

Pembridge Association *Newsletter*

Number Two: Autumn 1973

Price 5p: Free to Members

The many who came to our inaugural meeting last year will doubtless recall the brave and welcome words we heard from the Council's Planning Officer and the Chairman of the Planning Committee about their pleasure at the establishment of the Pembridge Association, their sincere desire to see a continuing and meaningful dialogue between the Council and the people of the area and, above all, their protestations of help and support at all times.

Unfortunately the intervening months have been distinguished by a marked lack of that co-operation and that dialogue that was so freely promised. A catalogue of

non replies, lack of information and, apart from basic planning applications a virtual total absence of consultation now prompts the thought that, to some people, a local Association such as ours might be seen as a way to get the residents 'off the back' of the Council.

If this was the case, the problem we as a community would have to face up to is what we should or could do in such a situation and this is difficult to assess before we are able to determine the Council's real attitude to us and our fellow Associations beneath the Council's veneer of fine words.

Pembridge: The next steps

May 29th - the day the meters came - and with them possibly the biggest single change we have experienced in our own local 'environment'. Overnight, chaos gave way to at least a degree of sanity and frontages that for years had been hidden by solid lines of metal parked bumper to bumper were suddenly revealed to the mere pedestrian. At the same time, with few opportunities left for the all day parking commuter the amount of traffic in our residential streets dropped dramatically.

But our pleasure and gratitude for these mercies must not blind us to the fact that, far from being an end in itself, parking control is only a first step towards true environmental improvement for the whole area. Now is our chance to introduce a scheme for traffic management that will, once and for all, keep out the through traffic by quite simply taking it out of the residential streets and back onto the main roads where it rightly belongs.

One thing however is certain, if we are to succeed in this we must seize our opportunity now before the traffic in one form or other starts to return and we are told



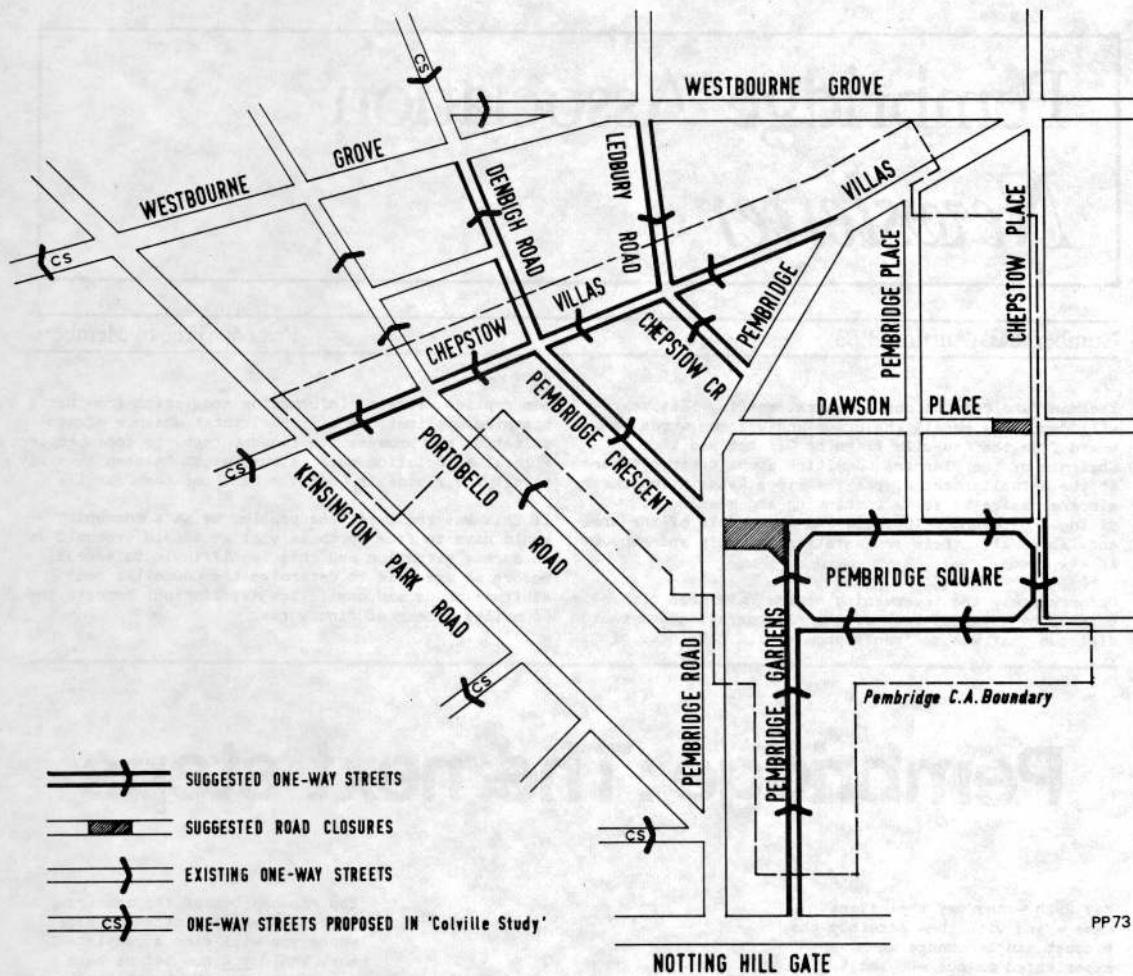
by the powers that be that to re-organise the road system then would cause too much disruption.

