

# THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

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Chairman	Miss Nadine Beddington	17 Champion Grove, S E 5
Hon Treasurer	Brian Allsworth	165 Grove Lane, S E 5 (274 0367)
Joint Acting Secretaries	David Whiting	92 Ruskin Park House, S E 5 (733 5080)
	Michael Ivan	24 Grove Lane, S E 5 (703 4564)

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NEWSLETTER NO 17

January 1974

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## MEETINGS FOR MEMBERS

The following meetings will be held in the Vaughan Room of the United Reformed Church (at the corner of Grove Lane and Love Walk). Enter by the basement door under the ramp.

Tuesday January 22nd 1974 at 8 pm (as already announced)

### *PIECES OF OLD CAMBERWELL*

STEPHEN MARKS will show slides and talk about some recent historical investigations and discoveries in Camberwell.

Tuesday March 19th 1974 at 8 pm

### *TECHNIQUES FOR CHANGE IN THE URBAN STRUCTURE*

E E (Ted) HOLLAMBY, Director of Development of the London Borough of Lambeth, has kindly agreed to talk to members of the Society.

Coffee and biscuits will be available after the meetings.

## COMMITTEE CHANGES

There have been two resignations from the Society's Executive Committee; they come from Oliver Probyn who has moved to live north of the River and from Helen Johnston who finds that she is not able to attend its meetings. Three new members have filled their places in accordance with the Society's constitution:

Valerie Kent 38 Camberwell Grove (701 4758)  
Paul Sandilands 21 De Crespigny Park (703 4536)  
Sally Stockley 113 Camberwell Grove (701 2658)

## NEW ADDRESS

David Whiting, one of our Joint Acting Secretaries, has moved from Camberwell Grove to 92 Ruskin Park House, S E 5; his telephone number, 733 5080, is unchanged.

## BEWARE — GAS !

The Gas Board are now busy preparing in our area for conversion to North Sea gas. Sometimes, instead of converting or replacing the appliance, they seek a cheaper way out by providing a longer flue which will enable an existing heater to burn the new gas safely. The results of this can be seen on nos 32 and 34 Camberwell Grove where three ugly and extremely prominent asbestos flue pipes have just been installed: they stick out of the front facade at least a foot and then climb high. No planning permission was sought although it is needed, and on many other buildings listed building consent would be necessary as well.

We believe that in principle such pipes should not be allowed, especially on front facades, so we have written to the Borough Council to ask them to take up the planning aspect and to the Gas Council exploring the environmental nuisance caused by what is claimed to be *the* environmental fuel.

If the Gas Board's engineers tell you that they have the Council's permission to do what they like, it's not true; if they tell you it must be done that way, tell them they must find some other means of conversion, replacing the appliance with a modern one if necessary; if you see it happening on another house get in touch with the Planning Department straightaway (703 6311).

## PEABODY TRUST DEVELOPMENT AT LOMOND GROVE

On a site to the north of Camberwell Green the Peabody Trust is to build a scheme with various kinds of housing.

Last year Mr Michael de St Croix, architect to the Trust, and his deputy, Mr L S Sharp, very kindly showed the Society's Committee the proposals, and the following brief account is based mainly on information supplied by them.

The development is to be undertaken in the form of a housing association on land made available by Southwark and will be paid for partly by central government funds. Part of the land was previously occupied by Victorian tenement blocks and the site includes most of Elmington Road where all the shops will be demolished. The new layout takes account of the alignment of the north section of the so-called D-ring road which has been planned to divert traffic from Camberwell Green (see Newsletter 15) and which will run obliquely behind the Father Red Cap. To the north and west the site is bounded by GLC housing, and on the east by Lomond Grove. The new buildings are shown solid black on the plan.

The brief for the development was drawn up together by Southwark Council and Peabody Trust. Housing should be provided at a density of 136 persons per acre (336 p p hectare) including sheltered houses for about 40 old people, and there should be a luncheon club and day centre for old people. The brief stipulated that there should be a height limit of five storeys.

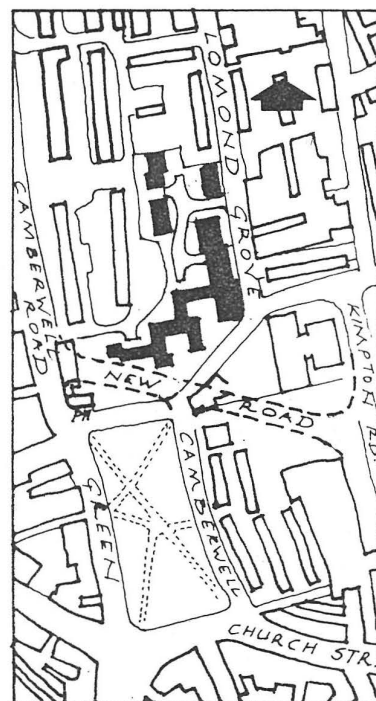
The proposed scheme has buildings ranging from two to six storeys in height, providing houses, flats, and maisonettes, and old people's homes. The highest part of the scheme is a range varying from four to six storeys along Lomond Grove with to the north three short terraces of two-storey houses and on the southern part of the site an open court of old people's flats on two floors with two four-storey blocks abutting it. Nearly four hundred people will be accommodated.

There are, however, no shops in the scheme and no opportunity for continued trading by those displaced. We feel that this is a very serious omission: logically a subsidy should be available for shops which are necessary as well as for housing. As it is, several valued traders will vanish and will not be able to afford new rents elsewhere.

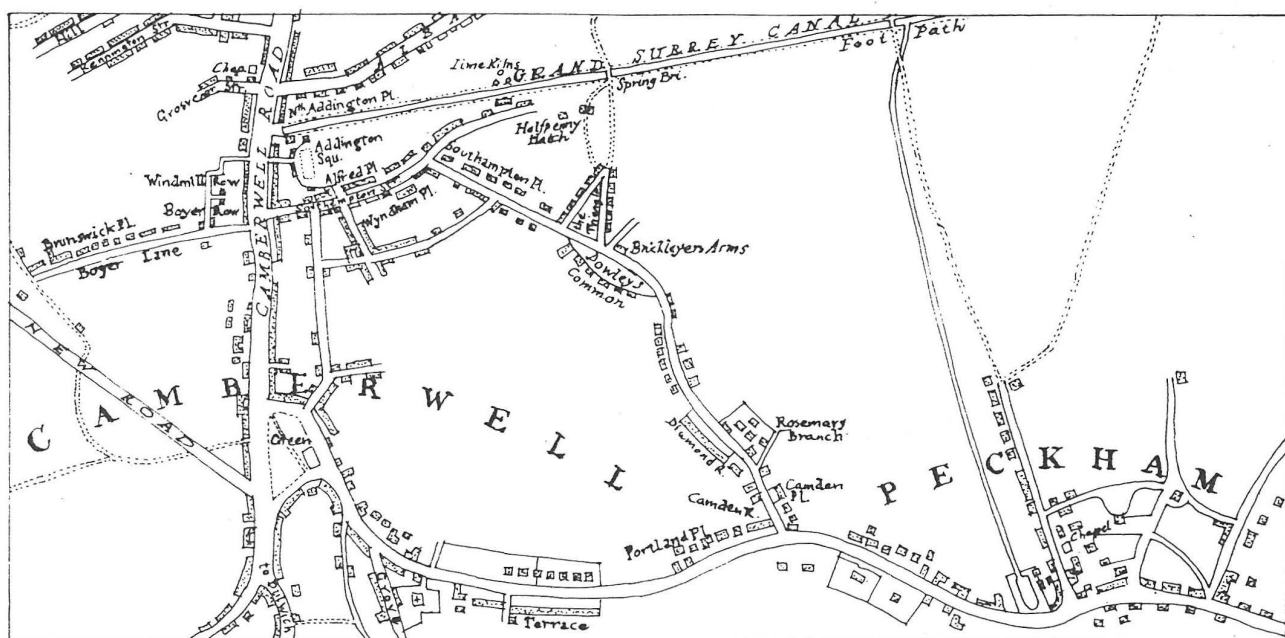
The scheme will be built in brickwork with the horizontal lines of floor slabs exposed, and it will be flat-roofed with a high parapet. The facades, none of which is in any case very long, are punctuated with a varied distribution of bay windows and balconies. The design benefits from the informality of its massing on an irregular site, with the build-up from lower blocks at both ends to the highest in the middle, partly four, partly five, and partly six storeys high. A four storey block on the south-western tip of the site will close the view from Camberwell Green and will help to restore the sense of enclosure at the northern end of the Green where at present there is nothing more than a municipal car-park enclosed by advertisement hoardings.

The Green will, eventually, be extended northwards to the new road, with a pedestrian underpass, and there will be an open space, a paved piazza, outside the magistrates' courts.

It has not been possible to reproduce a perspective sketch which the architects have sent, but this can be seen by arrangement with Stephen Marks (703 2719).



scale 12 inches to 1 mile



Extract from CARY'S Map of London

1820

# **Bermondsey & Rotherhithe and its Society report of a meeting on December 6th 1973**

More than twenty people came to hear Nigel Haigh, Hon. Secretary of the Bermondsey and Rotherhithe Society, talk about his area and what his Society does. He began by giving a brief account of the history and development of the area: the first mention in an Icelandic saga, the Royal Manor listed in Domesday, the priory established shortly after the Norman Conquest which became Bermondsey Abbey, owning most of Southwark and much else besides, suppressed by Henry VIII and given to Sir Thomas Pope who built on the site of the Abbey a house which stood till about 1805.

The area generally was rural till the eighteenth century, until the arrival of tanning and weaving trades and of the docks and railway to Greenwich in the early nineteenth, when it went into a social decline and became one of the two poorest areas in London. Bermondsey Street itself had, according to Stowe, been built up before 1600, and it followed the line of the causeway linking the slight eminence on which the Abbey stood, Barmund's Island or Bermondsey, with the riverside and London Bridge. All around was swampy and liable to flooding before the river wall was built.

