

SPRING 2013 NEWSLETTER

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Things have certainly been somewhat hectic over the last twelve months. On the one hand there have been some excellent consultations by the Planning Department which have been very encouraging in many cases such as the developing basement policies, the protection of public houses and other A classes, and the development of conservation and open space policies. On the other hand the consultation about *Involving People in Planning* still does not give us the confidence that there is a real commitment to engage with the public: involvement is being confused with the mechanical process of distributing information which is only one part of it. We remain concerned that there are inconsistencies in the application even of existing policies, and also cases where the policies appear to be blatantly ignored.

There is still a lot to do and if you are interested in helping please do contact me or **Maha Sarkis**, our membership secretary.

For a start there is the review of our Conservation Areas (page 2). Many thanks to our Ward Councillors for the financial support through the *City Living Local Life* initiative which, as mentioned above, has allowed us to employ the services of an architectural historian to guide us through the study.

We are now developing our **Local Business Membership** (page 7). This has sprung from a belief that these organisations make a major contribution to the quality of our environment and that they are often placed under considerable

pressure due to the inflated residential property values in our area. Help in recruiting members and in developing our policies concerning this section of our community would be welcomed.

The **Mansion Block Group** is growing and is part of a developing interest in the role played by mansion blocks in the character and appearance of the heart of Kensington (page 7).

Keeping in touch is going to be easier for many of us with the development of our website which we hope to have up and running by the time of the AGM www.essaw8.com. For those who do not want to provide an email address it will be a means to keep up with recent developments and provide us with your views. We will continue to contact residents who do give us an email address with more immediate information.

ESSA AGM

This year the Annual General Meeting will be held on **21st May** at Leighton House, 18 Stafford Terrace.

Doors open at **6.30** for a **6.45** start.

The Annual Address will be by **Deyan Sudjic** *Director of the Design Museum*

There will be drinks afterwards and an opportunity to talk to the Committee members.

DID YOU KNOW?

That our Borough has less open space than most others? This gives us all the more reason to work hard to protect that which we do have, especially in publicly accessible areas such as our Parks. The Local Plan does acknowledge the pressures from commercial events which often deny public access in areas for months at a time just to allow a few days of performance time.

Although they are not within the ESSA area, we consider that both Holland Park and Kensington Gardens make a very significant contribution to our residents' amenities and enjoyment of the environment. We therefore thought it right to play an active role in raising concerns regarding planning applications for an extended period for the *Opera in Holland Park* and for the Global Challenge equestrian event in Kensington Gardens. In both cases our main concern has been for the balance between the duration of set-up, taking down, the restoration of the grounds and the actual time of entertainment which we believe is contrary to Policy CR3 of the Local Plan to protect the open space for public use. We are all aware that the grass in Kensington Gardens has still not recovered sufficiently to allow public access where the theatre was sited last year.

AT THE HEART OF THE MATTER

The Conservation Area designation lies at the heart of ESSA's existence but the Council's current Character Statement (Conservation Area Proposals: CAPS), which is a requirement against which any planning proposals should be tested, is wildly out of date. This is very important since it is a legal requirement that any proposals must 'protect or enhance the character of the area' and the NPPF which came into force in March 2012 confirms that any documents which are out of date can be ignored!

For several years ESSA has felt that the CAPS for our area needed updating and we have been approached by residents who have shared this concern with regard to the boundaries and to individual buildings.

At long last our objectives and those of the Council fall into line, not least because the planning department recognises the need to review the conservation and design policies in the Local Plan (formerly the Local Development Framework, LDF) to comply with the NPPF requirements. That process is currently in hand and should be completed by the end of the year.

The planners have agreed that the boundaries and assessment of the details of our area, including individual buildings, need to be reviewed and they have welcomed our proposal

to start that process. Our Ward Councillors have been equally supportive and we are grateful for the funding from the City Living Local Life fund which has enabled us to employ an Architectural Historian, **Neil Burton** of the Architectural History Practice, to guide us in the process.

