
CAMBERWELL QUARTERLY

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THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP & EVENTS

Membership is open to anyone who lives, works, or is interested in Camberwell.

The Executive Committee is elected annually at the Society's AGM. Meetings of the Executive Committee are usually held on the first Thursday of the month – please contact the Secretary for details. Members are welcome to attend as observers with prior notice to the Secretary, Robert Wainwright (see inside back cover for contact details).

Sub-Committees on planning, the public realm, traffic and transport, publications and local history form an important part of the Society's work and all members are welcome to involve themselves in areas which interest them.

The views expressed in the *Camberwell Quarterly* are not necessarily those of the Society unless clearly stated as such. The Camberwell Society is a registered charity (No 264751).

LOCAL SOCIETIES, VENUES AND EVENTS

We recommend checking details

Brunswick Park Neighbourhood Tenants and Residents Association
Jason Mitchell 07985 548 544
tandra.brunswickpark@yahoo.co.uk

Burgess Park, Friends of
For meetings, events and updates on Burgess Park improvements
www.friendsofburgesspark.org.uk
friendsofburgesspark@gmail.com

Butterfly Tennis Club
www.butterflytennis.com

Camberwell Gardens Guild
Membership enquiries to:
Pat Farrugia, 17 Kirkwood Road, SE15 3XT

Carnegie Library, Friends of
See the Friends' tray in the Library or
foclchair@googlemail.com

Concerts in St Giles' Church
Camberwell Church Street
www.music@stgiles.com

Cuming Museum
Old Walworth Town Hall, 151 Walworth Road, SE17 1RY.
020 7525 2332
www.southwark.gov.uk/Discover-Southwark/Museums

Dulwich Picture Gallery
College Road, SE21 7AD
020 8693 5254.
www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk

Herne Hill Society
Jeffrey Doorn 020 7274 7008
Membership: Herne Hill Society
PO Box 27845, SE24 9XA
www.hernehillsociety.org.uk

Lambethans' Society
See Brixton Society website
www.brixtonsociety.org.uk

Maudsley Learning
ORTUS learning and events centre, 82-96 Grove Lane, SE5 8SN
www.maudsleylearning.com

Minet Conservation Association
020 7737 8210
www.minet.fsnet.co.uk

Nunhead Cemetery
Linden Grove, SE15. Friends of Nunhead Cemetery (FONC)
020 8693 6191
www.fonc.org.uk

Peckham Society
Peter Frost 020 8613 6757
Sunday 18 August, 2pm, Peckham and Burgess Park Walk. Meet at Peckham Rye Station
www.peckhamsociety.org.uk

Ruskin Park, Friends of
Doug Gillies 020 7703 5018

SE5 Forum
SE5Forum.org.uk
comms@SE5forum.org.uk

South London Gallery
65 Peckham Road SE5. Open: Tuesday to Sunday – 12pm-6pm, closed on Monday
www.southlondongallery.org

Southwark Friends of the Earth
Stephanie & Jim Lodge
020 7701 3331. Emails:
stephanielodge1947@talktalk.net
southwarkfoe@bopenworld.com

Wells Way Triangle Residents Association
Andrew Osborne
WWTRACamberwell@gmail.com



Cover: A team of artists going under the name of Gourmandising has fun with Camberwell Green Post Office
Photo: Marie Staunton

New businesses are springing up – let's help them to thrive

Autumn rapidly approaches and there is a lot going on in and around Camberwell.

In my last Chair's letter I mentioned the number of new businesses, particularly in the food and drink area, that were opening (or planning to open) in Camberwell. This issue of the *Quarterly* looks at some of the coffee and coffee related shops and bars that are springing up on Camberwell Church Street. As I said, do give them your support and custom as that is how they will thrive and others will follow in their wake. We are also looking at the proposals to open a jazz bar on a site that has a lot of history to it.

Traffic and transport continue to be issues of interest. In the Mayor of London's 2050 vision there is mention of a possible extension to the Bakerloo line. Two possible



Nick Holt

routes are contemplated – one down the Old Kent Road and then one to Camberwell and then to Peckham. Southwark Council, understandably in my view, are supporting both routes. We will be doing all we can to make known our support for the Camberwell/Peckham option and I would urge you all to do likewise.

There is also an article in this

issue looking at the history of the theatre and cinema in Camberwell. This is timely in the light of the recent open-air performance at Dog Kennel Hill Wood of some old black and white films that were made at the old Gaumont studios. I was unable to attend as I was away but I understand it was a great success – and even got a mention in *The Times*.

Camberwell has always had a vibrant artistic tradition, which was underlined earlier in the summer when Stephen Humphrey led a number of Society members on a walk round artistic Camberwell. These walks are always fascinating and we are looking at a walk with a focus on modern architecture some time in the spring.

Nick Holt

Nick.holt.camberwell.soc@gmail.com



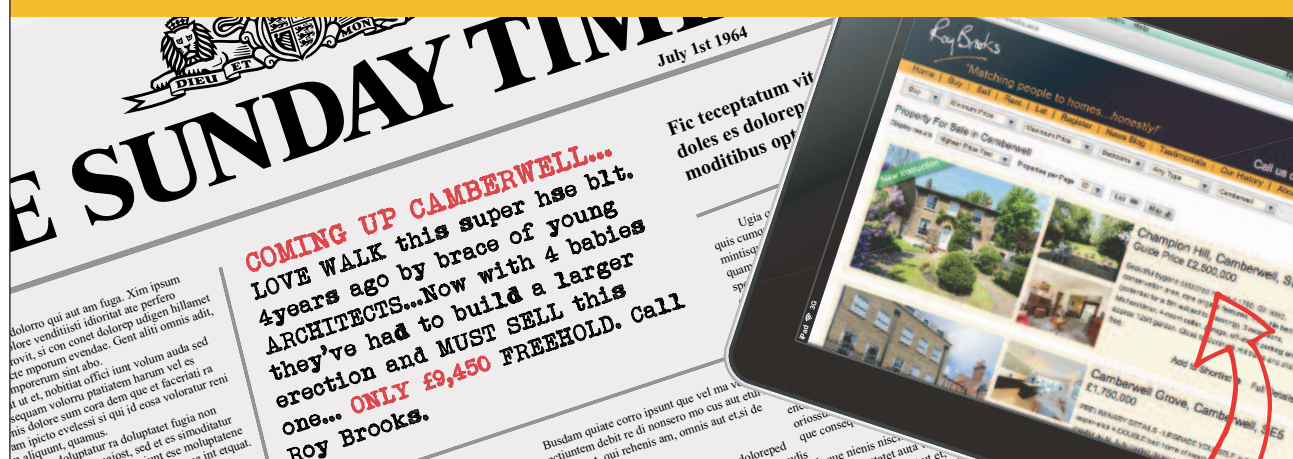
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Camberwell Coffice Culture

Time was when the **Jungle Café** was the beginning and end of coffee options in Camberwell. Now free wifi has transformed the café into the “coffice”. Over 20 coffee shops have opened within a five minute walk of the Green, all busy with customers holding meetings and answering emails.