It is on this basis that we devote much of the Newsletter to a suggested management scheme - an Aunt Sally if you wish for you to knock down, criticise or improve in any way possible. If EVERY member of the Association would indicate the approval or criticism their acceptance or amendment, we could then go the Council with the best possible scheme and - most important - one which spoke for the area as a whole.

The reasons behind the measures suggested are indicated on page 2 where you will find a complete map. Would you now let us have your comments. Maybe the easiest way for you would be to draw your own amendments, comments or commendations straight onto the map itself and return this to the address shown. We will happily replace this with a new Newsletter for you to keep should you so desire.

The impetus must come from us - and come quickly - if we are to succeed in what most people agree is the most important single step forward we can take today in environmental improvement.





A TRAFFIC SCHEME FOR PEMBRIDGE

An environmental scheme such as this is based on the simple premise that in a primarily residential area the traffic should be confined - by and large - to that generated by those who live in the zone and that other traffic - through traffic, commuter traffic, commercial traffic and so on - should be kept wherever it is possible to main roads intended for traffic.

Surely Notting Hill Gate or West - bourne Grove are more suited to carrying such traffic than, say, Chepstow Crescent or Pembridge Sq.

If such a scheme is to have any real chance of acceptance and success it must be a reasonable compromise between the needs of a residential community and the demands of a large city. In drawing up our own plan we have borne this in mind thus for example accepting the existing metropolitan traffic flow along Pembridge Villas.

We believe that our own suggestions would eliminate much of the ex- traneous traffic, both East/West and North/South, would cut out most of the accident 'Black Spots' and, most important, could be implemented with the minimum of disruption or delay.

Clearly the proposed solution is far from perfect - for instance much of the through traffic along Chepstow Place might remain, but whether we could do anything more without the concurrence of Westminster Council - and hence the delay in getting two Councils to act - is debateable.

The scheme is put up, as we have said, much as an Aunt Sally - as a starting point for discussion for, quite clearly now, if we do not act for ourselves in this no one else is going to act for us.

Would you now let us have your comments - be they criticisms or

commendations. Could you send them to any of the following as quickly as possible to enable the scheme in its entirety to be discussed at the forthcoming Open Forum.

Alan Greengross - 9, Dawson Place

Peter Pilkington - 14, Denbigh Tce.

Simon Linton - 24, Denbigh Terrace

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Open Forum

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REMARKS
If the Association through its executive committee is not fully satisfied and refused to discuss the matter in the past, it should provide regular opportunities for you to make known your feelings for the community to be able to debate questions that are of concern, for individuals to be able to ask questions and to be able to be heard.

Some forty to fifty people came and had the opportunity of airing their views at the first Pembridge Open Forum last April.

Many points were raised about traffic and signposting and it was agreed that these should be borne in mind when we prepare our own traffic scheme for the area.

A number of questions about the future of Portobello Road and the implications for residents there about prompted the suggestion that these people might get together and form a local Action Group.

