympathetically, form what is almost certainly the most important part of the Pembridge Conservation Area.

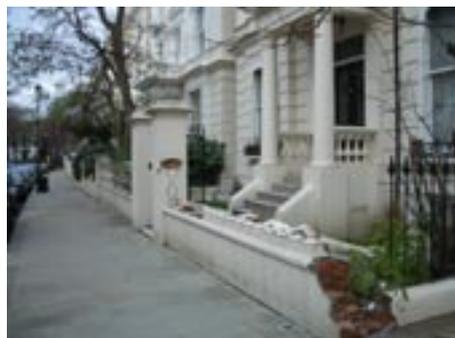
It is therefore of considerable concern when the external fabric of such an imposing set of buildings is not maintained properly as this can seriously affect the overall quality of the area. A case in point is the hotel at the junction of Pembridge Square and Pembridge Place, where many of its external architectural features are crumbling and the whole elevation is crying out for redecoration.



This could be regarded as a typical case for the Council to add the building to its list of Buildings at Risk and serve notice on the owner to carry out the necessary repairs.

## Pembridge Gardens

Front garden walls form an important part of the streetscape in a conservation area and it is therefore to be deprecated when lack of adequate maintenance results in collapse and a long delay before rebuilding and repairs are carried out.



An example of where the Council took action to effect a restoration which has now been completed.

## Church in Westbourne Grove

In the 2002 Newsletter we included a photomontage of the proposal for converting the Church on the corner of Ledbury Road to provide apartments above retail units at ground floor level with a smaller internal church. This montage is shown again below and following this are two views of the completed development. It is often instructive to compare an approved scheme with the reality!



## Tree Works

One of the other major activities of the Pembridge Association is keeping a watch on both trees in the streets, under the control of the Council, and trees in front and rear gardens which are the responsibility of individual property owners but for which permission may be required by the Council for the carrying out of pruning and felling works.

There are often situations where trees in front and rear gardens of properties have grown over large and their roots have affected front garden walls and even the adjacent properties.

Where the Council is faced with a possible insurance claim if it does not allow felling of the tree concerned, it will in general approve an application for felling, or will make every effort to keep trees even if this may mean some drastic pruning to try to prevent severe damage.

The Council is, of course, responsible for the works to trees in streets and can specify the works to be carried out to them.

The problem that has been experienced is that the tree contractors working for the Council have often pruned every last leaf and twig leaving a bare skeleton that takes many years to grow a good foliage again. The Council has admitted that it just does not have the staff resources to monitor all the work undertaken by its contractors.

While the Association often informs the Council in cases when unacceptable works have been carried out, it is not of course possible to stick branches and leaves back on the trees again, so the area can suffer a certain lack of amenity value for a year or two.



*Excessively pruned tree in Chepstow Villas*

The Council has had a policy of planting trees in the pavements where this is possible; however, the presence of underground services often prevents this happening.

While many trees in private gardens are protected by Tree Preservation Orders many are not; however, trees with trunks over a certain size in conservation areas do require permission for works to be carried out to them.

The penalty for carrying out unauthorised works can be a fine of around £1,000 or more, so beware!

## The Millennium Project

After what must seem a rather lengthy process the Association has now completed its part in pump-priming the project having prepared the drawings and obtained planning approval with the aim of encouraging the upgrading of the Westbourne Grove terrace with railings at first floor level.



This has been managed by Vicky Butler, the previous Chairman of the Pembridge Association, with professional help by Davd Rea Architects.

The unified scheme having received planning approval, it is now up to individual property owners to obtain any necessary Building Regulations Approval before upgrading their property within the overall scheme approved by the Council.

This is necessary because some of the first floor terraces may need structurally strengthening if they are to be used for access and the railings need to be fixed securely down to the roof terrace which implies an adequate substructure to support the fixings.

## Garden Party July 2004

After an unfortunate break of one year the Pembridge Association was able to hold its annual garden party again in Pembridge Square on 17th July 2004.

The annual garden party is the primary social event for the Association when both existing members and potential new members can meet each other in the attractive and informal surroundings of the well kept garden.

The weather behaved itself and a most enjoyable time was had by all those who attended.

Our guests of honour were the Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress of the Royal Borough Cllr Dr Ian Hanham and Cllr The Lady Hanham.

Towards the end of the evening we held the traditional raffle, to raise funds for the Association, with quality prizes generously donated by the following local businesses:

*Baywood Chemists  
Chalmers & Gray  
Fairman  
Fresh & Wild  
Frontiers  
Lanna  
Mr Christians  
Parsons Skott  
Tylers Homecare  
Wall*

We were once again indebted to Sally Heilbut for persuading local businesses to make their donations for the raffle.

We hope that we are able to attract similar donations for the garden party in 2005.

We were also very appreciative of the work contributed by Elizabeth Shaw, in organising the event so successfully, and by members of the committee and their friends who helped at the event by manning the entrance and membership table and the bar.

Not least, our thanks are due to the Pembridge Square Garden Committee for allowing us to hold the event in their garden again.