Laptops and tablets are much in evidence at **Maloko** – the word means journey in Cameroon where owner Evagale comes from. Comfy leather armchairs and a bookcase full of paperbacks to dip into make for a relaxed vibe. Ethiopian born painter Ata produced the bright and witty décor for the opening in 2013. The ceiling is covered with coffee bean sacks and thoughts on life and love are chalked all over the fireplace. Current thought for the day is “Before speaking consult your inner bullshit barometer and resist the temptation to tell people only what they want to hear”.

Open 9am to 11pm. Gluten-free, vegan and dairy-free food available. Best for – buckwheat pancakes and juices. The apple ginger and beetroot juice is Camberwell’s best hangover cure.

A few doors up is **Daily Goods** which just opened this summer. The owner, Carter, a barista from Boise Idaho, believes the growth of coffee shops in the UK is driven by demand for higher quality coffee.

On the walls are photos of La Finca Timana, the farm in Columbia that grew this week’s filter coffee. It is “direct trade” – bought direct from the farmer by Clerkenwell’s artisan coffee roasters, Workshops Coffee. Carter, 28, is happy to explain the difference between coffee that is dried naturally and that which is pulped to separate the coffee seed from the cherry-like fruit that surrounds it.

His expertise comes from a decade of working in coffee in New York, and NY style is reflected in this coffee shop’s birch ply tables and wooden floors. Why Camberwell? “To be closer to the Stormbird”. And Daily Goods? “I thought of the name



Above : *Daily Goods*
Left: *Happy customers at Maloko*



to describe a coffee shop that is part of the neighbourhood, where you drop in to get your coffee and baked goods.”

Open Monday to Friday, 7.30am to 7pm Saturday, 9.30am to 5.30pm, Sunday 10am to 5pm.

Best for – seasonal coffee based on harvest time (Kenyan comes in August, Guatemalan in October, Rwandan in March).

Hamish and Samantha at **No 67** Peckham Road are sure *they* sell the best cup of “direct trade” coffee. From Allpress coffee roasters in Shoreditch, their grind is air dried for a sweeter taste. But it is their association with South London Gallery that has set No 67 apart since it opened four years ago.

During the day visitors to the Gallery drop in for coffee and fresh, home-made food. Regulars from Vanguard Court and art lecturers from neighbouring

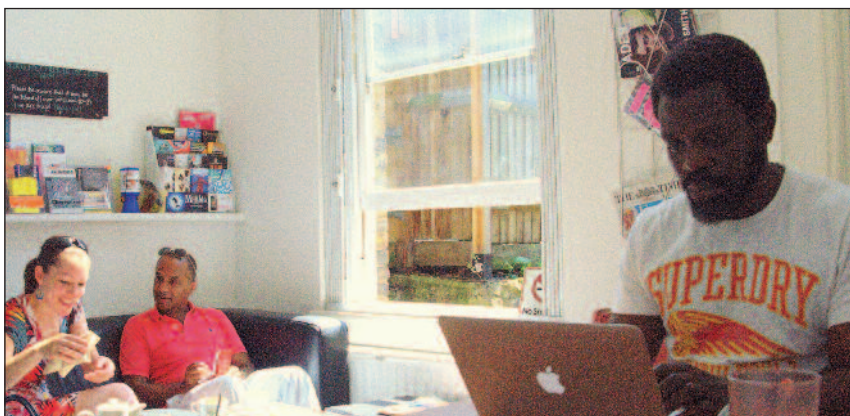
reading,” though he does encourage coffice workers to share tables. “And they like that,” he smiles.

Samantha, a painter, organises “supper clubs” based on the theme of the current exhibition – from tabouleh, biryani, and baklava for the Welcome to Iraq exhibition, to cocktails in edible glasses for the Sugar Glass Show. Hamish, a DJ, explains that it was the gallery and the “incredible” space that drew them from Shoreditch to Camberwell. And this is what gives No 67 such a special feel.

Open Tuesday 8am to 6.30pm, Wednesday to Friday 8am to 1pm, Saturday 10am to 11pm, Sunday 10am to 6.30pm.

Best for – meetings, brunch and art with your coffee.

Art is also featured in **House**, which encourages emerging artists to be experimental in its basement gallery shows. Half the exhibitors are



Above: House; Below: Jungle Cafe



students but others come from across the world – from Russia to New York.

House is a social enterprise set up seven years ago by the Well Community Church in Wells Way which provides about half the staff. The profits go to XLP, a local youth charity and a project helping women and children in Bangkok.

Inside, House is both cosy and calm. Rosa and Madeleine are busy behind the counter – but not too busy to offer a regular customer an extra cake on her birthday.

Customers include young professionals with laptops who stay an average couple of hours, art teachers from Camberwell for lunchtime takeaways and lots of parents and children at weekends. *Open Monday to Saturday 8.30am to 4.30pm.*

Best for – home-made cakes and French toast.

A busy breakfast and lunchtime trade means that **Café Noir** does

switch off the wifi between 12 and 2pm – although for the rest of the day coffee workers are welcome. Faïdel from Algeria opened this coffee shop a year before Costa Coffee opened on Denmark Hill. His prices are much cheaper and his seats as comfortable as the chain – so trade is holding up. With coffee from £1 and excellent croissants (though it is wise to get there early before they sell out on Saturdays) Café Noir offers a Mediterranean atmosphere – and chicken sausages and turkey rashers for those who want a pork-free fry up.

Open 7am to 8pm.

Best for – Pain au Chocolat and croissants.

In the next block, but more importantly on the C55 cycle superhighway, **Cycle PS** has a very different offer. Have a coffee, a beer or a £5 stone baked pizza while your bike is serviced. On Tuesday nights this café bar is often rammed full with some 40 or 50 cyclists meeting for the Fixed Gear Forum – for people who would rather use one gear than 29. Why? “Fixed gear is a challenge – you make a choice and stick to it,” says barista Tom, a student from LCC. On other nights cyclists play pool or buy spare parts. Obviously a concept whose time has come as Cycle PS has just opened on two other superhighways – the C57 in Kennington and C58 in Battersea. The bare brick walls, cycle parts and Nintendo give Cycle PS the feel of a games room or a den – an entertaining place to hang out.

