

# The Pembridge Association NEWSLETTER



The Newsletter of the Conservation Society for the Pembridge Conservation Area

Winter 2011/12



*In the centre one of the Imperial College's proposals for the rear of 28-32 Pembridge Gardens*

## Pembridge Road

### Rear of 28/34 Pembridge Gardens

The Pembridge Association has had an active dialogue with not only the Council but also with Imperial College over the last year in the attempt of the latter to produce an acceptable scheme for their site along Pembridge Road at

the rear of 28-32 Pembridge Gardens. This proposal started off with the intention of the College to provide houses for letting and was designed as a terrace of houses.

The Association was not convinced by the architectural approach with copper-clad buildings and an unconventional



*Existing hostel at the rear of 28-32 Pembridge Gardens viewed from Pembridge Road*

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**WEDNESDAY  
29th February 2012  
at 8 pm at  
The New Church Centre  
5 Pembridge Villas, W11**

All local residents will be welcome and it is hoped that those who are not already members of the Association will feel encouraged to join.

As usual there will be an invited speaker, yet to be confirmed, to entertain those present on matters related to conservation followed by a short AGM.

roof and persuaded the Council's Planning Applications Committee to reject the application. (see page 3).

One of the revised proposals that has been discussed is illustrated here.

The proposed planting of trees along the pavement is not shown here so that the buildings themselves can be more clearly seen.

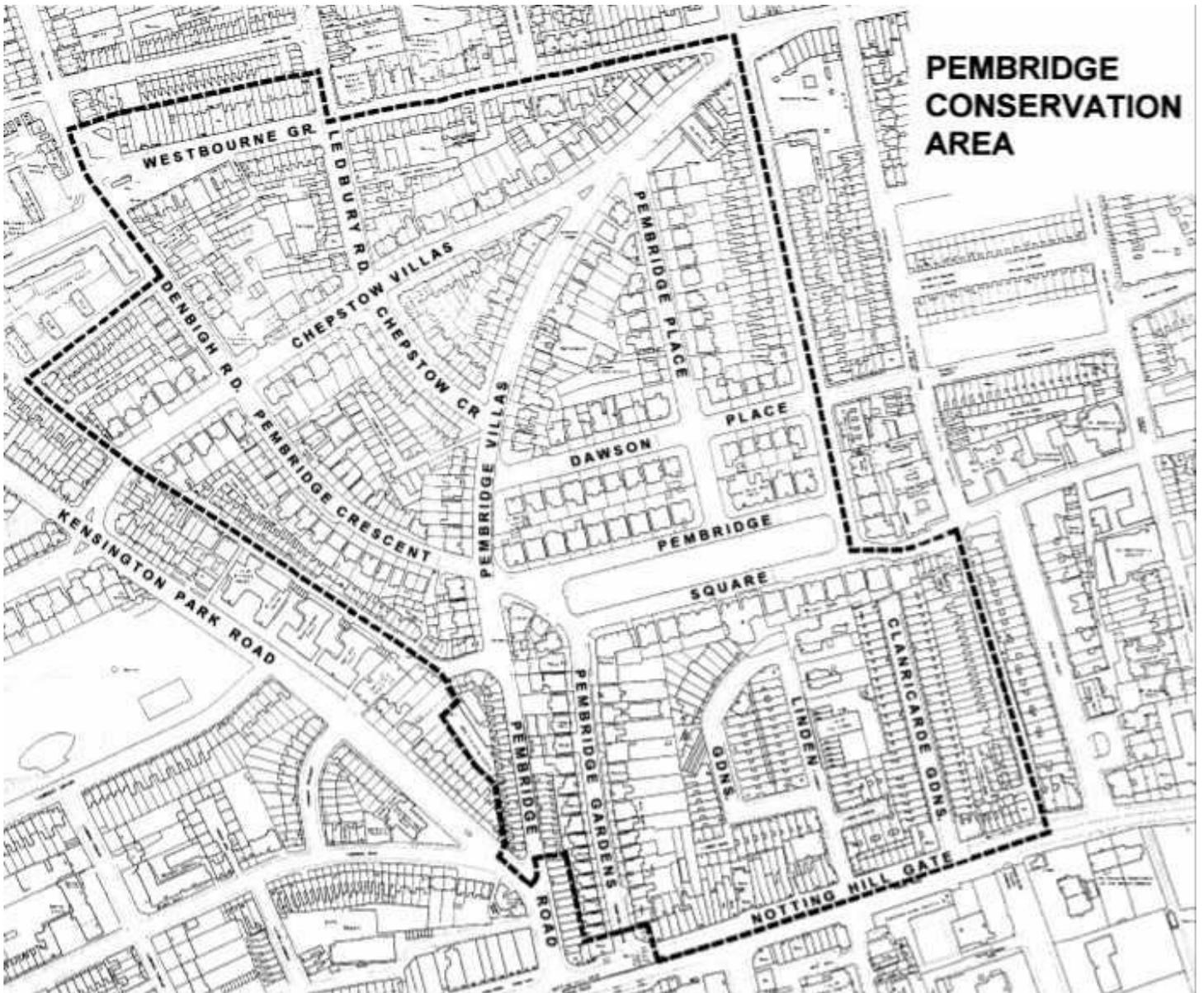
The College has decided to provide flats instead of houses but has not changed the design to reflect this change.