The Thames Tunnel was begun in 1825 and opened in 1843, the first underwater tunnel to be built; other links to the north are Tower Bridge (1880) and Rotherhithe Tunnel. Nevertheless the area has been very much cut off from London and there has always been a strong tradition of living and working in the area.

The Bermondsey and Rotherhithe Society was formed in

1970 as a direct response to the proposal by Hawker Siddeley to use the Surrey Docks as a VTOL airport. Although the new society could not get Southwark Council interested in opposing the scheme a very active campaign was waged resulting in the acceptance that VTOL was not suitable for urban use: that VTOL was not developed was primarily due to the reaction to its proposed use in Bermondsey.

The present concerns of the Society are the future of the Surrey Docks, some 400 acres, and the strategy plan for Thameside for which Southwark issued a draft plan three years ago and recently a revised plan which is very difficult to comprehend and consequently provokes opposition. The Society is also trying to get Brunel's Engine House for the Thames Tunnel restored as its contribution to European Architectural Heritage Year 1975.\*

Mr Haigh's stimulating talk was illustrated with slides of maps and views. A most interesting discussion followed, over coffee and biscuits, ranging more widely over the subjects of participation in planning, of effective liaison between council departments, and the relationship of local authority, both council members and officers, to the community and local societies.

\*There is an exhibition at St Mary's Church, Rotherhithe, dealing with the Brunels, the history of the area, and the proposals for converting some riverside buildings into a Brunel museum and craft workshops. It is open from the 19th to the 27th January, 10 - 7.30 on Monday to Friday and 10 - 5.30 on Saturday and Sunday; entrance free. —Ed.

## ORGANISING IMPROVEMENT IN EAST DULWICH: NOT JUST BRICKS AND MORTAR

A study by the Borough Development Department of the London Borough of Southwark in association with the Department of the Environment  
March 1973

Appraised by Judi Bratt in relation to wider housing issues

*Although the area covered by this study is outside the Society's area it touches on problems which apply generally and it is especially relevant during the current public inquiries taking place on the Selborne Road and Daneville Road areas near Camberwell Green.*

The East Dulwich study published in March 1973 has been little publicised. It reinforces the need for new housing impetus in this and similar inner London areas. In addition to some excellent housing Southwark Borough Council has developed vast clearance areas which illustrate in many cases the community dislocation and consequent social problems which two recent housing White Papers condemn (Cmnd.5280 April 1973, and Cmnd.5338, June 1973). These promote the philosophy echoed in the East Dulwich study, namely that improvement policies will, if correctly implemented and interspersed with small-scale redevelopment, offer potentially a more humane and desirable housing solution.

The study, which does not claim to represent Council policy, results from investigations of the pros and cons of improvement in East Dulwich by a joint Department of the Environment and Southwark team and is a valuable if somewhat tardy and limited illustration of the problems likely to arise when improvement policies are implemented in inner city areas. The objective of the team was 'to investigate ways by which the local authority can encourage and carry out improvements of its older housing areas whilst meeting social objectives'.

Research parameters are not clearly defined. There is no bibliography or list of information sources which is surprising in a document dealing with such important issues. Some of the information was taken from the now outdated 1966 Census which was a 10% sample and not reliable. (The 1971 Census was not published at the time of writing) However, the team obtained much useful information from the researches undertaken by Southwark planners between 1970 and 1972. These investigations, conceived originally as the basis for a Southwark housing policy document and not generally available, included detailed analysis of the types of communities resident in the borough as well as the housing, tenure, employment, and communication patterns found in Southwark. The interrelation between community groups, the characteristics of landlord and developer, and activities and potential of all housing agencies were discussed together with analysis of possible future housing strategies, public and private. Possibilities and methods of utilising a range of improvement policies were also considered. This investigation which related the Southwark case to inner London as a whole has obviously contributed to the generally valid findings of the East Dulwich study group.

The team recognised that the impetus of the improvement drive in inner London and in Southwark to date is much too slow to alleviate or even counteract the increasing housing shortage. In Southwark at the time of writing it was established that 650 standard and 725 discretionary grants had been awarded including 273 and 139 respectively in East Dulwich, yet approximately 5,000 households in East Dul-

wich lack one or more of the basic household amenities.

The study rightly establishes that the areas of greatest priority in East Dulwich are those where the interest and capacity of owners to improve is least, where high occupancy rates hinder improvement, and where change will be expensive to effect both in housing and in environmental terms. The writers conclude that general improvement area (GIA) declaration in East Dulwich would tend to increase pressure from potential owner-occupiers and speculators on the least privileged groups, especially those in the rapidly diminishing private tenanted sector.

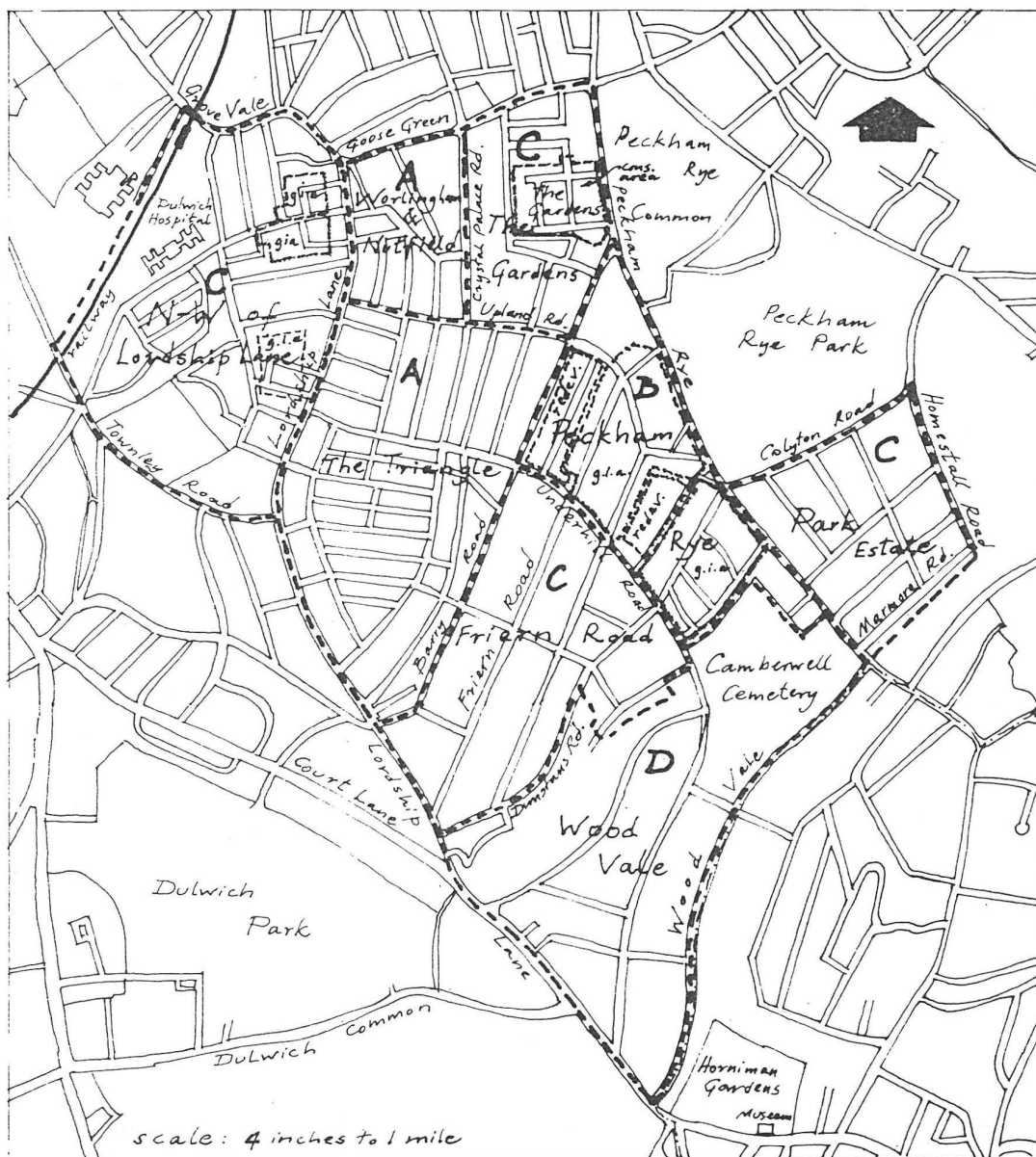
This attitude is a welcome reversal when compared with the approach to general improvement areas and improvement work of other inner London boroughs whose councils became rapidly committed to the improvement drive following the Housing Act 1969. In Southwark at that time redevelopment was a firmly entrenched policy. Since Southwark Council has not plunged into extensive improvement activities nor in fact publicly issued a housing policy statement during the 1970s the East Dulwich study might be viewed as testing the water. In retrospect investigation of the pros and cons of improvement prior to large-scale commitment seems eminently sensible in view of the complexities of the inner London housing situation though this should obviously have been instigated sooner. It is disappointing that almost a year after publication there is no evidence to suggest that the Council has re-assessed its overall housing strategy.

### *The content of the study*

After analysis of the housing characteristics and pressures found in the study area the writers propound a series of theoretical strategies to achieve their objective which include some excellent practical ideas together with wider use and extension of existing powers. These are backed up by study of cost implications. East Dulwich is broken down into eight zones which are classified into four types of sub-area, each requiring a different range of local authority action which roughly coincides with the varying degrees of housing and environmental improvement need.

Most important of these proposed four sub-areas are those zones in worst condition with a high proportion of tenanted, often multi-occupied, small properties where owners are least able to afford or implement improvement. Two such areas are identified - Worlingham and Nutfield Roads, and the Triangle (marked A on the plan). These require concerted local authority action. It is proposed that this be on a block by block basis with a high degree of local authority involvement and assistance. Demolition would be necessary to provide open space and other amenities, which implies council acquisition.