Open Monday to Friday 8am to 11pm, Saturday 10am to 11pm,

Sun 11am to 5pm.

Best for – games, pool, bike parts.

The **Jungle Café** still thrives as a family business. Now run by 25-year-old Consu Yakut, whose Turkish parents bought the café 10 years ago, it continues the traditional formula – good value, home cooked food and a great garden. Despite increased competition, not just from coffee shops but other brunch places in Camberwell Church St, the Portugese across the road, Culture Café, Angels and Gypsies, the new Sun café in Havil Street, Ortus in Grove Lane and the Crooked Well (at weekends), it keeps its regular customers. Local drivers from the bus garage, retired people and students come for the café, not the coffee. So no need for wifi here.

Open 6am to 6pm.

Best for – fry ups and weekend brunch with your newspapers on a sunny day in the garden.

Marie Staunton

And just off Church Street...

Recently opened in Datchelor Place is the **Pigeonhole** café run by Holly and George. This is a wonderful addition to the café culture. With an eye to serving only products sourced as locally as possible, Holly and George have created a homely, comforting place to eat, drink (maybe a glass of wine), work or to just get together with friends.

The table outside offers a sunny window to the world passing by.

The furniture has all been up-cycled by Holly and George, creating a very special place to be – and don't forget to try their weekend bacon butties, easily the best in Camberwell.

Open Tuesday and Wednesday 8am to 5pm, Thursday and Friday 8am to 11pm, Saturday 9am to 11pm, Sunday 9am to 1pm.

Best for – cakes, home-made cordial and delicious sandwiches.

Berni

The good old days of Camberwell theatre

The smell of greasepaint, the lure of limelight and the big names on the theatre, variety and cinema bills once brought thousands of people to the theatre, variety palaces and cinemas of Camberwell. To the many thousands of pedestrians and motorists passing through the busy junction at Camberwell Green each day very few have any idea that this was once such an oasis of culture in what then was a rapidly developing suburban village at the junction of two of London's major roads. The names alone conjure up an era of opulence and escapism as The Metropole, The Oriental, The Golden Domes, The Bijou and Picture Empire graced this small crossroads of south London. During the last decade of the 19th century a number of theatres opened along Denmark Hill but all that remains to remind us of this is a small side street, Orpheus Street, named after the musician of ancient Greek legend.

In 1894 The Metropole Theatre opened and would bring culture to the residents of south London saving them the journey into the West End's theatre land. The man behind this venture was J B Mulholland. He began his career as an actor in Ireland, but his dream was to become a theatre owner and impresario. He achieved this in no small way with the theatre here in Camberwell and the Grand Theatre in Nottingham, as well as the later New Wimbledon Theatre. As ever the shrewd businessman, Mulholland chose his



The Co-op site where a theatre once stood

site for the Metropole Theatre well as there were no other theatres within a two-mile radius, giving him something of a captive audience.

However, competition quickly arrived on the scene, and in 1896 the Oriental Palace of Varieties opened its doors. This time the company was backed by probably the most famous popular entertainer of the age, Dan Leno. For whatever reason the theatre building was demolished and rebuilt just a few years later as the Camberwell Palace, with the foundation stone being laid by Vesta Tilley, the first time such an honour had been given to a variety actress and comedienne, on a site which now occupies Orpheus Street and the HSBC bank. Tilley was a star on both sides of the Atlantic and also graced the stage at the first Royal Variety Performance in 1912. She was the most noted male impersonator

of her age in a career which spanned over 50 years, beginning at the age of three-and-a-half and continuing until her retirement in 1920.

By 1905, with ever increasing demand for variety, the Metropole was in a decline as it was continuing to offer a programme of what could be considered "highbrow" entertainment and was sold that year to the theatre impresario Walter De Frece, who added the theatre to his music hall circuit of theatres in the south of England, and renamed the theatre The Empire. This was a move away from his usual pattern as most of his other venues were renamed Hippodromes when he acquired them.

Walter was the son of a theatrical agent and theatre manager from Liverpool whose father wanted to keep his sons as far away from the stage as he could, something which he failed to do as all four sons had careers in the theatre world. Walter was apprenticed with an architect in Liverpool but after a meeting with Tilley, the principal boy in the pantomime at his father's Gaiety Theatre in 1889, he promptly resigned and left home seeking employment as a theatrical agent. He pursued the actress and they married the following year at Brixton Register Office. After a successful career in the theatre Walter turned his attention to a career in politics and was elected as Conservative MP for Ashton-under-Lyme with his newly retired actress wife at his side. Vesta Tilley gave her last performance in 1920 and lived out the rest of her life as Lady de Frece following Walter's knighthood in 1919 for his contributions to the war effort.

With the advent of silent movies, films were incorporated into the variety bills and eventually their popularity led to the theatres and halls giving way to cinemas and the Metropole Palace became one of the early ABC cinemas in London and exclusively used for film showings until the outbreak of the Second World War when a variety programme was introduced again. Several revue shows ran here after the war but eventually the cinema closed and was demolished in 1956. Many people in

Below: The New Grand Hall cinema on Camberwell New Road that became Jono's Snooker Hall, recently demolished to make way for a new development



Including Sam in everyday life

Camberwell still recall the Odeon cinema on the corner of Coldharbour Lane and Denmark Hill on the site of the old Metropole and its conversion to a jeans warehouse called Dickie Dirts.

With the theatres, variety entertainment in local pubs such as the Father Red Cap and the Athenaeum, cinemas such as The Golden Domes, (later the Rex and then the Esoldo), and The Bijou on the corner of Oprehus Street, local residents looking for a night of entertainment would have been spoilt for choice in Camberwell.

Carol Walsh

Find out more about Southwark's rich historic and cultural past by joining the London Explorer Walks on the Southwark Adult Learning Service. Details of this course and others are available from Thomas Calton Centre on 020 7358 2100, www.southwark.gov.uk or pick up a prospectus from any Southwark library.

Where in Camberwell is this?



No prizes for getting it right, but do you know where this is? This is the first in our occasional series. Answer on page 19.

My son Sam will soon be five years old and has lived in Camberwell and Peckham his whole life. Sam is bright, loves books and is developing freckles in the summer sun. He also has cerebral palsy which severely affects his ability to sit, stand, eat, drink and walk.