Other matters of interest included the punitive rating of empty properties, the problems of nuisance and general inconvenience caused by developers and builders, the Association's boundaries and the need for a notice board outside the Library.

At the end of a meeting generally felt by most people to have been very worthwhile the Chairman made an appeal for vigilance by all and a vigorous drive to enrol new members so that the Association could truly claim to speak for the area as a whole.

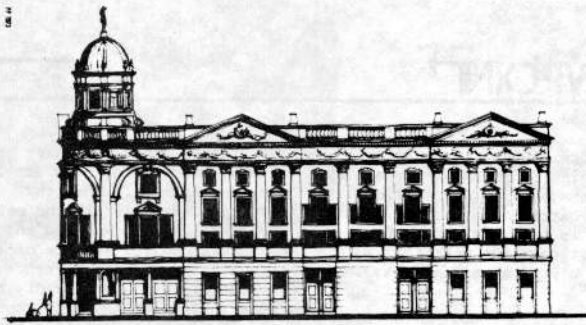
A second Open Forum is planned for October in St Peter's Church Hall.

No, No, Notice Board!

If one wants to keep a fairly compact community such as the residents of the Pembridge Area informed - on a day to day basis - of what's going on, there is probably no better way than by using a Notice Board located in a central position. Thus one of the earliest requests we made to the Council was for permission to erect such a board outside the library in Pembridge Square.

Whilst we have now received permission to have a board inside the building this hardly meets our main purpose.

It seems a shame, to put it mildly, that when we are told on all sides that the whole basis of establishing Associations such as ours is 'communication' we should be deprived of one of the very means of achieving this.



Gaumont saved - so far...

The most popular domed palace in Notting Hill Gate is to live on. The Gaumont Cinema, formerly the Coronet Theatre, where Sarah Bernhardt and Ellen Terry used to pack 'em in, will not vanish for a shops-offices complex after all. The Italianate frieze, elegant balastrades and corinthian capitals are to remain as a feature of the street scene. As a result of the many thousands of representations made at local and national government level, the 'theatre of which the whole county of London may well be proud (The Era 1898) is to keep its noble face intact.

There is no doubt that the decision of the Minister to confirm Kensington & Chelsea's safeguarding action was greatly influenced by the part played by the Pembridge and other Associations in the mammoth campaign organised against the redevelopment proposals. The Section 8 Order - the technical term for the planning measure which

was pulled out of the bag to prevent the Rank Organisation bulldozing ahead with their development is a brand new piece of legislation. It was included in the Statute to give buildings within Conservation Areas, which for one reason or another fail to qualify for historic building listing, protection against demolition.

The million dollar question now, of course, is whether or not the building which is 75 years old this November can be rejuvenated for theatre use once more. The Save-the-Gaumont Committee and a newly formed body, the Kensington Theatre Council, are working towards this end by trying to persuade Rank to co-operate with a theatre trust over an exciting new refurbishing project. If the idea succeeds it will be a prime example of how concerted community action can help to shape the environment - and protect a social amenity.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Since the list published in the first Newsletter the Town Planning Group has met regularly to deal with a total of 35 planning applications either in or affecting the Conservation Area. The following is a selection.

31/2 Pembridge Square	Conversion and rear addition
27 Chepstow Villas	Conversion of the property into two flats
8 Pembridge Crescent	Addition of one storey and conversion into 8 units
4 Chepstow Crescent	An additional storey
64 Pembridge Villas	Conversion
84 Portobello Road	Change of use to a restaurant
6-10 Pembridge Gardens	The addition of a storey
17 Pembridge Villas	Access for forecourt parking
66 Pembridge Villas	New 7 storey building providing 4 s/c flats
22 Pembridge Crescent	Rear addition, extra storey and convert to 13 units
3 Pembridge Square	An addition floor etc.
17 Chepstow Villas	The removal of a listed tree
6 Pembridge Crescent	Extra storey and conversion
16 Pembridge Gardens	Conversion
57 Portobello Road	Extra storey and conversion into offices
294 Westbourne Grove	Change of use to a restaurant
4a Pembridge Mews	Construction of three houses
6 Dawson Place	Extension and conversion
12-14 Pembridge Square	Rear addition
31-32 Pembridge Square	Conversion and rear addition
30 Pembridge Road	Provision of a new shop front
4 Pembridge Place	An additional storey
52 Pembridge Place	Car parking on the forecourt
Gaumont Cinema	Demolition of the building

"Pembridge Association - is that still going?" So said someone a few days ago of an Association that is barely one year old. But if this is only the second newsletter it does not mean that a healthy bay of a year ago has lost weight.