The second type of sub-area includes houses in fair to good condition with a high proportion of owner-occupiers likely to be interested in maintaining and improving their homes once the future of the area is assured; these are areas which also tend to have traffic problems a poor environment and are the areas in which local authority action is considered essential as a drive to promote private voluntary initiative. Here improvement and renewal are seen as long-term compared with more short-term palliative treatment in the first category. Peckham Rye (marked B) is included in this second type; two GIAs and two smaller redevelopment areas are proposed.

Private sector action with low priority for direct local authority input and environmental improvements is the suggested approach to the third type of sub-area which includes larger houses in good to fair condition occupied by a high proportion of owner-occupiers, many in the upper and middle

income groups. This covers the Friern Road area, the Park Estate, the Gardens area, and the zone north-west of Lordship Lane (marked C). In one of these zones three small GIAs are suggested and in another a conservation area is proposed in addition to the overall strategies already mentioned.

The fourth sub-area is Woodvale (marked D) with large houses and a good environment. Here strong development control is considered an essential means of preserving the status quo while only private sector improvement is envisaged.

While therefore, varying degrees of local authority activity are necessary to deal with sub-areas two, three, and four, the bulk of resources, powers and action are concentrated in the worst areas. Since similar zones are to be found elsewhere in Southwark and throughout inner London the need for immediate action is imperative. Three major difficulties emerge: first, the problem of implementing rapid improvement in the worst areas and the effect on the existing com-

munity; secondly, the numerical aspect of the housing problem; and, thirdly, the lack of effective machinery to implement large-scale improvement in its widest sense.

#### *Important issues which emerge from the study*

##### *The need for compulsory acquisition*

The study does not give enough emphasis to the need for compulsory purchase in the worst areas of housing. Evidence from other parts of London indicates that acquisition must be essentially large-scale to achieve real progress. This does not preclude arrangements by which other agencies such as housing associations might implement improvement.

##### *The effect on the community*

Since acquisition and improvement on the required scale will necessitate decanting and rehousing even in the short term some fragmentation of the existing community is inevitable, though not to the same degree as for redevelopment. This does not devalue the importance of preserving the existing fabric but suggests that the notion that improvement will preserve communities as such is somewhat misguided in inner London. This aspect of improvement policy and implementation requires much more study in depth since the claim that community disruption will be minimal seems unlikely. Experience shows that often when people are rehoused with a short-term option to return they are unwilling to face the disruption of a rapid second move; also, sharing and overcrowding means that many must leave for good when a bad area is improved.

##### *Improvement will tend to reduce housing densities*

A variety of publications including the 1973 Layfield Report on the Greater London Development Plan have established the huge shortfall of housing in satisfactory condition in inner London while emphasising that current social patterns and the demand for better living standards has led to a growth in the number of households seeking accommodation. These far exceed the number of available dwellings. The East Dulwich study team argues correctly that improvement, especially in the worst areas, is likely to reduce the number of dwellings available. When houses are mainly tenanted, over-occupied, in poor condition, and fairly small in size (often all these factors apply) improvement to a reasonable quality often precludes conversion; moreover, improvement to achieve an acceptable environment in these densely packed locations implies demolition to supply play space and other amenities. This combined with reduction in multi-occupation, overcrowding, and involuntary sharing must reduce densities overall.

Adjustment of bad dwelling fit - for example, elderly people or single individuals living in houses too large for them or small families owning properties capable of conversion to house more people - could obviously assist to some degree but this infers authoritarian restrictions limiting space entitlement. Thus density reduction tends to be essential to good quality improvement of both housing and environment. According to the study team this also tends to reduce costs.

In inner London there is however, no elasticity. Acute shortage exists now and must indubitably increase while current housing policies stagger ineffectively. Areas like East Dulwich face the greatest pressures. These are still volatile, redevelopment is minimal, and older property, even that in bad condition, is attractive to potential owner-occupiers and

private sector tenants both from within and outside the area. Convertible properties or those where furnished accommodation can be let for high rents attracts developers and speculators, large and small. Southwark claims that its post-war redevelopment programme has considerably reduced the rehousing problem thus facilitating temporary decanting to implement improvement of the type described in the study. However, neither Southwark nor East Dulwich is an island: both are part of the inner city framework subject to its overall pressures and those of neighbouring boroughs. Overall current housing need related to the total of available dwellings makes an impossible equation, even if all improvable property is renovated to decent standards.

Small-scale high-density infill offers no solution in inner London. Perhaps a limit on further movement into London plus a decision on the numbers that can be accommodated in London in the next decade should be made with emergency policies to deal with the rest. This might temporarily hold the situation while positive housing policies are evolved. Certainly higher density redevelopment programmes should be immediately implemented in the reluctant outer boroughs.

##### *Can improvement policies be effectively implemented?*

Improvement is critical if even the existing housing stock is to be saved. Reliable predictions that property deterioration will further accelerate in the 1980s in the absence of effective improvement policies highlights the situation. Improvement strategies such as those envisaged by the East Dulwich study team will have little impact if the external housing policy framework remains fragmented and ill-defined. Thus local council drive and initiative are also imperative. The desperate urgency of the task and the catastrophic fragmentation of resources and powers are not enough emphasised in the study. Clearly there can be no 'housing solution' but all available resources must be utilised to maximum effect if areas like East Dulwich are to be improved and retained.

Overall analysis of the study reveals a clear call for co-ordination between all housing agencies, public and private. To achieve maximum resource benefit and successful collaboration the co-ordinating, financing, legal powers, and construction ability of these agencies is a critical function of central and local government. It cannot be enough emphasised that this organisation will be the lynch-pin of all future housing policy, whatever the balance between redevelopment and improvement. Sensitive combination of infill and rehabilitation presents a challenge to the sensitivity and immediacy of interaction between housing agencies. The situation in East Dulwich so clearly revealed in this study is in many instances a microcosm of inner London as a whole and reflects the existing framework as terrifyingly unwieldy. There is a lack of feedback between insulated departments where activities overlap, lack of strategy comparison methods, and also lack of general understanding of the realities of the current situation overall.

##### *Conclusion*

The many imaginative and useful ideas promoted by the East Dulwich study will be inoperable without a highly effective implementation mechanism capable of interweaving all housing resources - legal powers, construction methods and techniques, expert and grass root community knowledge. Both in the housing White Papers and in a Report of

the Tenth Parliamentary Expenditure Committee (published in June 1973) there is tacit recognition of many of the issues raised in and arising from the study but so far there appears to be no determined drive to grapple with the more serious of these.

Despite the omissions and short-comings of the study Southwark Council has a useful discussion document which could form the basis for a more sensitive and intelligent attitude towards its older housing areas, despite the really major problems which these pose. It is hoped that some positive housing strategy will emerge in the near future.

#### **Peckham Hill Street - compulsory purchase order by the London Borough of Southwark**

The Society had objected last April to a compulsory purchase order covering houses in Peckham Hill Street and Peckham Park Road because there was no information at the time about the future of the houses. We have now received assurances that all the houses in the order in the two streets which includes many listed ones are to be retained and improved or converted; furthermore, it appears likely that the Council will not in fact acquire those which are owner-occupied so that the owners will be able to carry out their own works. Our objection has therefore been withdrawn.

#### **69 Camberwell Grove**

It is a shame that after cleaning and repairing the facade of no 69 Camberwell Grove so carefully it should be marred by a rash of flue terminals. The permission to convert the house into flats did not include these disfiguring objects, so in response to a letter from the Society the Borough Planner has said that he is going to try to get them removed.

#### **Recent planning applications**

##### **13-16 Addington Square**

At present this delightful group of four small two-storey houses, built in about 1822, are empty and neglected, having been used for storage and offices. A planning application was made to restore the houses with all their original details, which would be admirable, but also to build a three-storey block very close behind them. This we considered excessive in relation to the site and in proportion to the existing houses, and it was thought that the design would have been unsympathetic in views from the proposed extension of the North Camberwell Open Space. The Council has refused consent for the application.

##### **41 & 43 Wilson Road**

These two cases are selected as typical of a large number of applications for minor works of conversion or improvement of houses in the area east of Camberwell Grove. Several

are proposals, like these in Wilson Road, made on behalf of the Council itself. Usually there is no objection in principle, but frequently details are inappropriate and require comment.

Although the submitted drawings did not show elevations the new windows on the rear of these two houses would evidently not be in keeping with the other existing windows: as a result of our observations the Planning and Development Committee required that the new windows should be timber framed and of vertical proportions.

##### **Love Walk Hostel**

The Love Walk Hostel for Disabled Women Workers has submitted an application for a substantial extension at the rear of the existing building. The new wing would lie on the west side of Kerfield Place and would provide much-needed improvements to the accommodation both of the disabled residents and of the staff.

The application is now under discussion and a detailed report on this and other developments nearby will be given in the next Newsletter.

##### **Mews development**

##### **172, 182, 192 Camberwell Grove and 151 Grove Lane**

The Society's efforts to prevent the loss of openness between the houses in Grove Lane and Camberwell Grove are meeting with a degree of success. Two recent applications for development at the rear of no 151 Grove Lane and of no 172 Camberwell Grove have been refused on the grounds that they are 'considered to be an excessive intrusion into the open area existing at the rear of the properties in Grove Lane and Camberwell Grove, and would be detrimental to the character of the conservation area'. Consent for a similar proposal at 182 Camberwell Grove has also just been refused; permission has, however, been given for a scheme at the rear of 192 where the Council does not feel that the objection applies.

##### **25-29 De Crespigny Park**

Two further applications have been submitted since the report in the last Newsletter. Both include the retention and improvement of nos 27 and 29 and the erection of a small block of flats on the site of no 25 De Crespigny Park for which there is outline consent. They also involve the building of bungalows at the bottom of the gardens against the south boundary walls of the gardens of house in Love Walk. This, like the mews developments, is part of the process of diminishing the open aspect between houses, and therefore objections have been made to these applications.