Following his birth at King's during a winter of snow, Sam has been edging further away – from Maude Road, to Camberwell Grove, to Ivanhoe Road and then, last year, the big move to SE15 – so we have spent his life pushing him around Camberwell and learning how to navigate this bit of London with a disabled child.

We have been lucky to live so close to Sunshine House, on Camberwell Church Street. This beautiful building is exactly what a child like Sam needs: inspiring architecture, totally accessible for a buggy or wheelchair, stuffed full of dedicated therapists and useful doctors. I spent many hours enjoying the walk down Camberwell Grove and through the churchyard, then regretting the weight of a laden buggy as I huffed all the way back up to the top of the hill.

We were also fortunate in Sam's first year to stumble across Camberwell Grove Early Years Centre. Parents of disabled children frequently struggle to find adequate childcare for their complicated kids, but the manager of this nursery welcomed Sam with enthusiasm and I was able to return to work. Sam has been going there for almost four years now and his younger brother will start shortly. Collecting Sam when he is playing in the lovely, huge garden with children he's known for years is something to treasure.

In terms of activities for Sam, Camberwell is poorly served. Now Sam is four and uses a wheelchair, I

cannot think of any local playgrounds that have any equipment that Sam can enjoy. He loves books, but he can't get down the stairs to the children's section of Camberwell Library. So we often travel to the Horniman Museum which puts on wonderful story-telling sessions on Sundays. Sam is usually the child laughing loudest and longest at an elaborate tale of how the lion got his roar.

Transport is a mixed bag. The new ramp and lifts at Denmark Hill are a great development, and it is entirely our fault that we moved one month after they were completed. Our nearest station is now Peckham Rye which has a labyrinth of stairways which make it pretty much inaccessible for a wheelchair user.

As a result, it's usually most convenient for us to drive. Unfortunately, Southwark has a hardline policy on blue badge holders, meaning that – unlike in Lambeth – we can't park in resident permit bays. Given that Camberwell is increasingly dominated by controlled parking zones, this often means we circle the area looking for an elusive disabled bay.

We work hard to include Sam in as many aspects of local life as he can be, but it's complicated. It's easy for disabled children and their families to become isolated because they struggle to be included in "normal" activities. There is a real need for us all to fight for more inclusion for disabled people.

In the meantime, the world gets better by small acts of kindness and friendship. We appreciate and enjoy Sam having a place in the communities of Camberwell and Peckham, where mothers talk to him in the playground and shopkeepers return his smile.

Jess Moxham

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Catastrophe on Church Street – Part 2

This is the second part of Donald Mason's article on how Camberwell Church Street came to look as it does today.

The successful bidder for the tenancy of a lease was required to put up buildings meeting certain standards and to a certain value within a specified time. Building plans had to be submitted to the Committee for approval, which approval was not granted automatically. There is a mention, in relation to part of the work at Peckham, of the desirability of “buildings of a uniform and distinctive character”, suggesting that the Committee, certainly in the persons of its staff, was interested in the aesthetic qualities of what was to be put up.

In line with their having had the first leases to be agreed, the first buildings to be erected were Nos 3-23, forming the fine curved terrace that makes such a large contribution to the overall attractiveness of the area round the Green.

Messrs Pickersgill had them up by August 1883. And in the previous May they had got approval for “three houses and stabling on Plot 65 in rear of their shops in Church Street ...”, which I take to mean what is now Artichoke Mews. It seems that Camberwell's gain was Messrs Pickersgill's loss, since by 1885 they were bankrupt and had to forfeit leases on the south side that they had successfully bid for at auction. At the same time they forfeited the land behind Nos 3-23, so Artichoke Mews would have been built by their successor on the site.



Nos 35-41: Designs were accepted in April 1884 and were completed in the following June. They built “quick” in those days



Nos 43-47 were again the result of architectural co-operation

Nos 25-33, including the “Artichoke” public house, formed a single terrace – so either Mr Wetherby built the pub as well as the four adjoining houses, or one of the architects or builders politely followed the other. The pub has the date “1884”, which doesn't really point either way.

The next group, Nos 35-41, were

put up by a Mr James Kent, of 95 Milton Street. He first bid successfully for 35 and 37 at auction, then acquired the other two by private treaty, and buildings were finished by June 1884, the designs for the second two having been accepted in April. They built quick!

Nos 43-47 were again the result of architectural co-operation. No 47

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was first acquired by private treaty by a Mr H S E Davis of 4 Stratford Road, then Nos 43-45 similarly by a Mr Willis, of 217 Cromwell Road. No 47 was completed by April 1885. In the absence of a record it is reasonable to assume that the others were completed at around the same date.

We are really getting very handsome. Nos 51-53 went to a Mr John Mackie of 195 Camberwell Road at the auction. No 49 was acquired later by a Mr W H Cooper. The roundel on the top storey has his initials. Nos 51-53 were finished by October 1885.

A Mr Moule acquired Nos 55-57 some time after the auction (there is no record). In January 1884 he submitted plans, which the Committee rejected. This is the only case I have seen where there was such a rejection. He came back in March with revised plans, which were approved. Personally, I'd have rejected the revised plans too. The buildings were completed in October.

Unlike Nos 55-57, Nos 59-63 are at least inoffensive. But perhaps that is also the best that can be said for them. They were the last plots on the north side of Church Street to be disposed of and, fittingly, their history is obscure.

It was agreed in November 1884 to offer the three plots, and the one on the other side of the "Stirling Castle", to a Mr Henry Clarke of 33 Stamford Hill. Then, after various comings and goings, in October 1885 the Committee agreed to sell the plots on either side of the pub to an unnamed client of Mr Stimson, the auctioneer. The architectural detailing is just consistent with Nos 59 and 61 having been built together and No 63 separately. By this time the Metropolitan Board of Works was embroiled in financial scandal – perhaps everyone was losing interest in Camberwell.

The "Stirling Castle", No 65, gave no difficulty. Watneys did not mess around, and their plans were accepted in May 1882. I haven't found a record of the building's completion, perhaps some time in 1883.



Nos 49-53: A handsome terrace. Right: Nos 55-57: First plans were rejected. Perhaps the revised plans should not have been accepted

Finally on the north side, as regards Nos 67-75, the solicitor's report of the auction was clear that the plot for No 67 had gone to Canning and Mullins, 128 Newington Causeway, and the other four to a Mr William Stubbs, Phoenix Wharf, Lambeth. This leaves a puzzle in relation to the unnamed client of Mr Stimson who apparently bought No 67 later. Anyhow, Stubbs's plans for Nos 69-75 were approved in March 1884; and whoever had No 67 used the same architect, or at least followed much the same design.