The Association remains unconvinced that the bulk of the buildings fits into its surroundings in the conservation area nor that the detailing of the elevations is satisfactory.

We await further developments.

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## From the Chairman's Desk

We are all indebted to the large amount of time and effort that our Planning Secretary, Roy Griffiths, dedicates to the task of ensuring that the members of the Pembridge Association committee are kept fully up to date with planning applications that could affect the character of our local conservation area.

It has been very beneficial that all committee members are now required to be on E-mail so that they can receive information at relatively short notice and respond in the same manner.

It is not unusual for our Planning Secretary to E-mail details of a planning application to all the committee and to get a response within a day from the majority of them allowing that a few may be away at any point of time; even those who have travelled abroad tend now

to pick up their E-mails and respond relatively quickly.

The result is that the decision-making process within the committee has become more democratic and not reliant on a single person to try to represent the views of the Association.

This way of operating has proved to be much better than the traditional way, as with some other similar societies, of meeting only every month or so and being unable to respond to the Council within the period allowed for public consultation recognising that not all the committee might agree with them. In fact, they can make the deadlines but only if the response is delegated to one or two members of the committee who act as dedicated planning members.

During 2012 the intention is to widen the consultation so that not only the committee members are circulated but also any other members of the Association who elect to contribute to the process

and request that they are put on the E-mail circulation list.

This is important because as a charity we should be seen to be reaching out to as many of our members as possible so that they can feel that they are partaking in the activities of the Association rather than just leaving it to a hardcore minority.

The other advantage of this mode of operating is that it is becoming more and more difficult to fix meetings on a date that every member of the committee can make as so many people have other priorities on their time.

My thanks go to all members of the PA Committee who have participated in the monitoring and response to planning applications over the last year.

One of our priorities for 2012 must be to recruit more members.

**David Campion**  
Chairman

## William Clarke 1943 - 2010



*William Clarke when Master of the Mercers' Company in 1995-96*

William Clarke, a past Chairman of the Pembridge Association and an art conservationist, was born in August 1943 and died in April 2010, aged 66 years.

After graduating he entered the City, but his growing dissatisfaction with merchant banking led him to decide on a radical change of career and he enrolled in Camberwell College of Arts' paper conservation course. His first professional experience came at the British Museum, where he worked for two years. A further two years were spent at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, where he was employed by the Area Museums Service.

These experiences prepared him to take on a greater personal responsibility and a splendid opportunity arose when, in 1978, the Courtauld Institute recruited its first conservator of works on paper. He was to spend the rest of his career at the Courtauld Gallery, dedicating himself to the care, preservation and public enjoyment of its outstanding collections. His major preoccupation in those early years was the collection of some 3,000 drawings assembled by one of the Institute's other great benefactors, Sir Robert Witt. Throughout his career at the Courtauld William saw the collection of works on paper grow to some 7,000 drawings and 20,000 prints - one of the chief collections of its kind in Britain. William was a skilled amateur draughts-

man and the British School became a particular interest, most especially the techniques of the watercolourists.

In 1989-90 the Courtauld moved to its new home in Somerset House, and he was much involved in planning the safe transfer of the collection to its new home. His appointment as head of gallery conservation brought responsibility overseeing the conservation plans for other areas of the collection. His specialist expertise was regularly sought for the gallery's programme of research and exhibitions. The Courtauld's catalogues often included his technical notes and other observations. For many years he taught a specialist module on the Institute's renowned easel paintings conservation course and his lessons were entertaining and popular. He retired in December 2008.