By the end of the year we aim to have reviewed the boundaries and the buildings within the area and to establish criteria which will identify their significance. ESSA Members will be carrying out the study under the supervision of Neil Burton, resulting in a presentation of proposals to the community and the planners at a public meeting. A printed summary will be issued and published on our website which will be up and running during the course of this year.

One of our key objectives will be to create a database of buildings which will provide a robust basis for assessing their significance. It is clear from our survey last year that there is support for local listing, or other similar means of identifying clearly those buildings which contribute to the quality of the area and those which do not.

This is a weighty task and although we already have a number of volunteers we really could do with more help. **If you are interested please do contact Anthony Walker or Barry Munday.**

NEW APPOINTMENT

Barry Munday has been co-opted to serve on the ESSA Committee to take an active role in the updating of the conservation area. Barry is an architect who has lived in Lexham Mews since 1999. He was Chairman of PRP Architects, one of the UK's largest practices, until he retired in 2007. Since then he has undertaken a number of roles including Chairman of The Housing Forum and of Design for Homes. He sits on the Development Panel of the Octavia Housing Association, an active developer of affordable homes West London. He is a keen supporter of Opera Holland Park and of Chelsea Football Club. His wife, Jane, is an active committee member and volunteer for the Friends of the Royal Marsden Hospital.

RBKC CONSULTATIONS

You may have read in the press that some Councils have concerns that without up-to-date planning policies they may be vulnerable to presumption in favour of development, as predicted in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was adopted a year ago.

You should be pleased that our Council produced the LDF which was adopted in 2010 and also implemented a series of workshops and consultations which will lead to further updates during the course of this year. ESSA has taken an active role in this process, attending a number of sessions and submitting comments on the proposals.

We consider that considerable progress has been made in some areas such as better protection for public houses and others within the class A category, with improved basement policies and general conservation and the protection of open spaces.

On the other hand we are yet to be convinced that the Council is listening concerning **Involving People in Planning**. This is still much more about them telling us rather than *listening* to us.

OPERA HOLLAND PARK

We are delighted that our efforts in making representations to officers and the planning committee in support of the Friends of Holland Park have met with a considerable degree of success and that the period for taking down and clearing away the Opera has now been cut back so that the area in front of Holland House will be restored to public use a month earlier than requested by the applicant. There is no loss of performance time for the opera or related activities so this is a win/win outcome. We congratulate the councillors who, perhaps prompted by our emails, cross-examined the applicant in some detail about the sequence of events. We are however concerned that the first Officers' Report did not acknowledge a key policy, ie CR3 which seeks to minimise the loss of public access to our open spaces, and that they appear not to have considered it necessary to go into the detail of the actual timescale required.

ESSA CROSSWORD

The winner of the crossword competition is long-time resident of Marlborough Court, **Mrs Schayek**. "*Google was a great help,*" said the delighted octogenarian who takes a keen interest in the local environment and planning issues, having lived in Kensington for over 50 years.

Although Mrs Schayek had two mistakes in her crossword entry, she had the most correct answers and hence wins the bottle of Veuve Cliquot.

A votre santé!

We would like to thank **Roberson** for their generosity in donating the prize.

THE FAMILIES OF HOLLAND HOUSE

The Pleasure Grounds of Holland House: for over 300 years successive owners of Holland House in Kensington were at the heart of political, social and literary life in London until the house was bombed during the Second World War. The Cope and Rich families (the Earls of Holland and Warwick) were the owners from 1604 to 1721, and the Fox and Fox-Strangway families (Barons Holland and the Earls of Ilchester) from 1726 to 1951.

