

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

Chairman: Miss Nadine Beddington
Hon Treasurer: Brian Allsworth, 165 Grove Lane, S E 5 (274 0367)
Hon Secretary: Ronald Watts, 19 Addington Square, S E 5
(temporary telephone 723 7030 ext 2028)

NEWSLETTER No 1

July 1970

Newsletter

The Society has in the past lacked a means of keeping its members informed, so now that its scope and name are changed it is intended to issue a newsletter at least once every three months, perhaps more often. Several helpers are required for addressing and distribution: would anyone willing to do these please get in touch with Stephen Marks (703 2719, but not between 1st and 16th of August).

Annual General Meeting April 16th 1970

At the Annual General Meeting held on April 16th 1970 the Camberwell Grove and District Residents' Association (founded in 1966 as the Camberwell Grove and Grove Lane Residents' Association) decided to enlarge its geographical scope and to change its name to The Camberwell Society. At the same time two sub-committees were set up to deal with trees and with planning matters.

The meeting instructed the officers and committee to call a special meeting of the Society in about three months time and to present a draft constitution and a boundary for the Society's area of interest for consideration.

Of the retiring officers Dr Hugh-Jones, Chairman, and Reg Austin, Hon Secretary, did not wish to stand for re-election, but as there were no nominations for successors they agreed to be and were re-elected to serve till the special meeting; Brian Allsworth was re-elected as Hon Treasurer and the following were elected as the committee of the Society:

James Elliott, 26 Grove Lane (703 4104)
Michael Ivan, 24 Grove Lane (703 4564)
Stephen Marks, 50 Grove Lane (703 2719)
Cliff Potter, 51 Grove Park (733 3792)
Denys Short, 43 Camberwell Grove (703 5974)
Shirley Tanner, 107 Camberwell Grove (703 8624)
Stan Tracey, 158a Camberwell Grove (274 7967)

After retiring as officers at the special meeting the following continue to serve on the committee:

Reg Austin, 182 Camberwell Grove (274 7576)
Philip Hugh-Jones, 167 Camberwell Grove (274 9351)

Special General Meeting July 9th 1970

At the Special General Meeting on July 9th 1970 Miss Nadine Beddington was elected as Chairman and Ronald Watts as Hon Secretary.

A draft constitution in the form suggested by the Civic Trust was read out to the meeting and was accepted with minor modification and with the reservation that it should be reviewed for the next Annual General Meeting in the light of experience and further comments from members. It was explained that the apparent complexity of the constitution was to a great extent made necessary by the need to cover circumstances which might seem unlikely at present but which could arise and also by the legal requirements involved in applying for charitable status; it was also pointed out that the Civic Trust, to which the Society is affiliated, had drawn on its considerable experience in forming its model constitution, and that societies which adopted it were then in a better position to expect to be consulted by their local Councils under

recent legislation. Copies of the Society's constitution are available on request from the Hon Secretary.

The area of interest of the Society

The special meeting approved the area enclosed by the following boundary: on the south, Champion Hill, Cut-throat Alley and the branch railway; on the east, Talfourd Road, Southampton Way and Wells Way, including St George's Church; on the north Albany Road; on the west, Camberwell Road, Denmark Hill and Champion Hill.

Where matters outside this area affect it they will of course be considered.

The objects of the Society

Under the constitution which was approved the objects of the Society are:

- (a) to stimulate public interest in the Society's area,
- (b) to promote high standards of planning and architecture in the area, and
- (c) to secure the preservation protection development and improvement of features of historic or public interest in the area.

Planning Sub-committee:

The Annual General Meeting approved the formation of a sub-committee to deal with traffic, motorway and pedestrian problems; in order to co-ordinate the Society's planning activities this sub-committee now deals with planning matters generally. Stephen Marks (50 Grove Lane, S E 5, telephone 703 2719) acts as convener of the sub-committee which has the following members:

Graeme Aylward, Judy Bratt, Jeremy Bennett, J C J Brook,
Brian Bunting, Tim Capon, Alan Cave, George Finch, John Kirby,
Kate Macintosh, Pauline Neville-Jones, Cliff Potter,
Shirley Tanner, Roger Thompson, Joan Willoughby.

So far its principle activities have been the survey and preparation of material in connection with the motorway threat and the inquiry into the Greater London Development Plan and making observations to the Council on planning applications in its area, but the sub-committee hopes to be able to discuss future plans for redevelopment within the area and to co-operate with the Council on surveys and improvements.