William was one of the leading art conservationists of his time through his long service of 30 years as head of gallery conservation at the Courtauld Institute of Art, as well as his involvement in the philanthropic work of the Mercers' Company and through his support of many private collections and various heritage artefacts.

Among his other beneficiaries were the congregation of St Matthew's Church, Bayswater, in his helping to save the famous Walker organ there, and the residents of Pembridge Conservation Area, Notting Hill, with the restoration of the many period features of their district.

Although William was private by nature, his personal life reflected his interests and artistic talents, including glass engraving and bookbinding. He was a passionate collector of watercolours as well as being a gifted watercolourist himself, and when in 1981 he was married to Elizabeth Ivimy they were able to combine her family collection with his, creating a happy household that to the outside visitor increasingly resembled the museums which he so admired, particularly when they began to commission paintings from the modernists among their friends.

The experience that he brought to the Pembridge Association is something that we will very much miss.

**David Campion**

## Planning Report for 2011

### 227-229 Westbourne Grove

The battle to prevent intrusive pavement advertising is ongoing. An application was made to use a large hoarding, roughly 12M long and 7 M in height to screen the shopfronts of 227-229 Westbourne Grove during extensive refurbishment, for an advertisement. This was refused by the Council because it would be incongruous and visually intrusive. It would dominate a stretch of Westbourne Grove which is particularly attractive because of its wide pavement, the row of trees each surrounded with flowers, its stylish shopfronts and, of course, the pair of marble sphinxes put in place by John Scott. Despite the refusal, the advertisement was put up and is now the subject of an enforcement order.

### Dawson Place

An application for the excavation of a subterranean basement level extension in Dawson Place was granted by the Council. This was one of eight such applications in the Conservation Area this year, two of which were refused because of breach of regulations. Causing potential damage to adjoining properties or nuisance to their residents continue not to be planning reasons for refusal.

### Rear 28-32 Pembridge Gardens

A planning application by the Imperial College Endowment Fund for the redevelopment of the site to provide 14 residential dwellings together with associated works and landscaping was refused by the Planning Applications Committee on 22nd March.

One of the reasons for the refusal was that by virtue of its materials and roof form, the proposed building would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

The P.A.'s main objections were that the use of copper cladding on the greater part of the front elevation, the slit windows on the rear elevation, the excessive height of the building and the jagged skyline were prominent features which were architecturally unattractive and completely out of keeping with the surrounding buildings.

On August 3rd at a meeting in the



*Original Imperial College planning application for the rear of 28-32 Pembridge Gardens*



*Original application looking south.*



*Revised proposal looking south.*

Town Hall with officers from the RBKC Planning Department and six members of the P.A, the Imperial College Team presented new designs for the development which took into account the criticisms of the scheme refused in March. The chief changes proposed were: the use of reconstituted white stone panels to face the first and second floor elevations; the use of lead cladding for the third floor elevations instead of copper cladding; a reduction in the angularity of the roof line; having basement instead of street level areas, with taller railings on a low wall and

stone clad bin stores immediately outside the doors. The P.A. response to the revised design was still critical. But Mathew Chandler, Imperial College's project manager, was sympathetic to the P.A.'s views. He engaged in a series of discussions with Nick Ross, acting on behalf of the P.A. beginning with a meeting at the beginning of August and a series of email exchanges which finished at the end of September with a design for the street elevation which was considerably more pleasing than its predecessors. The College was not prepared to make these changes.

### **Denbigh Terrace & Pembridge Place**

Council decisions continue to show the importance of conserving the architectural style of the rear as well as the front elevations of the houses in the Conservation Area.

Three successive applications for the enlarging of an existing rear extension in Denbigh Terrace were refused by the Council because the resulting extension would neither preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the house, the terrace or the Conservation Area.

Another application to enlarge an existing extension on the rear of a top floor flat in Pembridge Place was also refused for the same reason but more specifically because it would obstruct the view from of the original house from the back. Both applicants appealed.

In the case of the Denbigh Terrace appeal the Inspector allowed the Appeal, disagreeing with the Council and the Pembridge Association. He thought the enlarged extension would not be "visible from the public realm", an odd opinion in expression and fact since

several neighbours objected because they would see it.