We look forward to holding the garden party again this year on 16th July 2005.

The date has to be chosen to avoid Wimbledon and it also needs to be before too many people depart for their summer holidays.

## 36-44 Chepstow Place



The most important planning application considered by the Pembridge Association during 2003/2004 was 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 appeal against the refusal of planning permission has now been dismissed. Curiously, the Planning Inspector also refused permission for the restoration of the cornice and details on the street elevation!!!



## Westbourne Grove Past and Present

When I first came to Westbourne Grove some 17 years ago it was well established as an Antiques Centre; business was thriving, competition was fierce and the queue of customers seemed endless, and truly Westbourne Grove was paved with antique gold!

Retail premises changed hands amongst antiques dealers for what seemed huge amounts of money (if only we had known). I took a second shop and business continued as normal.

The antiques trade had turned the area into a thriving business community; surely the future was the past and,



*Westbourne Grove in 2002 with Butchoff Antiques on the left of the photograph before they moved and relocated in Kensington Church Street.*

rather like Portobello Road, would go on forever.

Up until 1998 there were 35 antiques dealers in Westbourne Grove and another 15 in Ledbury Road.

We move on to 2002 when I left Westbourne Grove for another more enduring antiques centre (Kensington Church Street). As I left, I noted that there would soon be just a handful of antique dealers between the two locations, the reason?: frothy coffee and frocks!

Following the showing of the film 'Notting Hill' the area has become chic, trendy and fashionable; antiques dealers are quite unable to match the exotic rents paid by the new fashion and food retailers.

Café society is all around us, indeed on a summer's day the area looks more

like a Mediterranean holiday resort. High fashion is in; looking along the tree-lined grove from my home rooftop terrace it would seem that a new boutique/fashion house is opening every day!

Antiques are a thing of the past! I live in Notting Hill and am both pleased and amazed at the transformation from business community to 'Notting Hill Village'.

A thriving community now cares for the area; much needs to be attended to yet.

The council must be encouraged to empty litterbins and clear street refuse, particularly at weekends when we are visited by hordes of tourists.

The alcoholics and beggars are allowed

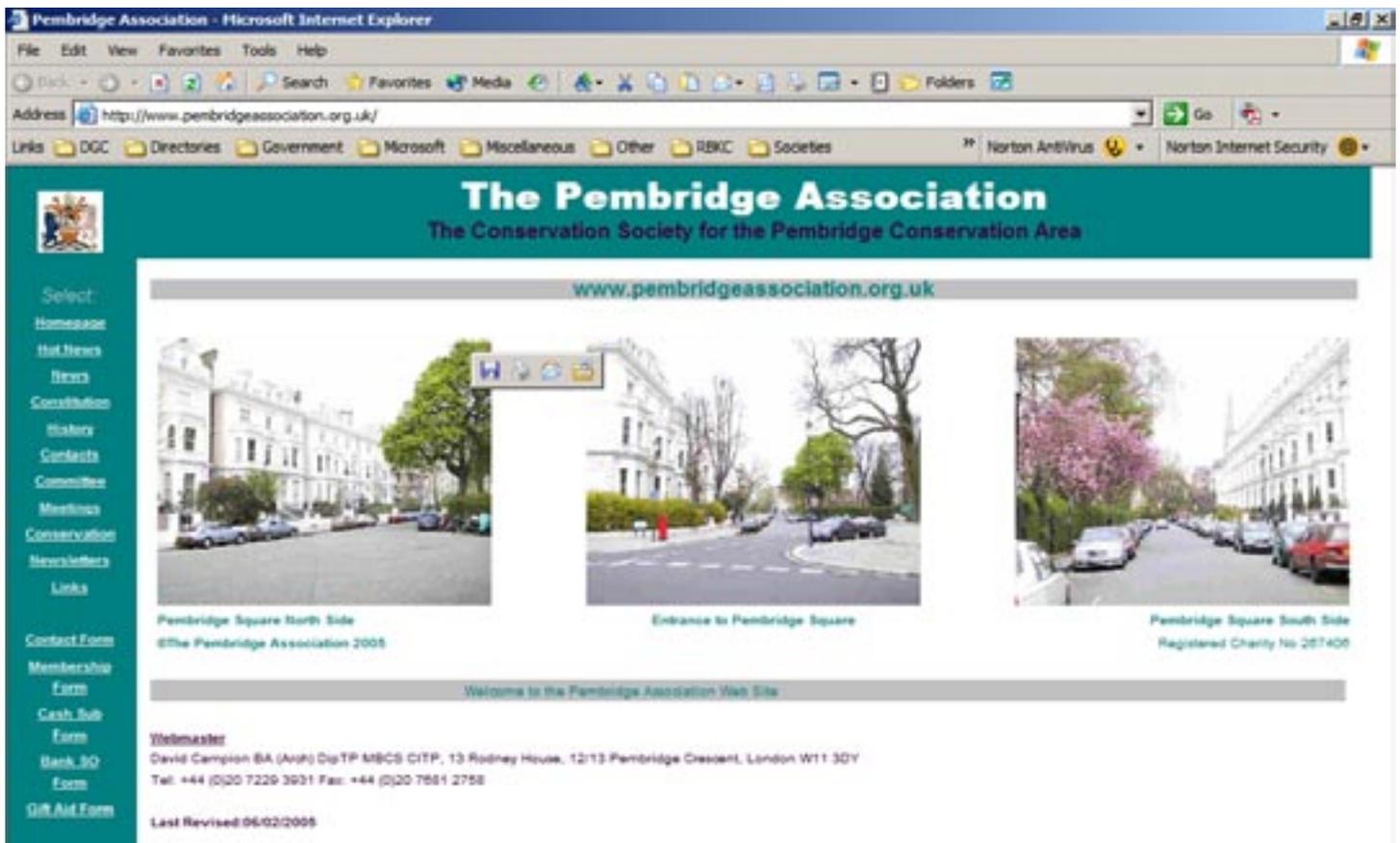
too much licence but, on the whole, the change from antiques to frothy coffee and fashion has improved the area, resulting in much needed refurbishment and redecoration of local properties.