The south side got going some time after the north side, but the work



was completed more quickly, if we don't count the wide plot left vacant at the east end of the road widening. The tenancy of this plot, including

Continued on next page



Nos 59-63: Unlike Nos 55-57, these are at least inoffensive. They were the last plots on the north side and their history is obscure.

Continued from previous page

the land behind that had been the grounds of the White House, went at the auction to a Mr Charles Bryant, a builder, of 32 Highbury New Park. Oddly, it seems that he did nothing with it, and there is no record in the Committee minutes of its having been forfeited. The plot seems to have been left unbuilt on until the police station was put there. For many years afterwards the land behind, with its entrance on Wren Road, was shared between the police and Thomas Tilling's coach factory.

The plots that became Nos 18-22 were acquired at auction by Messrs Pickersgill. On Pickersgill's bankruptcy they were taken over by a Mr C Kynoch, whose buildings were completed in September 1885.

The site of No 14 was acquired at the auction by a Mr T L Lassam of 276 Camberwell Road, but there is no further mention of him and his plot appears to have been taken over



Nos 67-75: The last of the north side. The south side got going some time after the north side but work was completed more quickly

by a builder called William Downs of Hampton Street, Walworth, who had got the adjoining plot at the auction. The plans were approved in May 1884 and buildings completed a year later. One can lament the intrusive 1930s addition to No 14.

The last portion of the terrace

Nos 2-12, one is scarcely aware of as being an architecturally uniform group. Facing north, in parts still darkened by, presumably, the smoke from decades of domestic coal fires, and adorned at street level by some of Camberwell's more unlovely fascias, it is easy to ignore. It was



apparently formed, in a way that is not very clear, from three plots got at the auction by the London and South-Western Bank combined with the adjoining plot acquired at the same time and apparently developed by a Frederick J Upton, a hatter of 68 London Road, Southwark. His, No 12, is a little wider than the others but at the very least he followed the Bank's architects, Messrs J and J S Edmeston, of Old Broad Street. The Bank's plans were approved in January 1884. Mr Upton's building was up in May 1885, and the new bank and adjoining terrace in the following month. Mr Upton did not open a hatting business in his building, and Nos 2-12 were first known as 1-6 Bank Buildings, which may suggest that the Bank took over from him at some stage. The contemporary illustration is from the *South London Press* of 14 March 1885, from a copy in the Minet Library. The



Above: Nos: 18-22
Right: Nos 14-16. One can lament the intrusive 1930s addition to No 14
Below: Nos 2-12, north facing and still darkened from decades of domestic coal fires



accompanying description makes mouth-watering reading.

So what do we have? To repeat, a very pleasant and stylistically homogeneous collection of buildings, basically neo-classical but with little oddments thrown in. Central City, Colorado, and Napier, New Zealand, have been carefully restored. The scale of Church Street is more modest in every respect. Nonetheless it deserves better, I think, than the lack of concern for its original architectural coherence, the dirty walls, the decorative decay and the plants growing from the gutters that characterise much of it today.

Photos: Donald Mason

There is a fully referenced version of this article at www.cdmason.org.uk/camberwell

Britain's first celebrity estate agent

Few estate agents inspire feelings of love and affection. Qualifications are not required and anyone old enough to drive you to a property and unlock the door, might find employment selling or letting your property. But once, there was an estate agent so famous and loved he was almost a national treasure, a bit like Stephen Fry or Quentin Crisp.

Roy Brooks was an estate agent who fast became famous for his hilariously honest property descriptions. Roy was as witty and refreshing as Fry and Crisp. His descriptions were never clichéd and often included wry observations (sometimes leaning towards offensive), about his clients, the owners of the properties. Not only did he get away with it, he was positively celebrated for it. His adverts in *The Sunday Times* and *Observer* were so widely read that the newspapers didn't charge him a penny for them. His way with words made him, arguably, Britain's first famous estate agent.

Roy Brooks first swung its doors open on King's Road, Chelsea in 1936. Colin Lowman and his colleague, Tony Halstead worked alongside Roy when he took the agency over from his father in the Kings Road in 1950. Colin was still working with Roy Brooks (apart from a couple of dalliances) more than 60 years later.

Colin has told us all many endearing stories about Roy. Roy was a cad, a bon viveur and a passionate socialist, known to drive shoes and clothes to Russia and hand them out to impoverished victims of the Cold War. He was also educated, carefree, a ladies' man and utterly charismatic. He also told us many stories about old times. They traded in days when people queued around the block waiting for the agency to open to make their offers. Colin remembers two different buyers wanting to buy the same house at the asking price. Instead of today's sealed bids and gazzumpings and over-biddings, Roy suggested the fairest way forward was to decide the home's new owner on the flip of a coin. All parties



Roy Brooks

agreed. That's exactly how that house was sold and such gentlemanly deals remained gentlemanly to the end.

We still get calls from the generation that remember Roy's adverts. Colin tells us that Roy would bound into the office and enthusiastically knock out descriptions after valuing homes. If the property lacked in any way whatsoever, Roy delighted in highlighting its worst aspects:

"FILTHY OLD HOUSE – Fashionable Chelsea – Preserved as of Architectural Interest – God Know's why. Providing you have enough patience and cash wld make: 3 bedrms. 27FT L-drawing room, 1 or 2 bathrms., kit. The horrible patch of weed, refuse infected earth behind wld make a lovely – Gdn – maybe. Lease, 51 years. G.R. ONLY £80. A gift at £8,550."

"ANITQUARIAN PROUDLY OFFERS his ghastly Peckham house. Almost innocent of plumbing, no bathrm, - bodily ablutions confined to a couple of sinks & the canal at the bottom of the garden. As the artists have already moved into Peckham it is

only a matter of time before they are followed by the fringe professions, Stage, Tely and Advertising – with the Chelsea type of monied intellectual snob breathing on their necks – then a dump like this will be worth well over £10,000. MOVE QUICKLY."

The owners of the properties weren't free from Roy's satirical candour. It seemed the more offensive he was, the more people wanted to do business with him.

"WE HAVE A RATHER REPULSIVE OLD MAN who, along with his child-wife, are looking for an elegant Town Res. Pref. BEGRAVIA, CHELSEA OR S.KEN. Price not important but must be realistic as he has, at least, his head screwed on the right way. Usual scale commission required."