Conservation Areas

There are two conservation areas within the Society's area, the Camberwell Grove Conservation and the Addington Square Conservation Area; of these the latter is still being considered by the Council.

The Council has set up a Conservation Areas Advisory Committee with members representing various national and local bodies. The Camberwell Society is represented on this committee by Stephen Marks. It has met once so far on June 1st and is expected to meet at least once every three months.

Jumble Sale

There will be a jumble sale at 3 p m on July 25th at the Church Hall, All Saints, Blenheim Grove; the proceeds will be given to the London Motorway Action Group which is representing the Society at the Public Inquiry and is presenting the case against the motorways including Ringway 1 which would come straight across Camberwell.

If you have any jumble please take it to 26 Grove Lane or to 92 Talfourd Road. If you can help please ring 703 4104 or 703 6572.

The Camberwell Society is your local amenity society.

If you are not already a member please support it by joining.

Subscription 10/- a year to the Hon Treasurer

Brian Allsworth, 165 Grove Lane, S E 5 (274 0367)

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

Chairman: Miss Nadine Beddington, 17 Champion Grove, S E 5
Hon Treasurer: Brian Allsworth, 165 Grove Lane, S E 5 (274 0367)
Hon Secretary: Ronald Watts, 19 Addington Square, S E 5
(office 723 7030 ext 2028, home 703 7026)

NEWSLETTER No 2 ADDINGTON SQUARE SPECIAL ISSUE

OCTOBER 1970

Addington Square and Addington Place

The traveller who comes south from the Elephant towards Camberwell must be aware of a sudden transition from the winding main street of Walworth to the broad thoroughfare of Camberwell Road. Walworth was one of the many small villages which clustered round London; its traditional high street stops abruptly at Boundary Lane. The road south to Camberwell, which had run through open fields, succumbed to characteristic ribbon development at the end of the eighteenth century with the building of many terraces of elegant Georgian houses.

There were Clarence Place and Prospect Place (now no longer) on the east side south of New Church Street, Grosvenor Place now facing the western end of the public garden and surviving after a fashion, and others, but the best of all now are the terraces which were called Addington Place. These are the houses to the north and south of the approach to Addington Square (nos 117-129 and 131-155 Camberwell Road respectively); one of the houses still retains an incised stone with the name Addington Place and it may be that their completion coincided with the premiership of Henry Addington (1801-4). They were certainly begun earlier as they are shown on a map of 1797. Part of the southern row now accommodates Cambridge House, and much of the northern terrace, it is heartening to see, has recently been carefully restored.

If the same traveller now turns off Camberwell Road between the two terraces of Addington Place, he approaches the Square through its principal entry on the western side. It is no mere chance that a square grew up at the end of this turning: for, although the first houses in the Square were not built till some years later there is a deliberate and formal break between the two terraces to accommodate the approach to the Square and some such scheme must surely have been intended; this is clear from the treatment of the two houses which flank the approach road as terminal features to their respective terraces. The buildings which lie on either side of the traveller before he reaches the Square are of no distinction but his attention is held by the central garden and the mature trees and he will see opposite him another terrace with a central feature.

But now let him walk right into the Square and turn round: he will see on either side of the way from Camberwell Road the earliest houses in the Square, on the right the Talbot Settlement (c 1810) and the left another pair (c 1815).

The central pair of houses which he saw on the east side as he approached the Square were built next (c 1822) following the pattern of the terrace houses and fully exploiting the axis between the first pairs of houses. He might not be aware that these three pairs of houses, different as they seem in character, are closely related, but a little study of details such as railings cill and impost bands, might convince him that they are derived from a common source of design.

The traveller will see too that the later buildings on the west side (nos 9 & 10, c 1840; nos 11 & 12, before 1855) maintained the semi-detached rhythm already established, while the east side was completed (c 1845) as a terrace composition with a central feature nicely balancing the void on the west side. He might be forgiven for not realising that the three right hand houses of the east side were built at the same time as the five on the left: the

builder who put up nos 33-35 clearly tried to match the appearance of fifty years earlier but some of his details betray him (look at the solid parapet up the front steps, for instance).