##### **70 & 103 Camberwell Grove**

In line with our views on the subdivision of larger houses (see Newsletter No 13) we objected to proposals for the conversion of these two houses which would have done great harm to their architectural quality. The applications have been refused by the Council: in the case of no 70 it was because 'unacceptable alterations' would have an 'adverse effect on the architectural interest of the building', while on no 103 the 'internal character and plan form will be affected adversely by erection of partitions in important rooms on ground and first floor and within the main entrance hall'.

1789 36 Green Lane

## CAMBERWELL GREEN AREA

We have been pressing for some time for a meeting with the GLC about roads; this has now taken place. Mr David Chalkley, Chairman of the GLC South Area Board, met the Society's Chairman and members of the committee in the middle of December. The most significant points to emerge were that the GLC is now not committed to any particular scheme for roads at the Green, that any proposals will depend on new decisions in principle about the level of traffic to be accommodated, whether more or less, and Mr Chalkley acknowledged our concern that the use of Daneville Road or a similar alignment as a main route would produce an enormous traffic roundabout with houses, shops, and whatever else goes on the 'Epic' site cut off from surrounding areas by busy roads.

It was generally agreed that the main concern was about the intrusion into the area just south of the Green; it was also accepted that the northern part of the road proposals would provide a useful diversion of west-east traffic from the south side of the Green. The alignment for the latter has already been allowed for in the layout of the Peabody Trust development at Lomond Grove and of the D'Eynsford Road development now under way north of Church Street, and in the location of the Magistrates' Courts. The eventual enlargement of Medlar Road would complete this part of the network.

The vital need to improve public transport was also discussed and Mr Chalkley referred to the joint London rail study now in progress; the possibility of re-opening the disused station in Camberwell Station Road was mentioned.

Since that meeting we have seen Southwark's planners and planning Chairman. It is becoming increasingly clear that the future of Camberwell Green will depend very much on finding out what the local community, of which The Camberwell Society is just a part, say they want: our questionnaire is an important element in the process of discovery and we have a date, March 7th, for presenting our results at another meeting. A final concerted effort will be made during February to increase the coverage and validity of the survey before analysing the contents.

The second compulsory purchase order covering properties in Allendale Road, Cuthill Road, Daneville Road (south side), Kerfield Crescent, Kerfield Place, and Selborne Road, comes before a public inquiry on January 29th at the Town Hall; the Society will be represented and, we believe, a lot of the residents will also be voicing their objections.

1853 - Cong. 13, Waverley

Daneville early (1860s)

1810, House on 16 Green

### 64-68 Camberwell Church Street

The Society and many individual members can be pleased that their efforts here are now getting their reward. The first notice of a supermarket proposal was sent to the Society by the Council in April 1970: planning permission was finally given in April 1972 for an office development on the site of nos 64-68 Camberwell Church Street which secured the preservation of the facades with the ground storey restored.

There was a long and loud discussion about several proposals for this site and for the demolition of no 13 Camberwell Grove. The site of no 13 would have provided servicing access to the rear of the Church Street premises which were to have been rebuilt as a supermarket. Although part of a pair of houses and a prominent feature in Camberwell Grove this house could not be protected as it was not considered to be listable, so negotiations had to take account of its vulnerable situation. The Council's officers worked hard on this one to get a scheme which satisfied both the developer and the claims of local amenity. In the event the facade could not be retained but it is now being rebuilt in replica which is nearly complete and looking very handsome.

Miss Gillian Whittle  
30 Love Walk  
S.W.2  
Camberwell Grove

Ohampian Lodge

Sylvanus H. H. H.



# THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

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Chairman	Miss Nadine Beddington	17 Champion Grove, S E 5
Hon Treasurer	Brian Allsworth	165 Grove Lane, S E 5 (274 0367)
Joint Acting Secretaries	Valerie Kent	38 Camberwell Grove, S E 5 (701 4758)
	Michael Ivan	24 Grove Lane, S E 5 (703 4564)

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NEWSLETTER NO 18

March 1974

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## MEMBERS' MEETING

## PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE

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The date for Ted Hollamby's talk has been changed to – Thursday April 4th 1974 at 8 p m.

Mr Hollamby, Director of Development of the London Borough of Lambeth, will talk to members of the Society and their guests on the subject of

### *TECHNIQUES FOR CHANGE IN THE URBAN STRUCTURE*

in the Wren Hall of the United Reformed Church, entrance in Love Walk.

Coffee and biscuits will be available after the meeting.

## SECRETARY

Mrs Valerie Kent, who has been very active in keeping our questionnaire going, has been appointed by the Society's Committee as Joint Acting Secretary in place of David Whiting who unfortunately finds that he cannot give the necessary time to the Society's affairs. Michael Ivan will continue also as Joint Acting Secretary. Their addresses and telephone numbers are at the head of the Newsletter.

## YOUR NEWSLETTER

Your Newsletter doesn't just appear by itself when it comes through your letter-box. The Executive Committee thought you should know that the last Newsletter, eight pages long, kept the Editor busy for thirty-one hours all told, in the following way:

writing, map-drawing, and editorial	11 hours
preparation for printing and other	
production work	16 hours
addressing and distribution	4 hours

He was helped in the last item by a few kind people who altogether spent four hours on it.

This is also the appropriate opportunity to thank Ann Ward for the printing of the Newsletter, since its twelfth issue, in the present format, which makes it much smarter, more legible, and more authoritative into the bargain. While the Editor has been able to use her IBM Selectric Composer, she has herself or one of her helpers has printed these Newsletters by offset litho; she has also printed for us our questionnaire, poster, and leaflets about Camberwell Green. We are indeed extremely grateful to her.

Just occasionally remarks filter back about the Newsletter, but the Editor would appreciate any comments on its contents or frequency or anything else about it, and would welcome suitable contributions, perhaps a letter or historical note or comments about current concerns for our surroundings. Please ring 703 2719.



## DANEVILLE ROAD AND SELBORNE ROAD COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDERS

Public inquiries were held in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall on November 27th and on January 29th to hear objections to compulsory purchase orders made by Southwark Council. At both inquiries the Society's objections were made in evidence presented by Stephen Marks who also cross-examined the Council's witnesses. At the earlier inquiry involving houses in Wren Road, Jephson Street and on the north side of Daneville Road, a small number of individual objectors also spoke but at the second one covering most of the area of late Victorian houses between Daneville Road and Love Walk there were several professional representatives of owners and a very large numbers of individuals. For the latter, some of whom were owner-occupiers, in some cases of houses which the Council had not condemned as unfit to live in, it was obviously an unnerving experience, but they all spoke well and the inspector went out of her way to put them at their ease and to see that they said their pieces: their mass of objection clearly made a considerable impression and as clearly showed the strength of indignation at the palpable inaccuracies and exaggerations of the Council's principle evidence produced by their Public Health Inspector, Mr C H Medland. The second inquiry lasted two days and finished only just before seven o'clock on the second day.

The Society's case rested mainly on the proposition that it would be perfectly reasonable to repair the houses instead of demolishing them, thereby avoiding derelict or cleared areas, the break-up of communities, and the long period of housing loss before rebuilding was finished. While admitting that a fair number of the houses needed considerable work, others would require relatively little or even none at all, and taken overall the cost would be very much less than the cost of completely redeveloping the area. The experience of the earlier inquiry enabled the Society to present a better case and to ask better questions at the second at which it was shown that the Council had produced no evidence whatsoever about the comparative costs or any other factors which had led it to the conclusion that the best way of dealing with the area was to clear it.

The Housing Act 1957 lays down that in declaring clearance areas (which the Council had done) there are two conditions to be satisfied, that the houses are 'unfit' for human habitation and that the Council is satisfied that the best way of dealing with the area is to clear it: whether the second condition was fulfilled was, as Stephen Marks pointed out in summing up the Society's case, the crucial test in deciding whether the compulsory purchase orders should be confirmed. He asserted that both on financial and on social grounds there was a case against clearance and that, in the absence of evidence from the Council, the clearance area declarations might be considered to have been improperly made. The Council's officers were obviously shaken and unable to refute the need to show that clearance was the best method.

One of the most interesting aspects of the Society's case was the evidence provided by our questionnaire; the questions on whether people wanted to stay were analysed in detail and produced a very high proportion wanting to remain in their homes either as they were or with improvement. Many of those who wanted to leave wanted to do so for reasons unconnected with the state of the houses themselves.

One of the Council's officers was heard to say after the inquiry that 'these inquiries are getting much more difficult': the truth is that many years ago the Council was very properly clearing real slums by compulsory purchase and demolition and as the years have passed it has used the same formula to clear areas of progressively better houses, so that opposition has become increasingly well founded.

The results of these inquiries are now awaited, but they are not likely to be known till late spring or summer.

# 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)  
Joint Acting Secretaries: Michael Ivan, 24 Grove Lane, S E 5 (703 4564)  
Valerie Kent, 38 Camberwell Grove, S E 5 (701 4758)

NEWSLETTER NO 19 & NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

April 1974

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - Monday May 20th 1974

The Annual General Meeting of The Camberwell Society will be held on May 20th 1974 in the Vaughan Room of the United Reformed Church, Love Walk, at 8 o'clock.

## AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Previous minutes and matters arising
- 3 Annual report of the Executive Committee for the year 1973-74 (printed overleaf)
- 4 Treasurer's report
- 5 Proposed amendment of the constitution of The Camberwell Society in accordance with paragraph 12 of the constitution

The work load of the Honorary Secretary has proved especially demanding and in the past year has been discharged by two joint acting secretaries. It is proposed to amend paragraph 6 of the constitution (dealing with the officers of the Society) in order to allow two people to be elected to perform the duties of the Honorary Secretary. It is considered that there should also be provision for an assistant to the Treasurer. The following proposition will therefore be put:

That the sentence 'The officers of the Society shall consist of ..... Annual General Meeting' shall be deleted from paragraph 6 of the Society's constitution and the following inserted in its place: 'There shall be the following officers of the Society:

Chairman

Honorary Treasurer

Honorary Secretary:

there may in addition be a Vice-Chairman and an Assistant Honorary Treasurer: in place of the Honorary Secretary there may be elected two persons, either as Joint Honorary Secretaries or as Honorary Secretary and Assistant Honorary Secretary. All the foregoing officers shall relinquish their office every year and shall be eligible for re-election at the Annual General Meeting.'