Roy circled the west London celeb crowd and close friends included Alan Whicker and George Melly. Whicker recalls:

"I met Roy Brooks while doing a BBC radio programme about property. He was already a London character and instantly likeable."

Afterwards I spent many agreeable evenings in the surprisingly grotty garden – basement – flat in Gledhow Gardens, SW5 (suit shambolic family) where he and Barbara daily fed-and-watered a varied gathering of people-around-town; indeed one pre-Clean Air November night when the fog had come down I slept on his sitting room floor along with a Hollywood heart-throb and a bit-actor soon to be famous in Steptoe...while Barbara went into her mother hen routine."

Transparency was at the root of his success but his delivery was filled with hyperbole and humour. His wickedly honest property descriptions brought humour and fun to an industry that desperately needed them. Transparency remains our touchstone, and what would a day in our business be like if we didn't have a sense of humour and fun?

Felicity Blair

Making angels

Visit artist Imma Maddox and you could be coaxed into making an angel. Everyone, from the local Polish builder to *Camberwell Quarterly*, has found themselves painting an angel shape on wood and picking it out in gold foil.

In Camberwell Imma is best known for the ikons on display at St Giles Church and the George Canning. Her tapestries have been exhibited widely from Winchester Cathedral to Hay on Wye Castle. She is one of a growing movement of “outsider artists”, one of the first exhibitors in the Bethlem Gallery, which shows work from artists who have been patients in the Maudsley and south London, following in the tradition of Richard Dadd and Louis Wain.

Imma did not follow the typical artist’s career path. Daughter of the influential editor of *Nature*, Sir John Maddox, her life changed when she was five. Her mother Nancy killed herself. Imma was sent to the Tavistock Clinic for counselling. When the therapist interpreted her picture of a bird, a tree and a nest as Imma pushing her mother out of the nest, little Imma decided to draw throughout the session rather than listen to this “crazy lady”.

From St Paul’s Girls School Imma went to Oxford to study PPE. It was there that she had her first breakdown, the beginning of a pattern of illness every two or three years.

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and brokenness
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*Extract from Imma A weaver
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Imma Maddox

Eventually, with the help of a government scheme which paid tuition fees for disabled people, she studied weaving and calligraphy at Digby Stuart College (now the University of Roehampton).

Imma came to Camberwell in 1983, resettled from the Maudsley to a local flat. Her “almshouse” is now filled with books, pictures and work in progress. By this time she was making dramatic tapestries – on themes such as Beowulf and the mediaeval Queen Emma, wife of Ethelred the Unready. Her pieces were exhibited in Winchester and Southwell Minster. But like so many other weavers the repetitive work gave her arthritis and she had to sell the loom. With the proceeds she bought a piano – and learnt to make ikons. She was introduced to the art at Turvey Abbey one of the convents and retreat houses that fostered Imma’s deep religious sensitivity.

The method of making ikons is ancient and the effect very particular. Imma explains: “Ikons in the way we know them come from Roman times. The methods of preparing a wood panel with rabbit skin glue and painting with egg tempera (egg yolk and pure powder) is their distinctive

mark. The egg gives colours a warm soft glow.” Local Camberwell artist Slavomir Blatton taught her this method.

Imma’s experience of homelessness, of sometimes crass treatment by therapists would make many bitter. Instead she carefully marks all those who have helped, the nun who gave her shelter in a convent in Oxford, the community nurse who helped her settle into Camberwell, this week Whitten Timber who gave her a rubble bag full of wood offcuts for under a fiver. She looks ahead with optimism: “I am nearing 60 and by then I hope to be out of treatment for good. And to have found a patron.” She has one of the quickest minds you will ever come across and with her achievements in poetry and art could be formidable; but instead she is encouraging, a teacher sharing her gifts, having fun, filling Camberwell with golden angels. And the fact that *CQ*’s “angels” looked more like teapots was just part of that fun.

Marie Staunton

See Imma’s ikons in the George Canning: her ikon of St Michael is on the organ case of St Giles Camberwell. http://www.bethlem-gallery.com/Bethlem_Gallery/Artists.html



“You look at an ikon and it looks back at you”

A neighbourhood saved from dereliction

It was sometime in the 1990s that the houses on Windsor Walk slid from neglect to dereliction. For a decade commuters to Denmark Hill station passed corrugated iron barriers surrounding abandoned houses with buddleia sprouting from their roofs. Then Kumar Jacob took over as Chair of the owner, Maudsley Charity, and led the renovation of this corner of Camberwell. Now they are an ornament to the neighbourhood.

The Windsor Walk development and the new Ortus building on Grove Lane are part of a bigger vision to break down barriers between the mental health work of the Maudsley and the local community. Even more significant to Kumar than the dozen prizes Ortus has received, and the A+ environmental credentials of the new Windsor Walk buildings is the mix of patients and local community who use the Ortus café – from office workers to mums and toddlers. He explains: “It’s about creating a calm unintimidating space, opening up the Maudsley campus, breaking down the fear around mental health.”

There was no vision for Windsor Walk when South London and Maudsley Trust gave up their lease to the buildings in 1995. They reverted to the Maudsley Charity which derives its £100m fund from



A spectacular view of London from the top of the Ortus building

investments made since 1247 when the Bethlem Royal Hospital, the world’s oldest psychiatric institution, was founded.

After an environmentally friendly renovation in 2013 four buildings were leased to the Institute of Psychiatry. Another was sold to the Fetal Medicine Foundation led by Professor Nicolaides of King’s whose three-storey Centre of Excellence with two-storey basement is set behind the Windsor Walk façade. It will treat some 10k patients per year from next summer. Numbers 6 to 9

are leased to the MacDonald charity for short-term accommodation for parents with children in the hospital. These 24 rooms and play garden enable young patients from across the South East undergoing specialist cancer and liver treatment to have the support of their families.

So what of Numbers 10 and 11? Great care has been taken with their appearance. The tiles on the front path have been replaced by the same Yorkshire firm that manufactured the Victorian originals, heating is by solar panels on the roof and they



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Roy Brooks



Kumar Jacob

have been fitted out as high class family homes. The decision facing the Foundation is whether to sell now or keep them as an asset for the future.

Immediate funds are always needed. Last year the Trust gave over £4.5 million in grants for service innovations, patient well-being and research. Large projects like the Maurice Wohl Clinical neuroscience Institute which brings together doctors and scientists to fast-track new treatments to patients affected by disorders such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, motor neurone disease, epilepsy and stroke, traditional causes such as the Bethlem Art Gallery displaying the work of patients and local services like the Lambeth helpline all need funding.

