

Pembridge Association Newsletter

Number One: Spring 1973

Price 5p: Free to Members

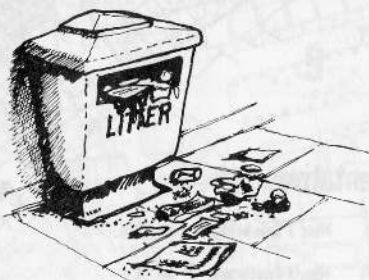
The Association was formed in October last year to safeguard the interests of the people who live in or are connected with the Pembridge Estate as a Conservation Area and to provide a voice for them in all these matters.

The purpose of this Newsletter is to give you some idea of the considerable amount of work that has been done by each of them and the co-ordinating Executive Committee. As important, we hope that as a regular publication, it will provide a continuing link between you and the Association.

Together we have aimed to do this by establishing four Action Groups, which have separate and distinct responsibilities for Planning, for Amenities, for Traffic and Transport and for Communications. We also appointed a number of Street Representatives to keep a regular contact with the community as a whole.

Alan Greengross
Chairman

AMENITIES



Conservation Areas are not just a collection of beautiful or interesting buildings - relics of good planning in the past. People live and work and move in them. The activities of the Amenity Group are concerned with street furniture and street cleanliness, with trees and gardens, and before we can even start to persuade some one - usually the Council - to do something we realise that its going to be up to us to identify the problems and their causes and, very probably, think of the remedies as well.

The problems are many. We want for instance to change the present situation where apparently buildings are more likely to disappear than litter. The problem arises in many ways, from domestic refuse sometimes accidentally, sometimes deliberately, left in the streets, from general litter - anything from a bus ticket to a beer can, from commercial refuse left outside shops and cafes to be collected - when? Old cars, dust and dirt from building operations - the trouble is that rubbish begets rubbish.

There are many other problems. Should front gardens be turned into car parks? How should trees be protected and plantings extended?

Our solutions will only be yours if more and more people are prepared to participate. More and more people like you.

COMMUNICATIONS

To make our views known - and effective - we quickly realised that communications would be an important part of our activities. We hope that over the coming months, the work of the Communications Action Group will enable us to put our case on any issue to some purpose whilst, on the other hand, through a true dialogue with the Council or any other organisation, to make public participation a reality.

The Newsletter that you are now reading is the materialisation of just one of these functions.

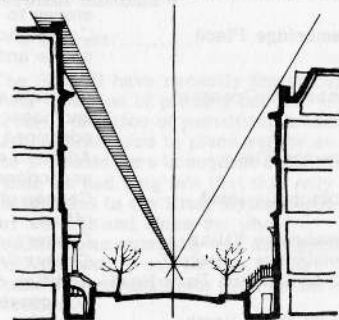
TRAFFIC



Traffic has a tremendous impact on the environment. The Traffic and Transport Action Group has been set up to deal with just this. We must reconcile the demand for improved amenities with the demand for increased mobility and must balance our needs as a community with our role as part of Central London.

One of our first priorities must be to produce an over all traffic plan for the whole area bearing in mind these responsibilities, but a plan that puts people first. In this we must reflect the wishes of the whole community as far as we can.

TOWN PLANNING



The Town Planning Group of the Association receives regular lists from the Borough Planning Officer, which summarise all the applications submitted in the borough. Every proposal that is in the Pembridge area, or is likely to affect it, is inspected at the Town Hall in Chelsea, and where relevant, we go to look at the building concerned to see what effect the development is likely to have. We hold regular meetings to consider the applications, and make comments upon every one for submission to the Planning Officer. This is a very time consuming job, but we hope that the result of the vigilance will be that our area is a better place in which to live. It will be seen from the list on page 2, that the most common types of development so far are the additional storeys and the conversions to self contained flats. We have on a number of occasions expressed concern about the subdivision of houses into flats, and the proliferation of roof additions that all too often break a skyline on a regular row, involve windows breaking through a parapet, or more simply cause a diminution of the visual quality of a street due to a lack of sensitivity in the design. A fair number of the applications involve rear extensions, and we have made the point that the erosion of garden space in a Conservation Area can only be to the detriment of the area. This too is in accord with the Council's own policy for Conservation areas.

In the Editorial article of the last issue of 'London Architect', the journal of the London Region RIBA, architect David Holmes writes:

'In the three months between editions of London Architect so many changes are made to the city's fabric that it is not possible to keep up with them.'

He goes on to write that it was their hope to publish a list of all the changes but it would have been far too long for the space available. 'There is little doubt' he continues, 'that a Gazette of change would be of great value to Londoners'.