- 6 Election of officers and committee

Nominations will be required for Chairman, Hon Treasurer and Hon Secretary, and for the Committee. Any paid-up member may together with a seconder nominate candidates for the officers and committee. Nominations must be in writing and may be made at the meeting but would be preferred before the meeting delivered to the Joint Acting Secretary, 24 Grove Lane, S E 5.

The retiring committee comprises Joshua Brook\*, Anthony Hall\*, Stephen Marks, Freda Ruthven\*, Paul Sandilands, Sally Stockley, Shirley Tanner, and David Whiting; those marked with an asterisk are not standing for re-election.

- 7 Any other business

Michael Ivan  
Valerie Kent Joint Acting Secretaries

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

The subscription to the Society is 50 pence a year, due on June 1st. Subscriptions for the current year (June 1973 - May 1974) or for the coming year may be paid at the Annual General Meeting. Only paid-up members may vote on any matter at the meeting.

## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR 1973-74

Since the last Annual General Meeting the Society's main concern, and the most important work it has ever been involved in, has been the future of Camberwell Green and the area to the south. This has involved three main aspects of planning: roads, redevelopment of the area immediately to the south of the Green, and the clearance of houses in areas to the north and south of Daneville Road. Reports on one or another aspect have appeared in almost every Newsletter over the past year.

A most successful and well-attended public meeting was held on September 3rd with contributions from members of the Society and the public and from councillors and officers of the Council (see the report in Newsletter 15): the upshot of the meeting was the setting up of a survey. A large number of people, led by Michael Ivan and Valerie Kent, called on numerous households, concentrating at first in the 'clearance' areas around Daneville Road, and conducted personal interviews with a questionnaire relating to housing, shopping, traffic, and the amenities and use of the Camberwell Green area. The gathering of information for the survey has been completed and is now being prepared and analysed by computer. A meeting had been arranged with Southwark Council to discuss the results on March 7th, but has been postponed by them.

There have been several meetings of members of the Society's Executive Committee with the GLC, with Southwark, and with EPIC, at which we have, we believe, had some success in conveying our concern, not merely at the lack of progress, but more particularly at the policies and attitudes which have been guiding discussion so far: perhaps of greatest significance were the Borough Planner's statement that the 'Epic' site need not be redeveloped comprehensively and the GLC's complete reassessment, now under way, of road and transport policies.

Public inquiries were held on November 27th and January 29th-30th into the Council's Daneville Road and Selborne Road compulsory purchase orders: at each of these inquiries detailed evidence was presented on behalf of the Society making the case for the rehabilitation and repair of the houses instead of their demolition as proposed by the Council (see Newsletter 18). Individual members of the Society gave much help and encouragement to the residents who wished to object to the orders. Some results of the Society's survey relating to aspects of housing were used in the Society's evidence at the inquiries.

There have been four meetings of the Society, and the Executive Committee has met thirteen times, in the period June 1973 to May 1974. Besides the public meeting in September, already mentioned, there have been three meetings for members: on December 6th Nigel Haigh spoke to us about Bermondsey and Rotherhithe and its Society, in January Stephen Marks described his recent historical investigations and discoveries in Camberwell, and on April 4th Ted Hollamby, Director of Development of Lambeth, talked to us on the subject of Techniques for Change in the Urban Structure. Nigel Haigh's talk is reported in Newsletter 17, the other two elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Once again we wish to thank the United Reformed Church for allowing us to hold our meetings in the Wren Hall and the Vaughan Room.

We have, as in past years, dealt with a constant stream of planning applications to which our attention is drawn either by the Council's fortnightly lists of applications or by special notices sent to the Society: we endeavour to comment on all the latter as well as picking out other relevant cases from the lists. Occasionally we offer comment on applications which relate to buildings outside the Society's area of benefit but nevertheless raise points of more general concern, especially with regard to historic buildings.

The Society has been represented by Stephen Marks on the Council's Conservation Areas Advisory Committee which met three times during the year. Through this committee the Society has suggested the extension of the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area to include Grove Park, Champion Grove, and the upper part of Grove Lane (see Newsletter 15). The proposal was favourably received by the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee and has been approved by the relevant committees of the Council, but the extensions have not yet been formally designated.

The new format of the Newsletter which has been used since May last year is a great improvement on the duplicating used for the first eleven numbers. It enables us to include plans and other drawings; the type face and size can be varied; it is more legible; above all, it has an authoritative air and is, we hear, generally well regarded. Members should take the opportunity to contribute to their own Newsletter.

For the third year we published a greetings card before Christmas; proceeds from sales have, as before, contributed handsomely to our funds, and a word of thanks should be given to Hilary Hugh-Jones, proprietor of the Passage Bookshop, for selling the cards for the Society without charge, and to those who touted them round to members.

The Society has been without an elected secretary this year, but the work has been done by joint acting secretaries, Michael Ivan throughout the year and David Whiting for part of it succeeded by Valerie Kent.

As always the bulk of the work has fallen on a few people who have had to enlist help for various tasks: many did indeed help with the questionnaire, but it would be a great advantage if we could build up a list of people who would be able and willing to help in specific ways as the need arose.

The accounts which will be presented at the Annual General Meeting will be printed in a later Newsletter.

## PIECES OF OLD CAMBERWELL

On January 22nd some forty people gathered in the Vaughan Room to hear Stephen Marks talk about his recent historical discoveries and investigations which he illustrated with some seventy slides shewn on two projectors. The chances of investigating one source or another or of making discoveries on the ground occur without regard to historical continuity, so the subject matter of the talk tended to be in self-contained pieces (hence the title) with occasional overlaps and cross-references: over a period there will be more links, but there will always be gaps, so the best service one can render is to put one's own gleanings at the disposal of others.

The three main fields of his research have been in maps, ratebooks, and title-deeds. The maps mostly referred to, besides Dewhirst's Plan of 1842 (published in facsimile in 1971), were a Plan of Grove Hill in 1792, a collection of manuscript plans of Dr Lettson's estate and farms, and, most informative of all, the Tithe Map with its apportionment. The ratebooks for Camberwell are kept at Newington Library and cover the years 1780 to 1785 (in one volume) and, with minor gaps, 1802 to 1859: they can be inspected on request, preferably with advance notice. Title-deeds and related documents are a particularly valuable, even if rather long-winded, source of information: those of the church site in Wren Road, of no 36 Grove Lane, and of no 1 Kerfield Place were referred to in this talk.

### *The Tithe Map*

The collection of the tithe or a tenth part of produce was a method of great antiquity for providing for the upkeep of the church. Its administration, however, led to incessant friction between clergy and farmers, complicated by the fact that some tithes were due to the rector, others to the vicar. From the seventeenth century onwards there were many advocates for the commutation of the tithe, i.e. for instituting a cash basis for its payment, and there arose innumerable individual arrangements, which led to confusion and uncertainty, and eventually the matter was dealt with on a national basis by the Tithe Act of 1836. This Act provided for the tithe to be replaced by a 'tithe rent-charge' to be worked out on a uniform basis.

The documents which had to be prepared were a map and an apportionment. There were three copies, one for the Tithe Commissioners (now Tithe Redemption Commissioners), one in the diocesan registry, and one to be kept by the incumbent and churchwardens in the parish chest. In the case of the parish of St Giles, Camberwell, which included Peckham and Dulwich, there seems to be no sign of the parish copy which should now be in the custody of the parish council: the Tithe Commissioners' copy has been passed to the Public Record Office, where it may be seen if ordered in advance (IR 29 34/21 and IR 30 34/21). The copy which was inspected and to which later remarks refer is the one in the Public Record Office: the map is in fact a certified copy prepared in 1913 as the original had become very badly worn, but the apportionment is the original document.

The map is drawn on a very large sheet 6'8" wide overall by 11'8½" high mounted on rollers: the map itself measured 5'8" from east to west and 10'5" from north to south, and is at a scale of 3 chains to an inch (a common surveyors' scale) equivalent to 26⅔ to a mile. It is dated January 1842 but is entitled 'Plan produced at a meeting held on 22nd Day of August 1838 and agreed to be adopted by the Landowners present', so the map as drawn relates to the situation not later than the middle of 1838.

Plots of land are numbered consecutively throughout the parish, some numbers being subdivided. Not all plots are numbered, however, as the tithe rent-charge was normally assessed only for plots of a quarter of an acre or more: this has a bearing on the accuracy of the map in detail, as it would only have been challenged by landowners where errors might affect the assessments and not therefore in plots under a quarter of an acre. The map is in fact generally reasonably accurate, certainly much more so and at a much larger scale than any previous map and was not superseded till the first edition of the Ordnance Survey in 1870. The Tithe Map was used, with some embellishment and bringing up to date, as a basis for Dewhirst's map of 1842, onto which some minor errors were also transmitted.

As important as the map was the apportionment: in this case it is in two bundles, one the original apportionment, the other containing alterations, often relating to railway development. It is a detailed schedule of all the assessed property. There are eight columns in the schedule giving 1. landowners in alphabetical order, 2. occupiers, 3. number on map, 4. name and description of land and premises, 5. state of cultivation, 6. area in acres, roods, and perches, 7. amount of rent-charge payable a) to the vicar, b) to the impropriators. The rent-charge was related to the notional produce of the piece of land, not to its value.

A coloured print from a tracing of the central part of the map provided an excellent key for the various topics which were referred to later.