But that will be a decision for a new Chair as Kumar's term of office is now over. Meanwhile Kumar, a computer games designer turned social entrepreneur, is using some rooms to develop apps for mental health. The Charity's bright offices at No10, with interns on bean bags creating on Macs and cloud like brainstorm on the walls feel more like an internet start up than an 800 year-old institution. Kumar's remarkable energy has driven change – to the look of Windsor Walk, to Camberwell's perception of the Maudsley and perhaps soon to seeing a smartphone as a mental health tool.

Marie Staunton

Read any good books lately?

I was inveigled into attending the Camberwell Library Reading Group – something I would not normally ever consider, being one of those low-brows who read, mainly novels, purely for pleasure, never analysis.

The book chosen for us to read was *Theodora: Actress, Empress, Whore*. The book's namesake, Theodora, lived in Constantinople around the sixth century. This didn't sound particularly appealing to me – I am not a lover of faction. But the latter three words in the title sounded promising.

I was introduced by Wendy, the librarian who runs the group. On hearing I was to write about them in the *Quarterly*, someone said, "Oh dear! That means we will have to behave!" I urged them not to.

The group turned out to be a diverse group of 10 women (men do belong, but didn't come this evening) who were serious readers and thinkers and who enjoyed a laugh.

I quickly realised I was in for an entertaining hour or so.

First under discussion was life for women in the sixth century. For instance, the law had to be changed before Theodora, an actress, was allowed to marry Justinian, who was to become emperor. In those ancient times, it seemed quite usual for women to become actresses and prostitutes to support themselves and their families. This led to a discussion on slavery and then to the chores that women without husbands were expected to perform for their masters. "What's the difference between that and a husband?" quipped one woman, amid laughter and dissension.

Also analysed were characters and events featured in the book and, women being women, conversation butterflyed into related topics. For example, Theodora's loud behaviour led to discussion of children and attention-seeking.

Stella Duffy's book was likened to *Mills & Boon*, a rags to riches story. This was debated and in support of Duffy, a particularly moving and beautiful description of Theodora visiting the cathedral, was

read out. Not *Mills & Boon* at all.

This turned into a discussion of Stella Duffy's other work, with favourable comments on *The Room of Lost Things* which features the No 345 bus route – it's always fun to read about your home ground.

Not everyone liked *Theodora* and their reasons were discussed.

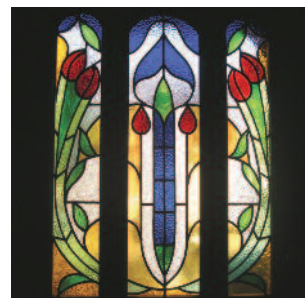
One group member couldn't quite get to grips with sixth century dialogue being written in 21st century style. This also applied to Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall* and *Bring up the Bodies*.

This jarring shouldn't apply to the group's next book, which is Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, written in the 1960s about a true 1959 murder. I look forward to reading it. As you will gather, I have been converted!

MP-B

If you would like to join the reading group, which meets once a month, please contact Wendy Williams on 020 7525 6327 (email: wendy.williams@southwark.gov.uk) or see the Council's website www.southwark.gov.uk

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Ideas anyone?

Consultation was the order of the day at a packed meeting of the Camberwell Community Council – around ideas to spend money collected from developers, around youth, culture, housing, regeneration and traffic. This was the first C³ meeting since the election. New councillors were ranged alongside the old members, quickly adopting their bad old habit of texting during presentations. The tone was to have an open ear for new ideas for the future, backed up by news of good outcomes from past actions.

One specific area for ideas is around using the new Community Infrastructure Levy – which replaces the old Section 106 grant, and is based on contributions from developers to community schemes as part of redevelopment programmes. The £2.5m secured from the rehabilitation of the old Town Hall is to refurbish Theatre Peckham (which provided an enthusiastically delivered and received singing performance). The meeting was asked to think up and send in ideas for spending future money, which according to the government website, can be used for “funding infrastructure that the council, local community and neighbourhoods want, like new or safer road schemes, park improvements or a new health centre”.

Many projects were motoring in Camberwell, the meeting was told, including the new Library which is programmed to open in spring 2015. It will have a large flexible meeting room, excellent ITC, more study areas than the old building, activities and events, and spaces to meet council officers such as housing staff.



Crime in Camberwell is down, except for the Green

Work on the Green is due in spring 2016, once plans are finalised including the location of the toilet. And although the discussions about addressing the location of bus stops in Camberwell has not yet concluded, it is likely to lead to a dispersal of the current concentration of stops outside McDonald's. The Summer Play programmes will be running again in several parts of Camberwell, including an extended scheme in Sceaux Gardens. The CAB representative said that another round of the “Big London Energy Switch” (where London Boroughs negotiate directly with energy firms to get better deals) will be held in October – so people were invited to register to benefit from the prices offered then. Things will also be motoring, but less quickly and dangerously, once the new 20mph borough-wide speed limit is imposed throughout Southwark, a limit which it was stressed would apply to cyclists as well. And a representation about the “rat run” of traffic on Camberwell Grove was well presented and well received.

The “workshops” were an opportunity to provide ideas and engage with the new (and old) councillors. Lots of ideas were suggested and discussed, without resolution as none was intended to be achieved. But if anyone wants to

send further comments on youth, culture, housing, regeneration and traffic then no doubt the councillors would be happy to receive them. Overall most people made useful contributions. Others were concerned only about traffic in front of their own door, and left after they loudly raised their issue in the workshops – seemingly without wanting to make any contribution to the wider needs and issues of the area.

More positive news was provided by the police, who noted an overall 6.2% reduction in crime in Southwark, as well as an increase of 10 percentage points in the levels of satisfaction with the police to 78%. Camberwell saw a 4.2% total reduction, Brunswick Park, down 10% (although burglary was up, possibly due to increased opportunity crimes with many open windows due to the hot weather). The Inspector noted that the simple mechanism of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme could bring improvements in many aspects of crime, including this. The exception was Camberwell Green where the overall reduction of crime registered up to April had now stalled, although the specific incidences of burglary and robbery were down by 19% and 20% respectively. Another anomaly was a huge rise in the theft of mopeds recently, which remained unexplained.

So for those many people who gave up a glorious sunny evening to attend the meeting, a set of positive reports and forward looking invitations to participate. Overall a good start for the new councillor team.

J A Provan

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What is planned for Greendale?