When the traveller turns south in the Square he sees again two kinds of houses but on a smaller scale; here are two rows of equal length, two-storey cottages (c 1822), now shorn of many of their features, and three-storey houses (1825-6). They are subordinate to and related to their neighbours on the west and east sides respectively, perhaps reflecting the lower scale of the single-storey baths building which used to occupy the north side of the Square. What he now sees on the north is a part of the North Camberwell Open Space which threatens to destroy the whole of Addington Square.

Our traveller has seen a considerable variety in these groups of houses, but, now observant, he will recognise that they all display, some in an unusual way, characteristic late Georgian and early Victorian forms and he will be aware that they hang together with a distinct and compelling coherence that makes Addington Square and Addington Place one of the most attractive urban spaces he has seen in Southwark.

Must Addington Square be demolished?

The Society is very concerned about the future of the Square: at present it is proposed that the Square should be demolished and the land thrown into the North Camberwell Open Space. The Society feels very strongly, like many others, that it would be utterly wrong to allow this to happen. Even if there were no historic buildings issue the Society would consider that there is a higher priority in present housing over the future extension of the Open Space and that this priority justifies the retention of the houses in Addington Square; but South London and especially Southwark has already lost so much of its architectural heritage that it cannot afford to lose such an important piece of its townscape as the Square.

The Borough Council has proposed a Conservation Area comprising Addington Square and Addington Place but considers itself impotent to take the matter further since the creation of the Open Space which would destroy Addington Square is a Greater London Council responsibility.

The Society believes that the two aims of housing improvement and the preservation of historic buildings are entirely compatible here and can be achieved by designating the area as a Conservation Area under the Civic Amenities Act 1967. This must be done at the earliest moment in order to reverse the present trend of deterioration, to give confidence in the future of the Square, and to encourage present and potential owners to take positive steps to improve the houses. The Council itself can forward these aims in many ways and also has powers under the Housing Act 1969 to designate the area as a General Improvement Area.

The Camberwell Society therefore considers that the Borough Council should themselves designate the area as a Conservation Area or vigorously press the Greater London Council to do so at the earliest opportunity, and should also consider its designation as a General Improvement Area.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

As a meeting of the Arts and Recreation Committee of the Greater London Council which will be crucial to the future of the Square is imminent, GO and LOOK NOW and then WRITE IMMEDIATELY to the Countess of Dartmouth, Chairman of the Historic Buildings Board, and to Councillor Harold Sebag-Montefiore, Chairman of the Arts and Recreation Committee, both of the Greater London Council, at The County Hall, London S E 1, expressing your appreciation of the Square, your desire to preserve it as a part of our architectural heritage, and your concern at the proposed demolition of good houses.

ign than whole so Core Work

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

Chairman: Miss Nadine Beddington, 17 Champion Grove, S E 5
Hon Treasurer: Brian Allsworth, 165 Grove Lane, S E 5 (274 0367)
Hon Secretary: Ronald Watts, 19 Addington Square, S E 5
(office 723 7030 ext 2028, home 703 7026)

NEWSLETTER No 3

December 1970

The Society meets the Council's planning officers

On October 1st Mr Ian Lacey, Deputy Borough Planner, Mr Michael Brown, Consultant Landscape Architect, two members of Mr Lacey's staff, Mr Norman Vickery and Mr Frederick Stafford, and Mr Bill Clarke of the Property Division were welcomed to a joint meeting of the Society's Executive Committee and Planning Sub-committee at 101 Camberwell Grove. We were pleased that Councillor Andrews was also able to be present.

The meeting was arranged to give an opportunity to open the discussions on a number of the more important matters concerning our area; many of them of course merit more detailed consideration and it is intended in due course to arrange open meetings of the Society on some of them. The meeting was most successful and a very satisfactory first discussion between the Society and the Council.

The following were the most important subjects of the discussion:

Lettsom Development Area

Mr Lacey had sent the Society a planning brief summary prepared by his staff for comment. When a scheme has been prepared the Society will again have an opportunity to make comments. A separate item in this Newsletter is devoted to the development.

Camberwell Green and Camberwell Church Street

Camberwell Green is on the junction of two major traffic routes and presents one of the most difficult traffic problems in the whole of Southwark; it is also a traditional village centre. The Council hopes to put on an exhibition in the Spring of 1971 to present the problems and the options for development. That will be the time for our discussions.