### *Dr Lettson's farm plans*

In the British Museum is a bound volume with Lettson's bookplate (Maps 197 e 22) containing several of the well-known engravings of his house and grounds and also a series of six manuscript plans. Of the latter, one is a copy of a map of 1739, and the others are very crudely drawn plans of farms owned or rented by Lettson: some have dates in the 1790's. It is possible to correlate the farm



plans precisely in almost all details with the field boundaries shewn on the Tithe Map forty years later. The last document in the volume is a table of produce from the various parts of the estate in the years 1805 and 1806. There is also in this volume a copy of the engraved Plan of Grove Hill, with manuscript alterations both of boundary and of field-name which indicate various changes in the estate.

#### *Title deeds*

The title deeds of no 36 Grove Lane, belonging to Mr Densumbe, comprise eleven documents. The most comprehensive is a thirty-three page abstract of thirty different items ranging in date from 1720 to 1792; this together with numerous leases and conveyances was necessary to prove the title to one house! The ownership and transactions affecting quite substantial areas of Camberwell near the Grove and Grove Lane are set out in considerable detail.

The first reference in the abstract is to a settlement of 1720, made by Joanna Cock on her son, Peter, who was about to marry Letitia, daughter of Lord Trevor. The settlement contained nineteen items of property, which included four-fifths of the Manor or Lordship of Camberwell Buckingham, the Mansion House (which stood across the bottom of the Grove), the adjoining 'Vineyard' field of eight acres, and certain closes, called Spring Hill, of 22 acres. The last-mentioned is an area across the top of Camberwell Grove, later known as Grove Hill. The early documents refer to Walnut Tree Walk which later became the Grove; this was a private avenue behind the mansion house. The earlier name may well indicate that it was laid out in the later part of the seventeenth century when walnut was fashionable. Included in the settlement also were the house and ground of James Scraggs, worth ten pounds a year; from later documents it transpired that this is the land on which the long terrace of houses in Grove Lane, including no 36, were to be built.

The settlement was made just in time, as Joanna Cock was a victim of the South Sea Bubble and bankrupted in December 1720. A later owner, Sir William Belchier, banker and MP for Southwark, having mortgaged the property, failed in his mortgage payments, so that there was a forced sale in 1776 which led to the opening up of the Grove by the demolition of the ruinous mansion house and to the development of the Grove with Lettsom's first purchase on Grove Hill and building by others nearer the bottom.

The date of development of some houses can be ascertained

from the deeds. 'Queen's Row' (nos 18-62 Grove Lane) was in December 1789 'now in building or intended to be built' on land for which there was in March of that year power to grant building leases; also in March 1789 '14 houses were then erecting and building', identifiable as nos 91-117 Camberwell Grove. In combination with the ratebooks and other information it can be shewn that Dr Lettsom's house was built in 1779-80 and that Grove Hill House (which still stands as no 8 Grove Park) was built sometime between 1776 and 1780, probably before Lettsom's house.

#### *The House on the Green*

The House on the Green was a fine Queen Anne house, standing half way along the site of Wren Road which was named after the unfounded ascription of the house to Sir Christopher Wren. The house was demolished in 1851 when part of its grounds were purchased for the erection of the Congregational Church. During recent survey work in the area in preparation for opposing the Daneville Road compulsory purchase order it was discovered that the lower part of the east wall of the old house had survived behind no 13 Wren Road and its garden. Some Portland stone quoining survives at both corners, establishing precisely the location of the wall and at least some detail of the house. The deeds of the church land establish many facts about the ownership of the house and take its history back to 1709 when a 1000-year lease was granted. The conveyance of 1851 incorporates a large plan of the grounds of the house shewing the location of all the out-buildings as well as the house itself.

Many other matters were touched on: the development of the area around Daneville Road, Wren Road, and Jephson Street; the details of the development of Kerfield Place and the south side of Kerfield Crescent in 1865-66, derived from deeds belonging to Mr and Mrs Cole of 1 Kerfield Place; the location of the various parts of Grove Hill, mentioned in detail in deeds; the well which is shewn on the Plan of Grove Hill and was found during excavations in March and April 1973 on the Lettsom Development Area (see Newsletter 14 page 4); the De Crespigny estate as shewn by the Tithe Map.

Many of the subjects mentioned deserve to be more fully explored and it is hoped that it might be possible to start a series of Camberwell Papers, historical and other, to make available the fruits of research. Any ideas or contributions of material would be welcomed by Stephen Marks.

## TECHNIQUES FOR CHANGE IN THE URBAN STRUCTURE

On April 4th Mr E E Hollamby, Director of Development of the London Borough of Lambeth, spoke to members of the Society about some aspects of planning which caused major change in our cities. His talk, entitled 'Techniques for change in the urban structure', was illustrated with numerous slides of plans, models, and buildings.

He started by shewing a plan of Erith, an early idea which grew to become Thamesmead; this was a completely new development which provided improved conditions for living for a great many people but also suffered from the problems of its large scale. Next he shewed the LCC's Brandon Estate, on the borders of Camberwell and Kennington, as an early example of old retained amidst the new, where major surgery was used to deal with the various new demands, and involving the rehabilitation of several rows of houses and the provision of new shops and amenities. It combined opposing tendencies in open space and high density housing in tall blocks, characteristic of the glamour in contrast

with the typical five-storey working-class blocks of flats.

After dealing with these two examples from the past with which he had been involved at the old LCC, he described several current or recent projects of Lambeth Council, who claim to do more rehabilitation than any other borough in London; this they were doing on a large scale, for example in Vassall Road, which had been saved after twenty years of waiting to be redeveloped.

Brixton, which stands at the very centre of Lambeth, is an area, he said, where large scale change is necessary even though it is tempered with a feeling for small things. Brixton centre cannot go on as it is, but will be made to



accommodate road works (even though, happily, the out-size overhead motorway is scrapped), transport interchange including the Victoria Line, civic centre, new shopping centre, a complex of offices and urban recreation centre, a very controversial cluster of high towers accommodating small families and single people, and the existing market retained.

He referred to large schemes of redevelopment at Stockwell Park Road and at Central Hill, and to small-scale infill, either on vacant sites or, as at Vassall Road, on backland in large gardens. Infill is now in favour instead of comprehensive redevelopment which was almost obligatory twenty years ago and had destroyed, for example, the East End. Infill is now more popular, probably gives the most satisfaction to tenants, and gains from perpetuating an element of muddle and from preserving greater privacy.

Twenty years ago rehabilitation, such as on the Brandon Estate, was regarded by most people, especially the pro-

fessionals, as crazy, but during the '60s 'conservation', as a positive concept, became a focus for resistance to change, with the planners and councillors, the decision-makers, cast as the enemy: now it is a major planning tool for restraint, stimulating the re-use of old buildings, encouraged by grants and do-it-yourself.

Plans for Clapham Manor were shewn in which the basic idea of mixing old and new was the same as at Brandon but was much more subtly employed, with the new building on a small scale, not dominating the old, and more closely linked and related. Ted Hollamby finished his talk by referring to the latest scheme of improvement at Akerman Road, where a substantial area of slums is to be replaced by a new village with its own centre and a mix of buildings ranging from one to four storeys high.

There was plenty of time for a lot of interesting questions and discussion, after which Mr Hollamby was warmly thanked for coming to speak to us.

### Love Walk Hostel

In July last year the Society received notice of a proposal for the Love Walk Hostel for Disabled Women Workers to erect an extension at the rear of their existing building. The proposal was for a wing two storeys high with floor levels running through from the main building and with a pitched roof. The intended accommodation included new single rooms for the disabled residents, so that, without increasing their numbers, they could avoid the necessity for sharing rooms as they have done for some time, and also rooms for resident staff: this extra accommodation would undoubtedly result in much-needed improvements. At present the Hostel also use no 6 Love Walk which they have found unsuited to their needs.

The Society has in the past had occasion to examine two problems which here are related, mews development (see Newsletter 13) and intensification of site use. Within a short space of time there have been other schemes to increase site use nearby, at 33-39 and 25-29 De Crespigny Park. The latter site is the subject of a succession of applications, two of which were for the erection of single-storey dwellings at the far end of the gardens as well as building on the vacant site of no 25, while the former is a Council development, nearly finished, which the Society opposed vigorously and which in its present form is substantially reduced from the original proposal. From time to time we hear that there may be schemes to develop the land behind houses in Denmark Hill between Love Walk and De Crespigny Park. Taken in isolation each of these developments has a relatively restricted impact on the character of the area as a whole, but together they would bring about a considerable change in the density and therefore in the character of the area.

The Society therefore looked at the Hostel plans very carefully, and made comments, as requested, to the Council about the height and the effect of the two-storey development on the nearby houses and gardens in Grove Lane and on the effective openness of the space to the north of the Hostel. Members of the Executive Committee were invited to meet the Hostel committee.

The architect prepared an alternative plan for a single-storey building containing the same accommodation. This is about twice the length of the previous scheme and because of the fall of the ground northwards from Love Walk its height rises to some sixteen feet at the northern end. Although this degree of enlargement of the building still

seems an over-development of the site, the Society accepts that the benefit to the Hostel justifies it.

The Council has granted planning permission with conditions requiring the submission of details of the elevation and materials and about planting, particularly requiring a new ailanthus to replace the existing young mature tree which will have to be removed.

### The questionnaire - progress report

The Society's public meeting on September 3rd last year gave rise to our survey to find out local attitudes towards development and the needs of the community as seen by the community.

The survey was carried out from September 1973 to March this year, using door-to-door interviews, each lasting about twenty-five minutes. This naturally put heavy demands on the resources of the Society, but we received help also from many people who were not members of the Society. During the six months of the survey more than fifty people were involved in collecting and preliminary processing of data; of these only half were in fact members of the Society.