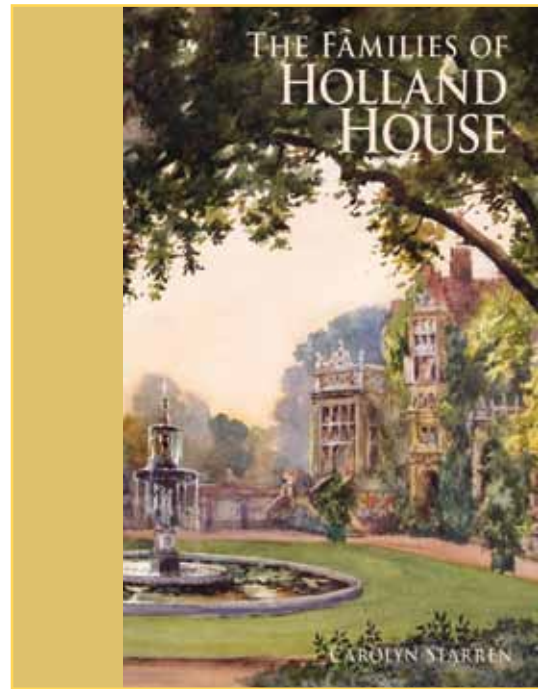
These influential and interesting figures of London society and beyond, and their guests, are the cast of Carolyn Starren's painstakingly researched and fascinating account of the life and times of Holland House. Commissioned by The Friends of Holland Park, Carolyn Starren, as a past Local Studies Librarian for The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and a lifelong resident of Kensington, is pre-eminently well qualified to write this definitive social history of Holland House.

THE PLEASURE GROUNDS OF HOLLAND HOUSE

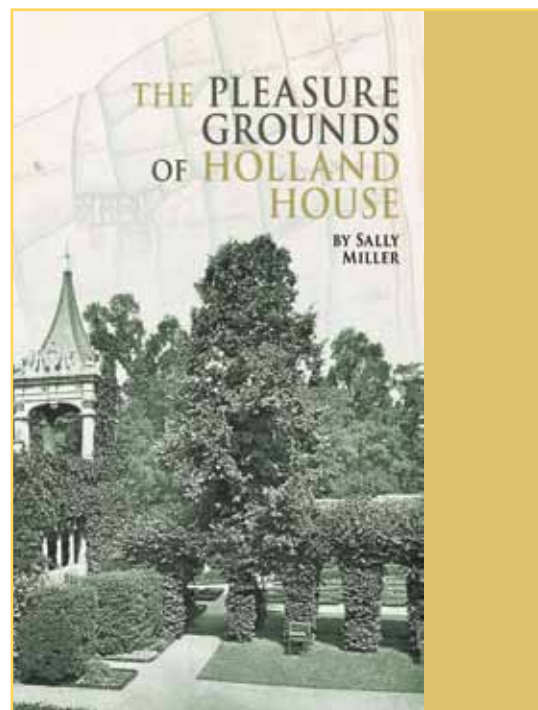
This new book by Sally Miller, a garden historian, was commissioned by The Friends as a companion volume to *The Families of Holland House*.

The Holland House estate was created in 1591, covering about 500 acres from what is now Holland Park Avenue almost to the Thames. Little has been written about the park and pleasure grounds, but Sally Miller has discovered records to show that they were laid out by owners with taste as well as money, who were familiar with the finest gardens in England. Changing landscape fashions down the centuries were reflected in the gardens of Holland House.

This book uses the surviving evidence to create impressions of the gardens as they would have been seen and experienced in each of the four centuries of their existence. It will add a new dimension for those who visit and enjoy Holland Park today; there are still places to stand and imagine how the pleasure gardens of Holland House once looked.



The 64-page, soft-covered book measures 243mm x 169mm, has 39 illustrations, 11 of which are in colour, and two family trees. It costs £5.95 (plus £1.10 p&p).



The 112-page, soft-covered book measures 243mm x 169mm, has 60 mono and colour images. It costs £9.99 (plus £1.40 p&p).

Both books may be ordered from **Rhoddy Wood**,
21 Kenton Court, 356 Kensington High Street,
London, W14 8NN.

Please make your cheque payable to *The Friends of Holland Park*. They are also available at the Park Office and at a commercial price from **Daunt Books** in Holland Park Avenue.