The Pembridge Estate Conservation Area is of course only a very small part of the Greater London Area, but it has many of the same problems of change referred to in the article, though on a much smaller scale. (We publish a list of Planning Applications received in the last few months on page 2.)

Mr. Holmes continues:

'The problem is that London is changing too fast, and the few people whose job it might be to keep an overall view of the situation are preoccupied with strategic matters like Ringways or general population movement.'

This preoccupation can happen at any level, from GLC, through Local Authority right down to Conservation Societies. But it is at the membership of the Societies that the ball stops rolling, because the members are the people on the ground, the people who can keep a watch out for the insidious encroachment of property speculation, the traffic hazard, the felled tree, and all the losses to amenity both actual

and visual slowly eating away the fabric of our City. We, at grass roots, can note such proposals before they happen, can see them as they are happening, or report on them after they have happened. The machinery of the Town and Country Planning Acts and the Civic Amenities Act gives us considerable teeth to take action, and make objections to, or comments on, proposals that affect our microcosmic part of the City.

But it is not just in the negative way that we wish to contribute. At the Inaugural Meeting of the Association on 12th October, 1972, both the Chairman of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Town Planning Committee, Mr. Peter Methuen, and the Borough Planning Officer, Mr. Charles Hudson, welcomed the formation of the Association and spoke of the contribution that Societies can make. Mr. Hudson went on to say 'I hope the Pembridge Association will enter into dialogue not only with the adjoining Amenity Societies but with the Borough Council.

It is with this hope in mind that we look forward to a long period of productive collaboration with these bodies, and the Council, that will make a positive contribution to the Planning Policy of this Borough. We believe that this is the way in which we can counter the 'creeping erosion of our social and physical structure' about which David Holmes writes.

If we maintain our watching brief in our own area, and discuss mutual matters for concern at Borough level, we hope that for their part, the Council will bring to the GLC and even Government the view of the people who live in and care for the area and for which we have formed this Association.

PUBLIC ENQUIRY RESULT 59 Portobello Road

In the belief that one of our main functions is to act as a channel of communication for the people of this area, we asked Peter Pilkington to represent us last November at a Public Enquiry called to hear an appeal against the refusal of the Council to permit a change of use from garage to shop at 59 Portobello Road.

The appellant, Mrs. J.V. Scott, said in evidence that she had traded from the garage for two years selling old clothes but the Council rested its case on the fact that the area was zoned residential and that the proposal would result in an undesirable extension of the market into a predominantly residential area. The Council also argued that the loss of the garage would add to street congestion.

These views were strongly supported in evidence given by the Association. The result of the appeal, which was announced recently, was that the Council's refusal to allow change of use was upheld by the Inspector.

Open Forum

11 APR 1973

If the Association, through its executive committee, is to truly reflect and represent the opinions of people in the area, there must be regular opportunities for you to make known your feelings for the community to be able to debate questions that are our concern, for individuals to be able to ask questions and for everyone to be able to state their view.

Since this is our strength and our purpose please come along to

ST. PETER'S CHURCH HALL
59A PORTOBELLO ROAD W11
WEDNESDAY 11 APRIL 1973

AMBER LIGHTS

Street Trading Pembridge Road

You will have seen, outside 54 and 56 Pembridge Road the stalls that appear each Saturday selling a variety of items. The Council recently took enforcement action to prevent this but are being resisted by the traders who say that they have been there for many years. If you wish to refute this or if you have any knowledge of when trading actually started the Council has asked if you would write to the Borough Solicitor at the Kensington Town Hall.

2 Pembridge Square

Some while ago a Planning Application to add a roof extension to 2 Pembridge Square was refused by the Council. An appeal by the applicant to the Minister resulted in him allowing the addition, seemingly in part on the basis that the extension had been completed by the time the appeal was heard.

We are worried about the implication of this type of decision and we are trying to get more information from the Council so that we can discuss what action we should next take should developments of this nature occur again.

LATE NEWS

It has just been announced that the Department of the Environment has refused to grant a Preservation Order on the Gaumont Cinema, thus dashing the hopes of the 10,000 and more signatories to the Petition. A deputation to see Mr. Rippon is now being planned by local GLC and Borough Councillors. This has the support of the two MP's in the Borough.



Everyone will greet 1973 as Tree Planting Year and all that the policy of the Department of the Environment could mean. They have stated that a special effort is to be made to begin a continuing programme of regular tree planting in town and country.

Our aim for this special year is to co-operate in conducting a survey of all the trees in the area, recording those in existence, reporting on their condition and suggest where others might be planted.

Can you help us in this?