A different Inspector took a different view when considering the Pembridge Place Appeal. He believed that the character of the Conservation area derives not only from what is seen in the streets but also from what is seen from private land. The new extension would not be apparent in "any views from public land", but it would be "visible from adjacent properties and their gardens" and as such would have the potential either to enhance the character and appearance of the Pembridge Conservation Area, or not. What was proposed may not cause "substantial harm", but "there would be harm", enough to justify the Council's refusal.

**Roy Griffiths**

*Planning Secretary*

### **Looking back to the start of the Pembridge Association**

When the Pembridge Association was formed in 1972 the first Chairman was the Rev Douglas Richardson, then the vicar of St Peter's in Kensington Park Road, the Hon Secretary was Simon Linton, who at the time lived in Denbigh Terrace, and the planning matters and the newsletter were dealt with by Peter Pilkington, who was an architect also living in Denbigh Terrace.

Simon subsequently moved to live abroad where his job took him.

Peter moved out of the area and sadly died prematurely not long afterwards.

It was Peter who produced the lovely cartoon, reproduced below and also available on the PA website, as a warning to developers not to mess around with the architectural heritage of the Pembridge Conservation area.



*Original PA warning to developers!*

## THE ROLE OF THE PEMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION IN THE HISTORY OF THE AREA

The Pembridge neighbourhood was first developed in the 1850s with a variety of building types, including substantial villas surrounded by trees, that gave the area a distinctive, highly attractive character but a hundred years later, for various reasons, Notting Hill, including Pembridge, had all but deteriorated into a shabby bedsit land.

At the same time a steady and increasing trickle of new residents were attracted to the area because of its architecture, sympathetic spaces and generous street layout. They brought a growing concern that the area's character was rapidly being eroded by careless alterations, lack of building maintenance, and inappropriate additions. The Council of the day took the first step to designate part of the neighbourhood The Pembridge Conservation Area, and this inspired a group of residents to form the Pembridge Association in 1969.

Over the next decades, this architectural appreciation manifested itself in a conspicuous increase in the number of residents wanting to restore neglected properties to their former glory. Refurbishments and restorations became less piecemeal and more sensitive to the original architectural character, and began to include the exterior settings – gardens, walls, railings and gates. This led in turn to the area's increasing attractiveness and 'buzz'.

Few know or appreciate how the buzz and the desirability of living here got started, or that an important part of the story has involved the many efforts of the Pembridge Association with its visionary leaders and members.

The original intention of the PA was:

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.

Over many years, alongside and encouraged by the tireless drive of the legendary John Scott and others, the Pembridge Association leadership has thrown the weight of its members' opinions behind achieving conspicuous improvements to the area.

Most notably, the Pembridge Association backed John Scott's vision of the Piers Gough designed Turquoise Island with its attendant sweet smelling Wild at Heart flower kiosk, a public loo facility par excellence which, unlike most other public loos, actually enhances its situation with a stylish clock, reinstated horse trough (the original having been removed and resited in front of Julies restaurant at Clarendon Cross), tree planting and aesthetically pleasing benches on which anyone can sit and enjoy.

The energetic local tree planting that was prevalent in the mid 1990s was enthusiastically supported by the Pembridge Association working in tandem with the Council's arboricultural department, and this initiative attractively transformed Ledbury Road south where the now mature trees help to make this a beautiful shopping street. Adding to this greening are the PA-sponsored hanging baskets along Pembridge Road and Westbourne Grove.

The PA's Millennium Project, working with the Planning department to achieve a multiple planning permission that allows all the residents of the properties on the upper floors above the Westbourne Grove shops to erect decorative railings of authentic design to their front boundaries, was also a stepping stone to greater collaboration with the residents and developers to improve and enhance the area. This is slowly but steadily taking shape, with some continuous sections of frontage now being erected.

It is planned that 2012 will be a year for the Pembridge Association to make itself more known in order to encourage residents to feel what we feel - a sense of really being part of our dynamic community, for whose preservation, maintenance and improvement we are all mutually responsible. Today, relative to the original area, the PA remit covers an enlarged area bounded by Notting Hill Gate to the South, Chepstow Place to the East, Westbourne Grove to the North, and parts of the Portobello Road to the West. It includes the southern section of Ledbury Road, Denbigh Road, Dawson Place, Pembridge Square, Pembridge and Chepstow Crescents and Villas, and all the other roads and mews tucked in between.