4 INKERMAN TERRACE

This is one of the most complete terraces in the Conservation Area and is identified as being a building of merit in the CAPS. We objected to an application for roof alterations due to the damage to the unity of the terrace and the loss of original building form. This was refused and has now been taken to appeal. We also objected to an application for a basement under the front garden not on principle but because the initial application would have moved the access stair and included an intrusive roof light which we again considered harmed the unity of the terrace. This was withdrawn and a revised scheme retaining the staircase in the original position and without a roof light has been submitted. We consider that this is a win win with the applicant benefiting from the additional space and the special interest and character of the area being preserved.



Above: 4 Inkerman Terrace, Below: 2 Abingdon Villas

2 ABINGDON VILLAS

This is another basement application which we did not object to in principle but where we had two main concerns. First, damage to a tree at the front of the building where the application was reduced so that the risk was removed; secondly the means of construction. To begin with this relied on an enclosure in Marloes Road with a grab lorry being allowed to stand beside it to empty the skip. For anyone who knows Marloes Road this was a no brainer and would have caused enormous congestion. The access was then changed with the enclosure in Abingdon Villas at the corner with Marloes Road which we considered was equally problematic and would not only would have caused congestion but was also a health and safety risk. Again our objections have been listened to and the working area kept back to within the site.



TELEPHONE KIOSKS

Most of you will have heard of the applications to replace the existing telephone boxes with structures wider and taller than the bus shelters with an open air telephone on one side and a large moving illuminated advertisement display on the other. Significantly the applications, of which there were 41 in the Borough, were submitted by an advertising company! ESSA worked in conjunction with many other conservation groups in the Borough to present comprehensive objections. To our surprise and delight the Council refused all the applications. The applicants have now appealed against 25 of these refusals and, again co-ordinated by the Kensington Society, we have registered our support for the Council's decision.



Left: Telephone Kiosks
Below: Britannia Tap Public House

BRITANNIA TAP

The planning application for a change of use to close the public house and convert it into self contained flats was refused by the Council and the applicant took the case to Appeal. We had objected not least on the grounds that with the substantial residential development on the other side of Warwick Road this was not the time to be losing a public house. The Inspector considered that the main issue was whether the change of use would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of our Conservation Area and concluded that it would not. The Appeal was therefore refused. We wait to see what happens next.

65 EARLS COURT ROAD

The application for a basement was one of the largest we have seen, covering nearly all the site both under the building and under the front and back gardens. The emerging policy would not have allowed this but under the current SPD the planners considered that the application did comply.



BT BROADBAND CABINETS

In order to improve broadband performance BT needs to install new cabinets which at first we had hoped would replace some of the clutter which is already there. It appears that not only is that not possible but that the locations for the new boxes are determined by a number of quite complex technical constraints. The Kensington Society organised a review of all the locations in several of the wards near us and we walked the ESSA area with the BT representative and tweaked some of the locations to improve both the appearance and in some cases the space left on the pavement. They have now revised their applications.

MANSION BLOCK GROUP

Kensington has many magnificent mansion blocks, some over a century old, which make a significant contribution to the character of the area. Equally, many new blocks of flats are being built in developments in areas such as Warwick Road and the Commonwealth Institute and we feel it is important that this existing and growing area has a forum in which to discuss issues specific to living in such homes.

We have regular meetings at which we not only discuss planning and conservation issues but also practical issues relating to the management of the blocks. This allows us to compare notes on suppliers, contractors, works programmes, service charges and other areas of common interest and the network we have now built up amongst our twelve (and growing) member base allows us to have access to a wealth of experience that can help make the correct and most cost effective decisions on any number of issues that these buildings face.

The ESSA Mansion Block Group is grateful for the support of the Group's members and would be happy to welcome other blocks, whether inside or outside our immediate area, who share our interests.

Contact committee member *Julian Childs* on julian.childs@talk21.com.

KENSINGTON GARDENS

The opening up of the gardens to the south and east of Kensington Palace has significantly enhanced the setting of the Palace as seen from Kensington High Street and from the Round Pond and this has been warmly welcomed. The presence of the theatre on the lawns next to the Broadwalk last year not only denied Kensington residents and visitors the use of a much loved part of the Gardens but it also left a devastated area of grass which still has to be cordoned off to allow for recovery. The land to the north of the Palace, although less prominent, is very well used and loved but it too has been left in a devastated condition following use last year for one of the Olympic competitors' pavilions.