Many residents gave help after they had answered questionnaires. Students played a valuable part, both from the University of London Goldsmiths' College and from St Gabriel's College: both these groups worked under the supervision of a social psychologist, and the St Gabriel's students were also guided by a member of staff as part of their studies of the local community.

Work was spread over a large area, making the survey a very arduous and time-consuming process. The study was divided into two operations. The first was intended to give the most intensive coverage to the 'clearance' areas north and south of Daneville Road; here the aim was to visit all households and to do it in time to have answers to certain questions on housing analysed for the public inquiries in November and January. The second part of the survey covered surrounding areas and outlying streets, where the aim was for a 15% sample of households.

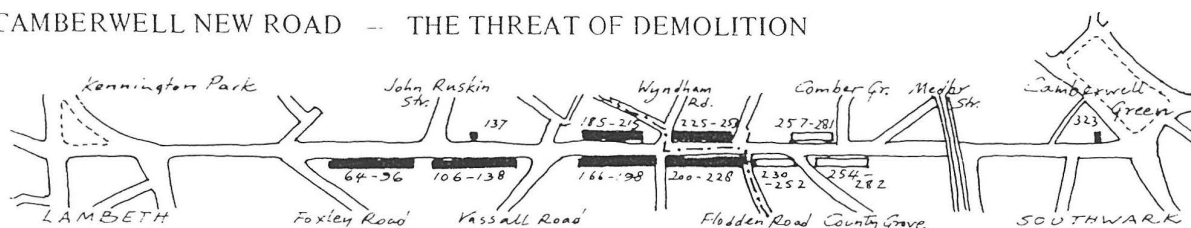
The processing of the survey information is now in hand. This requires the coding of answers, in itself an extensive task, especially with open-ended questions which do not provide specific alternatives for reply. The coding involves the selection of categories, and when these have

been done the services of the University of London Computer Centre will be made available for the processing.

Arrangements had been made to present at least some preliminary results to the Council at a meeting arranged

for March 7th. This meeting was then postponed, at the Council's request, to March 19th; unfortunately, this could not take place because of the overtime ban by the Council's staff and no new date has yet been arranged.

## CAMBERWELL NEW ROAD — THE THREAT OF DEMOLITION



Vauxhall Bridge was opened in 1816, providing a link from the West End and Westminster to the relatively undeveloped areas of South Lambeth. It was preceded by Blackfriars Bridge (1767) and Westminster Bridge (1750) focussing on St George's Circus and enabling the northern areas within the bend of the river and west of Southwark to be developed as suburbs of London. A bridge and new roads eastwards were projected for some years, such as, for example, Laurie and Whittle's map of 1809-10 shews with the line of Vauxhall Bridge Road, the bridge itself, and an intended link to the Oval and then a road running due eastward to cross Camberwell Road and lie north of and parallel with the canal. There was at this time no direct link with Camberwell. The opening of the bridge led to the construction in 1818 of the New Road, so called on maps (see the extract from Cary's map of 1820 in Newsletter no 17 page 3).

Cary shews no houses along the New Road. Building began from the west; by 1830 (Greenwood's map) development was virtually complete as far as Vassall Road and there were also individual houses and some terraces further east but with large gaps. These gaps were filled during the next ten years or so except in the stretch nearest Camberwell Green, that is east of Medlar Street.

The development of the New Road followed the pattern of ribbon growth typical of late Georgian suburban expansion, with villas, detached and semi-detached, and terraced house houses in symmetrical compositions or short groups. Almost all of them were built in brickwork and provided a striking display of the ingenuity with which brick, a simple material, could be handled to provide a restrained variety, with flat, segmental, elliptical, and round-arched openings and recessions in the planes of the brickwork, and with slight enrichments such as impost, cill bands, and string courses.

Much has been demolished, but there still survive substantial and almost uninterrupted stretches on the south side between Foxley Road and Flodden Road, all within Lambeth, with two terraces further east in Camberwell, and on the north side from Wyndham Road to Comber Grove, where of three groups the westernmost is in Lambeth and the other two in Camberwell.

In Camberwell, for which a new statutory list was issued in September 1972 (see Newsletter no 14), three out of the four groups are now listed as of special architectural or historic interest (nos 257-281, 230-252, and 254-282) while the fourth, comprising the Clarendon Public House and nos 225a-253 are on the local list. In Lambeth, however, where the houses are somewhat earlier, more numerous, and generally of greater interest, none at all is on the statutory list: with a few exceptions the general impress-

ion is of shabbiness and long-continuing neglect, and some individual houses are in a sad state of dereliction and from time to time suffer from vandalism and fire, and eventually meet their end at the hands of the Greater London Council.

This state of affairs comes as no surprise, however, for these houses have been overtaken by that special bane of our civilized society, planning blight: the Greater London Council have for a long time had proposals to widen the road almost all the way from Foxley Road to Flodden Road, entirely on the south side, which will entail the demolition of almost all these houses. The Council have also drawn up plans to redevelop the stretch from Foxley Road to Vassall Road for housing so that, road or no road, many fine houses are still under threat of demolition.

The Society has, therefore, written to the Secretary of State for the Environment asking him to list as a matter of great urgency a substantial number of these houses, so that their claim to preservation can be properly assessed. We would like to see the road proposals radically curtailed, especially as we have been deeply involved in what is to happen at the eastern end of the New Road at Camberwell Green, and the houses repaired and improved.

A list of our recommendations is given below, but particularly worthy of note are: nos 64-76, a symmetrical terrace with tablets in pediment blocks over centre and end houses reading OLIVE 1825 TERRACE (the first word defaced but marked on old maps), 78-82; a group of three, 96, a double-fronted villa with Doric portico and derelict, 114 (used as offices), 120-138, a symmetrical terrace which has lost its eastern end by demolition (two more houses stand empty), 200-210, a group with a near symmetrical balance, 212 which is owned by Lambeth and is especially attractive with central block and low wings, 137, a detached stuccoed house with pediment, 185-7, an excellent pair, and 189, another double-fronted villa boldly named and dated in a stucco tablet CLIFTON 1833 COTTAGE.

### *Buildings recommended for listing*

In Southwark (Camberwell)

225 (Clarendon PH), 225a, 227-253 (odd), 323

In Lambeth

north side: 137, 185-7, 189 (Clifton Cottage), 191-215

south side: 64-96, 106-138, 166-198, 200-228 (even)

Miss Gillian Whaite  
30 Love Walk  
S E 5

# THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

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*Chairman* Miss Nadine Beddington, 17 Champion Grove, S E 5  
*Vice-Chairman* David Whiting, 92 Ruskin Park House, Champion Hill, S E 5  
*Hon Treasurer* Brian Allsworth, 165 Grove Lane, S E 5 (274 0367)  
*Joint Hon Secretaries* Michael Ivan, 24 Grove Lane, S E 5 (703 4564)  
Mrs Valerie Kent, 38 Camberwell Grove, S E 5 (701 4758)

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NEWSLETTER NO 20

July 1974

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## THE SOCIETY'S COMMITTEE

The new Executive Committee elected at the Annual General Meeting on May 20th comprises the officers listed above and the following people:

Miss Judi Bratt 3 Queens Court, 6/7 Grove Park (733 3537)  
Mrs Beryl Johnson 70 Daneville Road  
David Main .96 Talfourd Road  
Stephen Marks 50 Grove Lane (703 2719)  
Trevor Pattinson 3 The Hamlet, Champion Hill (274 8045)  
Paul Sandilands 21 De Crespigny Park (703 4536)  
Miss Sally Stockley 113 Camberwell Grove (701 2658)  
Mrs Shirley Tanner 107 Camberwell Grove (703 8624)  
Jim Tanner 107 Camberwell Grove (703 8624)  
Roger Thompson 52 Camberwell Grove (703 3233)

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## HAVE YOU SEEN A DYING ELM TREE?

We are very concerned about the possible spread of Dutch Elm disease to the elms in our area. This is a countrywide problem and, according to a recent Observer report, there are 22 million elms in England and 20% of those in the south have already been killed by Dutch Elm disease. The disease is spread by a small beetle about 1/4 long which lives under the bark. It is also spread by root contact: as elms regenerate by suckering, any tree in the vicinity of an infected tree should be viewed with suspicion.

Dutch Elm disease was first identified in the south east of England in 1927 and there have been periodic outbreaks since then. Unfortunately a particularly virulent form of the disease has more recently been introduced to this country in infected logs from Canada. The disease does not, as suggested by the name, emanate from Holland, but derives its name from the very extensive research carried out there.

The most obvious and easily observed symptom of the disease is a yellowing of a part of the foliage; this may occur from early July onwards and should be noticeable now. If the attack by the beetles is massive, then the entire tree can die in one season, but if it is confined to some branches only, then there is a good chance of saving the tree as it is now possible to treat infected trees successfully if the disease is detected early.

Fortunately some varieties of elm are so far immune, but *your help is urgently needed* in detecting early signs of the disease. *If you see any signs of Dutch Elm disease please report it to one of the Society's Secretaries so that the co-operation of the Council may be sought in a programme of treatment.*

## EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE YEAR 1975

*Can we help save Camberwell's oldest church?*

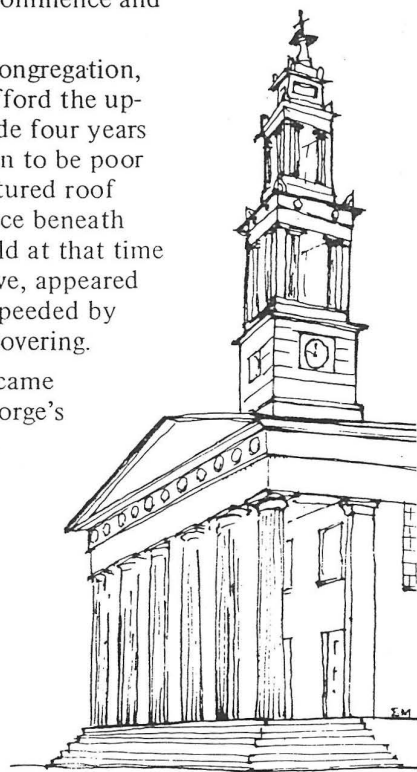
The oldest, and perhaps most architecturally distinguished, church in Camberwell is in danger of demolition failing effective action to save the building in the next few months. Your committee has resolved to press for such action as part of Southwark's contribution to European Architectural Heritage Year 1975.