Conservation areas

Of the twelve conservation areas proposed by the Council all but two are now designated. The two exceptions are the Addington Square and the Glen-gall Road/Trafalgar Avenue areas; the first of these is entirely within the area zoned for the North Camberwell Open Space, the second is partly within it and partly zoned for industrial use.

Mr Lacey pointed out that the GLC is responsible for the creation of the open space which is regarded as an aim of the greatest importance, and therefore the Borough could really do little more than suggest these areas to the GLC; he said it was difficult to find alternative areas for the open space. A meeting of the GLC's Arts and Recreation Committee was due to be held in November which would be crucial to the future existence of the two areas.

Mr Lacey agreed to look carefully at the submission which the Society will soon make for a small extension of the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area to include Champion Grove.

Trees

Mr Michael Brown described in detail a system of tree survey and it was agreed that Reg Austin would co-ordinate the Society's work in conjunction with him. Mr Lacey felt that this was probably the most useful help that

that the Society could give to the Council.

Tube to Camberwell.

Mr Lacey said that the Council was having serious and fruitful discussions with London Transport on the extension of the Bakerloo Line from the Elephant and Castle to Camberwell and Peckham; it now comes fourth in priority after the Brixton extension of the Victoria Line, the London Airport line, and the Fleet Line.

Lettsom Development Area - Redevelopment by the Council

The Council is going to redevelop an area extending from Vestry Road on the east to Camberwell Grove on the west, bounded by the railway on the south and including the houses on the north side of Lettsom Street and Linnell Road. For many years the area has been allowed to degenerate so that increasingly a number of people has been left surrounded by derelict properties and vacant sites. It is expected that they will be moved out and the site cleared by August 1971 and that work will start on the redevelopment in December of the same year, although this will depend on the progress in rehousing.

The Society had been sent a summary of the planning brief and this was discussed at the meeting on October 1st reported above. The following are the main points from the summary with some extra comments arising from the meeting.

Proposed accommodation

The development will exploit the site to the maximum within the permitted zone density of 136 persons per acre; instead of the former 375 dwellings there will be 446 of which twenty already exist in three post-war blocks of flats, two in Lettsom Street and one in Vestry Road. Just over half the dwellings will be for two or three people and there will be sixteen for very large families. The Society's Committees felt that it was undesirable to increase the density, but the Council is satisfied that the site is capable of development at the zone density and that there is no good reason for proposing a lower density.

Some shopping space and a community centre will be provided near Vestry Road. There will be a home for fifteen children in care. Parking space will be provided at the rate of one for every two dwellings with the possibility of increasing this in the future.

Design criteria

The area adjoins the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area at its western end and due regard is paid to this in the brief. The development "should maintain a residential facade to Camberwell Grove and the new dwellings should be in keeping with the height, scale, and building line of the existing buildings. Throughout the development area a medium rise solution is preferred, but if higher blocks are unavoidable they should not impinge on the skyline of Camberwell Grove". 'Medium rise' means two to six storeys high.

Traffic and pedestrians

Lyndhurst Grove will be extended westwards to link Vestry Road to Camberwell Grove; it and Vestry Road improved will serve as local distributor roads with limited access. Two east-west pedestrian routes will be provided linking up with existing footpaths and there will be a new way through to Grace's Mews.

Harrow Public House

The pub in Lettsom Street is to be demolished and there are no proposals to replace it. The Society asked for its retention to be considered because it was felt that it would provide a valuable element of continuity and would help to extend the links with the past; moreover there will be an

increase in population when the development is completed.

The Society will be consulted again when the architects have prepared a scheme.

Conservation areas

Correction

In Newsletter no 1 only two conservation areas were mentioned, Addington Square, to which Newsletter no 2 was devoted, and Camberwell Grove. Unfortunately a third area also within the Society's boundaries was omitted: it is the Sceaux Gardens Conservation Area. It includes the post-war Sceaux Gardens Estate where much of the old landscaping and existing trees were retained, the Georgian houses on either side of Peckham Road, now used as Council offices, and Lucas Gardens which extends southwards.

Conservation Areas Advisory Committee

The Conservation Areas Advisory Committee, which had its first meeting on June 1st (see Newsletter no 1), met again on November 2nd. One of the items for discussion was the De Crespigny Development, but because of the large number of matters consideration of it had to be adjourned to another meeting.