We were thus all the more concerned to learn towards the end of last year of an application for an equestrian event which would, yet again, occupy all these parts of the Gardens and more. ESSA objected largely on the basis that it appeared probable from the technical reports submitted that the overall duration of the event, including all the time required for restoration afterwards, would be many months and all for just four days of commercial exploitation!

A good report by the planning officers has resulted in a refusal for which our Council must be congratulated. What about the role of the Royal Parks however, whose only interest appears to have been to maximise commercial returns and possibly cover up their lack of attention to the conditions in which the Gardens have been left from previous events. It is no surprise that they may have taken that attitude when the RBKC was willing to grant consent for commercial events, apparently without securing assurance of proper reinstatement after the event. Let us hope that all involved have learnt from this sorry tale but we must continue to be very watchful.

BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP

ESSA has recently launched a new initiative to attract the support of Business Members. We are doing this since we feel local businesses can help to raise awareness of ESSA and inform us of any concerns affecting our neighbourhood, especially from a business perspective. They will also help ESSA's finances since Business Membership will cost £100 a year. In return ESSA is offering Business Members advertising space once a year in our Newsletter, a proposed link to our website, opportunities to write about how their businesses fit within the local community and an informed link to RBKC policies. We are hoping to attract a total of around 20 Business Members. We give a warm welcome to those Businesses which have signed up already and whose advertisements are in this Newsletter - we welcome their support, they include **Orsini, Mountgrange Heritage, Robersons, Chez Patrick, Prontaprint, Garden Basket, Miller of Kensington, Rickman Properties** and the number is growing daily.



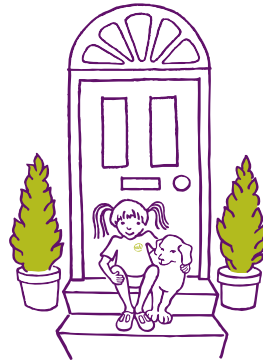
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ESSA ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Dear ESSA member,

We appreciate your membership and interest in ESSA, and we hope to serve you well. **If you have not paid your membership fee for 2013 please do so now**, or if you would like to recruit a new member please use this form.

- Here's my cheque for £10 for standard family membership for 2013
- Here's my cheque for £5 for senior citizen membership for 2013
- Please change me to a direct debit payer – the form is on the other side
-(enter name here)
is no longer a member, please remove this from the list

DONATION : £.....

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Name.....

Address.....

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I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer as stated and therefore eligible for you to apply Gift Aid.

Signature:

Thanks for your help,

Stuart Brown

Stuart Brown
Treasurer and Membership
8 Pembroke Road, London W8 6NT
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Edwardes Square Scarsdale & Abingdon Association



A charity registered in England and Wales (262019 charity number)



GETTING MORE FOR YOUR MONEY

Remember if you let us have an email address you not only save ESSA money on postage but you will also get more information including updates on the latest issues in our area.



A charity registered in England and Wales (262019 charity number)

ESSA BUSINESS MEMBER STANDING AUTHORITY

Note to Bank: please replace all prior ESSA standing orders with this one

Your Bank:.....

Branch:.....

Sort Code:.....

PLEASE PAY AS FOLLOWS:

Bank:	Branch Title:	Sort Code:
National Westminster	55 Kensington High Street, W8	50-30-10
Beneficiary's Name:	Account Number:	
Amount:	Amount in words:	Quoting Reference:
£5 (OAP)/£10 (Family) Pounds Sterling	ESSA
Commencing date:	And thereafter every:	Frequency:
	2nd January	Annually

ACCOUNT TO BE DEBITED:

Name of Account:	Account Number:

Signature:.....

Name:.....

Date:.....

S. Brown, Treasurer, 8 Pembroke Road, London W8 6NT. stubrown@btopenworld.com



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