Active members air their views on sensitive development Planning applications, raise objections when necessary, and extend their interest to awareness raising initiatives; non-active members support these activities by their annual charitable subscriptions.

Since the present Coalition Government has loosened the remit of the Planning authorities, the work undertaken by the PA is more important than ever if the character of the neighbourhood is to be preserved.

**Jacqueline Pruskin**  
Membership Secetary



*Ledbury Road junction with Westbourne Grove showing the trees*

## NOTTING HILL GATE

We reported a year ago that the Company that owned most of the north side and part of the south side of Notting Hill Gate had sold their properties to two other property/investment companies, William Pearson and LaSalle investments.

The latter has now sold on Newcombe house and the row of shops along the west side of the top of Church Street to another company, Development Securities plc, and it seems likely that Newcombe House will either be substantially refurbished or more likely redeveloped together with the properties in Kensington Church Street.

As regards the north side of Notting Hill Gate, Pearsons are said to want to encourage a mix of shops, as in Marylebone High Street, but they will obviously want a return on their investment, and there are fears that they will raise the rents, which may in particular drive out Tylers Homecare.

The latter would be an enormous loss, as it is a genuinely independent retailer and an amazing source of so many things nowhere else to be found in the immediate area of Notting Hill Gate.

It would seem that there is unlikely to be any immediate major redevelopment of the north side because of the lengths of the existing leases in Campden Hill Towers.

The Council is reconstituting the previous Notting Hill Gate Advisory Group to act as a channel of communication between the Council, the local Ward Councillors, the Notting Hill Gate Improvements Group and the two development companies which now have an interest in Notting Hill Gate.

**David Campion**

### THE COUNCIL'S PLANNING DEPARTMENT

The Planning Department has reverted to three operational areas instead of two for development control purposes and is now using the term *development management* for this part of its work in the context of its revised structure.

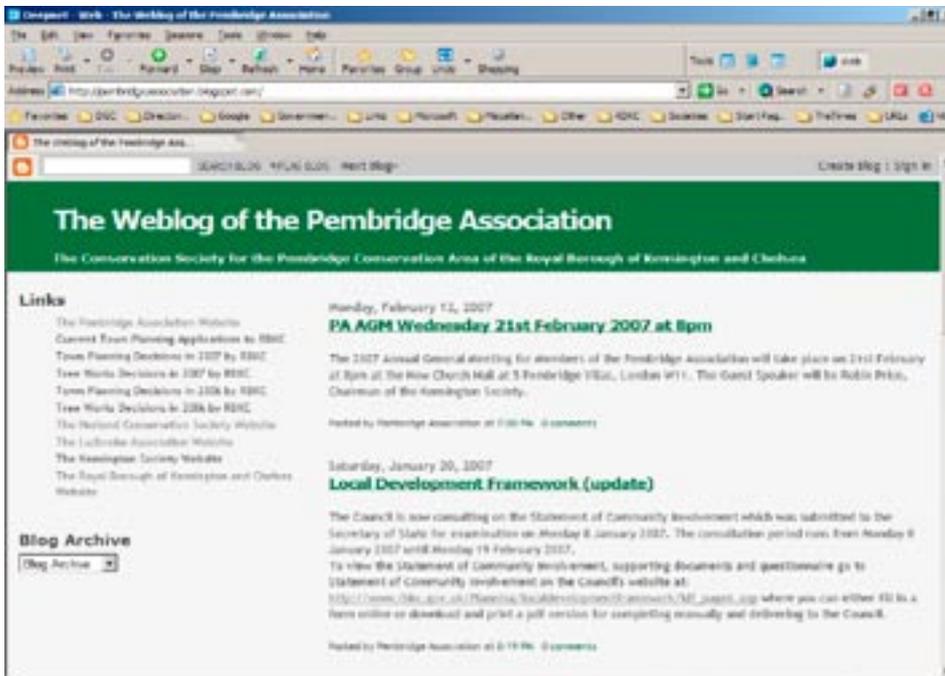
The north area, in which the Pembridge Conservation Area falls, continues to be managed by Luke Perkins as the Section Leader.