Some amenity societies arise out of a particular protest or cause celebre and when the battle has been won (or lost) sink into an early grave. By design as much as by good fortune the Pembridge Association did not come into existence for these reasons. Its life was to be lived on the plains rather than on a succession of hill tops. The Planning Action Group alone has shown that the mere fact of its existence has enabled local opinion to be expressed on many issues. Certainly in some of these cases planning

permission might well have been granted had it not been for local representations. Healthy Associations exist in the neighbouring areas of Norland and Ladbroke and the absence of an Association, or the presence of a weak society would hardly have been in the interests of those who live in the Pembridge Area.

Probably it should be a matter of rejoicing that we have not had any great crisis to meet for an amenity society worth its salt never welcomes such confrontations however good they may be for its publicity.

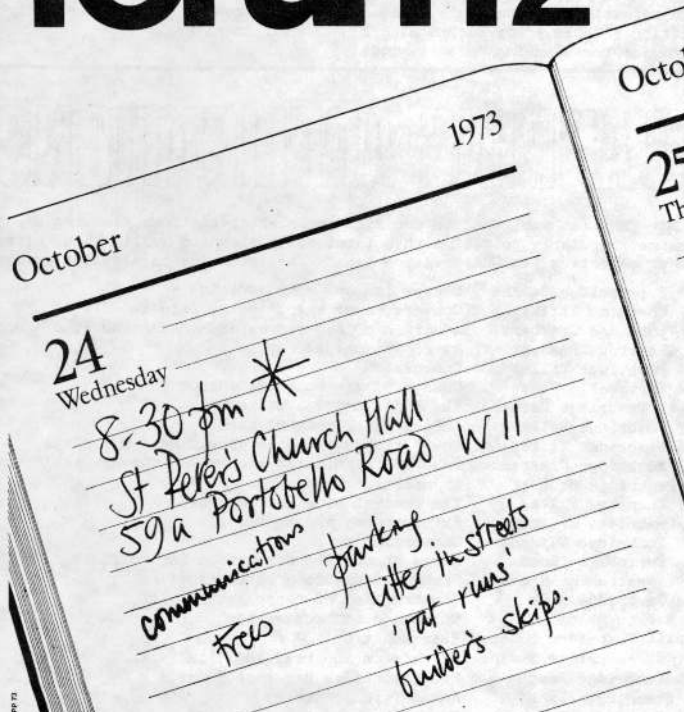
This Newsletter shows, we hope, that the Pembridge Association is still healthy, still working steadily, and still has a role to play.

Following a short but intensive period of public consultation a Steering Committee consisting of representatives of the Council and The Notting Hill Housing Trust has now submitted its report to the full Council.

So far as the Pembridge area is concerned the main proposal to affect us is the establishment of three 'environmental traffic areas' one of which virtually adjoins us and which would certainly have implications for the traffic in our area. The report however stresses that "consultation must be carried out with amenity organisations in adjoining areas" before this proposal is implemented.

It is now certain that the proposal to redevelop the Electric Cinema, Peniel Chapel and Finch's pub in Portobello Road will be rejected by the Council as a result of the public protest.

open forum 2



From the Borough

We were pleased to receive and welcome 'Planning News' from the Kensington & Chelsea Council, to be published, so we understand, on a regular basis for all those interested in planning matters in the Borough.

LATE NEWS

DEMOLITION OF GAUMONT CINEMA

The Rank Organisation, owners of the former Coronet Theatre, has applied to the RBK&C for Planning Permission to pull down the 75 year old building. This is despite the recent granting of a 'Section 8' preservation order by the Secretary of State for the Environment. (See report on page 3). In view of the weight of public opinion evidenced by the 10,000 signature petition, and the Council's own pronouncements on the subject, it is unlikely that permission will be granted. It is therefore probable that a Public Inquiry will be called to determine the future of the theatre.