Greendale, the five acres of open space between Sainsbury's and the cycle path, is set to become an important community issue in upper Camberwell. Hadley Property, which bought the Dulwich Hamlet stadium earlier this year for £5.7 million, wants to build six-storey blocks of flats on the football pitch. To do so, it proposes to move the football ground on to Greendale.

The council is proposing to spend £1 million on turning Greendale into a park. Some bodies want to see full details of what is proposed before reaching an opinion. Others are firmly for or against.

There will be a full report in our next issue.

A new look at last!

The scaffolding has now been removed from the redevelopment of 4A, 6 and 6A Grove Lane, derelict since 1977 and the subject of a well publicised campaign by Nicholas Roskill since 1988. The new building will greatly improve the north end of Grove Lane, particularly if the former Johanssons delicatessen next door, on a good site though now empty, is soon relet.

Facing Camberwell's challenges

SE5 Forum's 9th AGM was held in July at the Remakery in Lilford Road, a new co-operative workshop making things from materials destined for landfill.

Speakers included Priya Prakash, moderator of Camberwell Business Network (CBN), the business arm of SE5 Forum, who focused on cultural events as well as the £10,000 Post Office Community Enterprise Fund to develop the Camberwell Post Office as a community hub and arts centre, and Salome Simoes, a Tulse Hill resident, who presented her "Neighbours Like Us" project designed to encourage people to approach their neighbours on an informal basis with the long-term view of building a friendly community with a voice.

The keynote speaker was Councillor Mark Williams, Council Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Transport. He spoke of Camberwell's long history and its welcoming of people from around the world. He said the challenges currently facing Camberwell included unemployment, especially for young men (higher than the London average), and the private rental sector pricing people out of the area. There is, he said, a need to build more housing, and to keep encouraging businesses

to come to Camberwell.

Councillor Williams undertook to look into the threat of eviction of the artists from Vanguard Court and said he would talk to the relevant people. On empty business properties being made into residential homes, he said that designations must be kept very clear in the planning process. He also agreed to look into the dearth of wifi in the town centre.

There was a lively discussion about the make-up and workings of CBN and the consensus was that the Forum should develop a Business Improvement District (BID). The Community Council has stated that it would work with businesses and the Forum to this end.

*Barbara Pattinson
Chair, SE5 Forum*

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The Society comments on recent planning applications

Owing to the limited space available in the *Quarterly*, we can only print a selection of the applications on which the Society has commented. You can also see our comments on the Society's website at www.camberwellsociety.org.uk

198 Camberwell Grove SE5

Reconfiguration of existing residential property from four two-bedroom flats and one one-bedroom flat to provide two studio flats, two one-bedroom flats, and three two-bedroom flats. Associated external refurbishments and replacement of existing windows with "like-for-like" sash windows.

The description seems incorrect as the proposed front windows replacing small pane Crittall windows with timber sashes is hardly "like for like". The proposal description in this revised submission seems to more accurately reflect the reconfiguration. Two rear basement flats are 51 square metres and two at the front are only 39 square metres but now are referred to as studio flats, meeting the 36 square metres minimum required space standard. The rear basement flat with north facing living room in the back lightwell a whole storey below ground level has not changed from the previous application and would be dismal. While sympathetic to the wish to reconfigure and renovate the property, the new proposal with parapet removed and reformatted window panes as timber sashes do little to do make the building fit in better. The Georgian style compromise loses the design character of the present facade in making a pale imitation of something Georgian.

Replacement metal framed double glazed Crittall or similar windows would be a better solution, preferably with the parapet retained. We object to this application.

9 Champion Grove, SE5

Demolition of existing and construction of a new single storey rear extension. Reconstruction of garage as habitable accommodation

and new opening between front and rear rooms at first floor level.

Demolition of existing and construction of a new single storey rear extension. Reconstruction of garage as habitable accommodation and new opening between front and rear rooms at first floor level.

The Society has longstanding knowledge of the property, it once being the home of Norman Hutchinson, a key member and fountain of local knowledge for many years.

The proposals are well thought through to rationalise the existing poorly constructed single storey rear extension and an Amdega later conservatory with a simple modern interpretation of an orangery stepped down to set away the height on the boundaries each side. As such the design does not compete with the original cottage as clear modern addition. The internal arrangements are a rationale rearrangement to suit the owner applicant's needs.

These new applications are an improvement on the 2013 applications which we made comments on. No objection.

D'Eynsford Estate SE5

Replacement of metal windows and doors to uPVC

The Camberwell Society objects to the replacement of the windows and doors at the D'Eynsford Estate with uPVC. The windows are Swedish hardwood, timber framed windows and not metal as stated in the application.

The stained timber windows are part of the character of the development, matching the timber lined eaves. The windows are probably a structural element in the wall helping to support the corners of the building. Repair and retention/upgrade (which would be feasible) would be a much more sensible solution and maintain the integrity of a much loved and cared for estate. This would be a sustainable solution.

One of the reasons that the fire at Lackanal House escalated the way it did was that the plastic coating on the windows melted and spread the fire downwards into flats on lower floors.

uPVC windows cannot be repaired and have to be replaced every 20 years, making their installation a false economy.

30 Flaxman Road London SE5

Demolition of existing rear elevation and erection of a full width two storey (the lower and upper ground floors) rear extension.

The extension is between two similar depth and height rear extensions to the properties each side and gives improved living accommodation to this terraced single family dwelling house.

The houses each have a staircase from upper ground floor to garden so the overlooking of adjoining gardens is common to these but is an extended landing/balcony on the proposal which might be considered more intrusive. The proposed fenestration and alignment of glazing bars as drawn seem random but hopefully the reality will be more coordinated. On balance no objection.

54 Grove Park SE5

Single storey in-fill extension to existing garage and first floor extension above to form additional self-contained residential accommodation.

The application is phrased as if it were for a new dwelling, independent of the main house, although the accommodation to be provided does not substantiate this. Assuming that what is proposed is intended as ancillary accommodation, the Camberwell Society does not object to an extension in principle, although objects strongly to the proposed design, which contrives to be both diminutive and intrusive.

Its mansard roof, although lower than the main house roof, obscures part of the terracotta decorations on the main house flank wall and its six dormer windows and external spiral stair compete unnecessarily with the elaborately ornamented style of the main house. A plainer two storey building set away from the main house, with an internal staircase, connected to the rest of the house by a single storey link would be a more acceptable proposition.

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OTHER CONTACTS

LOCAL HISTORY:

email:
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