*Development Securities plc - Newcombe House and Kensington Church Street*



*The Pears Group - Campden Hill Towers and north side commercial properties*



## The Association's Website & Blog

The Pembridge Association Website provides the means 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 website may be accessed on the Internet using the following URL:

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

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

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

### Pembridge Association Blog

The Association also has a Weblog (Blog) which can be accessed from the menu on its website. This provides links to the planning information on the Council's website with a single click that avoids having to enter search criteria on the RBKC site itself. This means that any time you use one of these links you will see all current planning applications that have not yet been decided; another link

lets you see all planning decisions that have been taken in the current year.

It is now also possible to access scanned copies of planning application drawings which can be downloaded in the form of Adobe Acrobat pdf files. The benefit of this is that if you are unable to visit the Council's Planning Information Office, to see the original drawings submitted, you can view applications on your own computer at home.

If you prefer to do so you can go directly on to the Council's own website at:

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

and obtain a wider range of information that may be of interest to you.

### Key Decisions

The Council operates a procedure whereby decisions that are to be made by its Leader and his nine Cabinet Members are covered by a Forward Plan which sets out the Key Decisions that will be required. These are published on its website so as to allow public scrutiny and any objections to be made before the relevant decisions are formally taken.

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

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

and be automatically sent details of Key Decisions and other available information; this includes a wide range of planning information that can be selected by Ward, Conservation Area, Street or Postal District. You can also get details of all premises licensing applications and decisions.

From the top right of the Homepage of the Council's website you can now also sign up to **MyRBKC** and display a map of the area which can show details of all current planning applications and other selectable overlays showing other sets of information about the area.

### The Local Development Framework

The Council has completed the process of developing its Local Development Framework, now approved by the government-appointed Inspector, which has taken over from its previous Unitary Development Plan as the basis for setting out the strategic policies by which planning applications are now assessed.

Details of the Council's Local Development Framework and Core Strategy appear on the Council's website:

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

**David Campion**

# COMMITTEE 2011/12

## CHAIRMAN

Cllr David Campion

13 Rodney House  
Pembridge Crescent, W11 3DY

## HON TREASURER

Mrs. Ebba Dickson-Simpson

38 Portobello Road, W11 3DH

## HON. SECRETARY - Planning

Mr Roy Griffiths

14 Denbigh Road, W11 2SN

## HON SECRETARY - Membership

Ms Jacqueline Pruskin

32 Ledbury Road, W11 2AB

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Ms Katherine Allen

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Ms Jan Brown

60 Chepstow Villas, W11 2QX

Mrs Vicky Butler

2B Ledbury Mews North, W11 2AF

Cllr. Barbara Campbell

25 Pembridge Gardens, W2 4EB

Mrs Elizabeth Lindsay

3 Pembridge Square, W2 4EW

Mr Andre Marais

97 Linden Gardens, W2 4EX

Mr Nick Ross

9 Pembridge Place, W11 4XD

Mr. Dori Schmetterling

11a Dawson Place, W2 4TD

Dr Elizabeth Shaw

25 The Limes, Linden Gardens, W2 4ET

Cllr. Doreen Weatherhead

15 Clanricarde Gardens, W2 4JJ

The election of the Officers and Committee Members for 2012 will take place at the Annual General Meeting on Thursday 29th February 2012.

## 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.

We much prefer annual subscriptions to be paid by bank standing order as this helps to minimise the effort in renewing subscriptions each year!

If you have a point of view you would like to express about Conservation matters or issues raised in the Newsletter, write to or E-mail the Chairman whose name and address is shown at the top left of this page.

Chairman@PembridgeAssociation.com

## AGM 2012

The Pembridge Association held its last year's AGM on Wednesday 23rd February 2011.

Under its Constitution it is required to hold its AGM before the end of February each year.

Traditionally we hold the AGM on a Wednesday as this has proved to be the most convenient day for many members.

This year we are moving the AGM to the last Wednesday in February, which is a week later than usual, so that it does not clash with the Council's Cabinet Meeting which is being held on Wednesday 22nd February that would otherwise have been our chosen date.

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

It was printed by The London Printing Company.com in Notting Hill Gate.

## 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

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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 made immediately  
and annually thereafter until cancelled on ..... (Date)

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

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

Address: .....

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

The Pembridge Association

Charity No 267406