Our quality of life has improved as well, save that we no longer have a pub - not that it was much of a pub but it was closed for refurbishment. I little thought that it would be converted to a fashion outlet - where else in the country does a pub turn into a frock shop?

I suppose a glass of wine amongst friends on my terrace will have to suffice! Three cheers for the new Notting Hill!!!

I wonder what the next transformation might be.....

**Ian Butchoff**



## The Association's Web Site

The Pembridge Association Website, originally created in 2000 and restructured in 2005, 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](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. (See article on previous page by Ian Butchoff).

The Association now puts its annual Newsletters on its website so that they are readily accessible for anyone who has missed an issue. The Newsletters also form a useful historical archive of matters relating to the conservation area.

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 was 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, among others:

- \* Planning Applications & Decisions
- \* Planning Appeals & Results
- \* Enforcement Actions
- \* Tree Applications & Decisions

which are currently retrievable at the Ward level but will in due course also all be accessible by conservation area.

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 policy decisions, other than decisions delegated to the Executive Director of Planning and Conservation, 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 Kensington & Chelsea Council's website which can be accessed by:

**[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 contact the Cabinet Co-ordinator

**[cabinet.coordinator@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto: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 at their own E-mail address.

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

**[www.rbkc.gov.uk/emailnotification](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/emailnotification)**

and get selected weekly details of all planning applications affecting you by Ward, Street or Postal District.

As from February 2005 you can now also get details of all licensing applications as well.

The Council is currently preparing its Local Development Framework (LDF) which, when approved, will supersede the current Unitary Development Plan as the basis for deciding planning applications. The "Links Page" on the Association's website provides the means to find out about the LDF on the Council's website.

**David Campion**

# COMMITTEE 2005/2006

## CHAIRMAN

Cllr David Campion 13 Rodney House  
12/13 Pembridge Crescent, W11 3DY

## HON TREASURER

Mr. Bruno Giorgi 28 Pembridge Square, W2 4DS

## 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

Mrs Vicky Butler 2B Ledbury Mews North, W11 2AF  
Miss Rosemary Buttar 1 Chepstow Villas, W11 3EE  
Cllr. Barbara Campbell 25 Pembridge Gardens, W2 4EB  
Mr. William Clarke 13 Pembridge Gardens, W2 4EA  
Miss Sally Heilbut 17 Pembridge Crescent, W11 3DX  
Mr. Dori Schmetterling 11a Dawson Place, W2 4TD  
Dr Elizabeth Shaw 25 The Limes, Linden Gardens, W2 4ET  
Mr Leigh Tapper 21 Pembridge Crescent, W11 3DS  
Cllr. Doreen Weatherhead 15 Clanricarde Gardens, W2 4JJ  
Ms Jan Brown 60 Chepstow Villas, W11 2QX

The election of the Officers and the Committee took place at the Annual General Meeting on 24th February 2005 .

# 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 will hold its Annual Summer Garden Party in Pembridge Square Garden on Saturday 16th July 2005 from 6pm - 8pm.

This is an opportunity for local residents to come and meet their neighbours, to learn about the Pembridge Association and join as a Member in order to support the aims of the Association as set out above on this page.

Entrance is from the gate facing Pembridge Place on the north side of the Square.

There is an entrance charge, to defray the cost of the food and a glass of wine, and there will be a raffle to raise funds for the work of the Association.

The Guests of Honour will be our:  
Member of Parliament  
**Sir Malcolm Rifkind QC MP**  
and

The Royal Borough's Mayor  
**Councillor Warrick Lightfoot**

*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. A Gift Aid Form is also available by request to the same address.

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

Address .....

Please pay £ ..... ( pounds) to "The Pembridge Association"  
at NatWest Bank, 46 Notting Hill Gate, London W11  
Account No: 51098067 (Sort Code 60-15-33)  
with the first payment on ..... (Date)  
and annually thereafter until cancelled.

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

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

Address: .....

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