De Crespigny Park Development (Nos 33-39 De Crespigny Park)

Southwark Borough Council has put forward a scheme for the redevelopment of the sites of nos 33-39 De Crespigny Park. It has been designed for the Council by a private firm of architects, Gordon Bowyer and Partners, and is described and illustrated in detail in a brochure which has been prepared by them.

The proposal involves the demolition of four Victorian houses of about 1860 which are within the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area designated by the Council. They would be replaced by three new blocks: there would be a four-storey block of maisonettes facing De Crespigny Park and two three-storey blocks of flats at right angles stretching right across the existing gardens to the boundary wall of nos 8 & 9 Love Walk.

The Society has been invited to make its comments on the proposal which is also on the agenda for discussion by the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee. The Society is extremely concerned on a number of grounds. It is felt that the principles of conservation have not been observed, that the proposal affects the character of the Conservation Area very seriously, and that little regard has been paid to the rights and amenities of two houses in Love Walk, nos 8 & 9.

First, the new buildings will more than double the density and as a consequence will entirely alter the development form of the area which at present comprises ranges of houses which follow the lines of the streets and whose backs face one another across a stretch of gardens.

Secondly, the design and form of the buildings is almost entirely unrelated to the general character of the existing houses in the area. It seems that either the conservation area principles are understood but ignored when they are inconvenient or they are misunderstood and the scheme is believed to conform with them: whichever is the explanation, the proposal causes very serious concern about the Council's attitude towards conservation.

Thirdly, the two blocks of flats are so placed that the two houses in Love Walk suffer a grievous and unacceptable curtailment of their present enjoyment of light, sun, privacy, and view, to an extent which would not be allowed for the advantage of a scheme proposed by a private developer.

After full consideration by the Society's Executive Committee and Planning Sub-committee a detailed appraisal has been prepared and submitted to the Council. Anyone who would like to know more about the proposal is invited to get in touch with Stephen Marks, 50 Grove Lane (703 2719).

7 & 9 De Crespigny Park

The Institute of Psychiatry has submitted an application for permission to use nos 7 & 9 De Crespigny Park as research laboratories and offices. These houses are within an area zoned for residential use and with proper conversion could certainly be retained in such use. The Society is very concerned about the extension of hospital use outside the area already zoned for it (bounded by De Crespigny Park, Denmark Hill, Windsor Walk, and Grove Lane) and has urged the Council to refuse the application and ensure the residential use of these buildings.

Tigeress Restaurant, Camberwell Church Street

The Tigeress Restaurant which has recently opened in Camberwell Church Street and already has a music and dancing licence till midnight applied for an extension till 2 a.m. At a hearing before the Entertainments Licensing Committee of the GLC Southwark Borough Council objected to the extension and was supported with evidence given by three local residents, all members of the Society, one of them speaking on behalf of the Society; as a result the application was refused. The principle points of objection were the noise and disturbance which would be caused by late night car parking and movement in adjacent residential streets and the addition to the noise already in the main road.

Motorway

The Inquiry into the Greater London Development Plan is now under way and it is expected that the transport section including the motorway proposals will begin in early January. A general meeting of the Society is to be arranged about the middle of January to coincide with this part of the Inquiry when publicity will once again be given to the GLC's motorway plans. The effect of these plans on Camberwell and Peckham are being studied at the moment by members of the Society and more will be said in the next Newsletter in which the date of the meeting will be announced. It is hoped that Douglas Jay, MP and Chairman of the London Motorway Action Group, will be able to talk to the Society.

Motorway action funds

Two successful events have raised funds for the London Motorway Action Group. The jumble sale which was held at the Church Hall, All Saints, Blenheim Grove, on July 25th raised £50 7s, and at a party given by James and Gill Elliott at 158 Camberwell Grove enough was collected to be able to contribute nearly another £50.

Bermondsey Riverside and the Surrey Docks

Many members will be interested in what is going to happen in the northern part of our borough. The Bermondsey and Rotherhithe Society, whose area extends eastwards from London Bridge, has been formed recently to hold meetings and to express local opinion and would welcome enquiries and new members. The Hon Secretary is Nigel Haigh, 8 Grange Walk, S E 1 (237 6819).

The Camberwell Society is your local amenity society.

If you are not already a member please support it by joining.

Subscription 10/- a year to the Hon Treasurer

Brian Allsworth, 165 Grove Lane, S E 5 (274 0367)