St George's, Wells Way, was built by Francis Bedford in 1822-24, one of four churches he designed in South London at the same period. A fuller appraisal by Stephen Marks appears below, so suffice to say here that its giant Doric portico with west tower is such a prominent landmark in north Camberwell that it must be familiar to members of the Camberwell Society. The slow but inexorable implementation of

Burgess Park (formerly North Camberwell Open Space) adds to its prominence and the importance of its preservation.

Some 20 months ago St George's was declared redundant. Its tiny congregation, decimated by the demolition occurring all around, could no longer afford the upkeep and considerable sum needed for repair. A structural survey made four years ago by the architect Mr Martin Caroe revealed the building's condition to be poor but not irreparable. The most serious faults he found were two fractured roof trusses (making the roof potentially dangerous) and signs of subsidence beneath the tower. He estimated that essential repairs to the roof alone would at that time have cost about £6000. Underpinning the tower, inevitably expensive, appeared less urgent. Since his survey, the process of decay has been greatly speeded by vandals who have, among other acts, stripped the roof of its copper covering.

Redundant churches procedure under the Pastoral Measure which became effective in April 1969 is complex, but basically, in the case of St George's (an ecclesiastically listed Grade B building), it means this. From the date redundancy was confirmed, liability for the building's repair and maintenance passed from the parochial church council to the Southwark Diocesan Board of Finance. The board's Redundant Churches Uses Committee was then under a duty 'to make every endeavour to find an alternative use for the building', for a period of three years. To date, despite the conscientious efforts of Mr Crowe, assistant secretary of the committee, no suitable alternative user has been found; and if none is found by November 1975, the diocese will probably have no alternative but to demolish the church.



This would be a tragedy. Apart from the intrinsic merits of St George's, the future shape of London's first major park to be created this century is unpromising enough without the loss of the most important building so strategically sited on its southern perimeter. At one stage the GLC, whose responsibility Burgess Park is, showed some interest in retaining the building, but the Council's latest layout, we hear, shows it gone. A welfare organisation was said to be interested in its use, but was frightened off by the structural report. One of the smaller London orchestras is believed to be attracted by the possibility of using part of the interior part time as a rehearsal hall, but is probably unable to raise the necessary finance unaided. (Many of you will know that Holy Trinity Church, Southwark, also by Bedford and also redundant, has been saved by the concerted efforts of the London Symphony and London Philharmonic Orchestras; St George's, too, is reported to have excellent musical acoustics.)

So we have decided to try and enlist the Borough's aid in making the restoration and conversion of St George's a major item in its Heritage Year programme. A lot of money will be needed, but if we can persuade the UK Secretariat of European Architectural Heritage Year to accept this as a worthwhile project, there is money available.

The project will stand a much better chance of acceptance if it is backed up by realistic proposals for alternative use(s). This is therefore an appeal to all 200 members of the Camberwell Society for help. Three promising ideas have already been put forward and the committee is following them up. But we need many more. So if anything occurs to you, however tentative (though personal contact with the body concerned will of course make an approach easier), *please contact me without delay*,

Roger Thompson, 52 Camberwell Grove, S E 5 (703 3233)

### St George's: the church and its architect

St George's church was one of some six hundred churches built throughout the country under the auspices of the Church Building Commission which was in existence from 1818 till 1856. To remedy a dire shortage of church space for a rapidly expanding population Parliament, after much wrangling, passed the first of several Church-Building Acts in 1818, establishing the commission and authorizing the expenditure of a million pounds. This first parliamentary grant provided substantial contributions towards the building of almost a hundred churches in the space of a decade. St George's comes within this period, its foundation stone

being laid on April 23rd (St George's Day) 1822; it was consecrated two years later. Towards the cost of £16,700 £5000 was paid by the commission who subsequently made a further grant for repairs.

Francis Octavius Bedford (1784-1858), a resident of Camberwell Grove, was the architect of this and five other churches in London, two Gothic and four Grecian. Like other architects of the period he was able to suit the style to the client's demand, but he was clearly well attuned to the spirit of the Greek Revival, having travelled in Greece and prepared drawings for publication. The burst of building activity after Waterloo included many public



buildings where the Greek Revival could be successfully exploited and in fact a large number of the Commissioners' churches were in the Grecian style. Designs for churches were provided from a variety of sources, sometimes by the Crown architects, Nash, Soane and Smirke, but often by a local architect such as Bedford. His other Grecian churches are Holy Trinity in Trinity Church Square, St Luke's, Norwood, and St John's, Waterloo Road; all four were under construction during the years 1822-25.

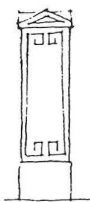
St George's church is built on a very simple rectangular plan; an apse, added at the end of the nineteenth century, mars the external simplicity at the east end. The whole of the enrichment of the exterior is concentrated on the portico and the tower at the western end. The portico is hexastyle Doric of superb purity with wreaths on the frieze (as on the monument of Thrasyllos) in place of the usual metopes and triglyphs; the clarity of the portico is supported by the plainness of the wall behind it in which are five unadorned door openings with windows or recesses above them.

The tower rises through three stages to support a casket, surmounted by an urn carrying a cross; the lowest stage is solid and rusticated, while the second and third are open with Doric and Ionic columns respectively within corner piers. The diminution and relative proportions of the parts of this tower are particularly successful and the relationship of height of tower to breadth and weight of portico is also most satisfactory in what is essentially a situation of architectural incompatibility. The flank walls and rear of the church have almost completely plain stonework with the entablature of the portico carried on to it and very shallow pilasters enclosing the bay under the tower.

The interior has galleries on three sides supported on Doric columns; it was noted for its dullness when it was new and it has had a number of insertions and alterations of varying quality; nevertheless it is a good space with a potentially attractive appearance.

The heavy cast iron railings which used to surround the forecourt have been removed, but the stone piers remain with Soanian incised decoration.

St George's is typical of the Commissioners' churches: it had to be built cheaply but not without the dignified enrichment which was felt to be necessary for a place of worship: the ornament was therefore concentrated where it would have greatest impact. This impact, even more evident today in the context of Burgess Park, allied to a sensitive design, makes St George's one of Camberwell's most valuable buildings for which a new use must now be found.



### Map of Peckham and Camberwell in about 1861

A facsimile reproduction of a map of Peckham and Camberwell is being issued with this Newsletter. The map is sheet 5 of the Suburbs of London from *The Dispatch Atlas*; the original measures 12¼" by 17½". It shows on the western side the London Chatham and Dover Railway (perhaps under construction) but there is no sign of the east-west lines of the London Brighton and South Coast Railway crossing Peckham and Camberwell and opened in 1865. Although the period of most rapid growth has not yet begun there are plenty of recent signs of the steady expansion and infill, for example, De Crespigny Park, Love Walk, Windsor Walk, College (Lettsom) Street, Kerfield Crescent,

Wilby (Jephson) Street; there is a new road from Grove Park to Peckham, and Talfourd Road, Denman Road, and Brunswick Square have just been laid out.

The Society is enjoying a kind of dividend on earlier publications, as the cost of printing is being borne out of the proceeds of the sale of Dewhurst's Map of Camberwell, 1842 (of which copies are still available from Stephen Marks, 50 Grove Lane, for the unaltered price of £1.10).

Further copies of the 1861 map are available in return for a donation to the Society of 10 pence (by post 10p extra).

### CAMBERWELL GREEN — 70 YEARS AGO

The South London Press in 1908 carried reports of depression existing in the borough of Camberwell and particularly in the neighbourhood of the Green. A representative of the paper interviewed 'Mr Robertson, the well-known auctioneer and estate agent of Camberwell-green'. The extracts which follow are taken from a report of the interview published in the issue of May 29th 1908.

"It is indeed a strange thing they can get an excellent market in Westmoreland-road, Camberwell-gate, where good rates are paid for the property, and yet in the main roads very little indeed is done. What's the cause of it? It's a thick problem. Some people blame the trams, and it would look as if they had something to do with the depression. You must have wide spaces for trams, yet the best business centres are the narrow streets. Where are the best business places in the City? Why, Cheapside, Throgmorton-street, and Mincing-lane. Church-street, Camberwell, used to be a good business centre, but it is not now.."

"I do not think I overstate the case when I say that in Church-street one in every three houses is empty. There are a number of empties in Camberwell-road, but it has never been a good place for business..... One of the drawbacks to Camberwell generally is the large number of basement and semi-basement houses which are absolutely out of date. Houses which have no basements let fairly readily, and even sell fairly well."

Mr Robertson proposed, though without much hope, that the landlords should get together and agree to reduce rents substantially and thought that the Borough Council "should pull down the rates accordingly, so as to induce tradesmen to come and invest in empty shops and make the place again worth looking at". "All sorts of inducements have to be held out to secure temporary tenants, and still they won't take the bait, whilst established tenants are only considering how soon and how easily they can get away."

"We have also to contend with a general fact, viz., that more than ever businesses are being concentrated. Big emporiums are ousting smaller trades-people, who have a very poor chance. Where a draper runs furniture, china and ironmongery departments in connection with his business, what chance has the furniture shop run by another tradesman?"

Mr Robertson's remarks demonstrate that blight and depression at Camberwell Green are not a phenomenon of our age only: main road traffic was bad for business in 1908 and it seems that the small trader feared the large emporium just as now he is worried by the dominance of the supermarket with which he can scarcely compete.

[We are indebted to Mr John Robertson, of Andrews and Robertson, for bringing to our notice the newspaper cutting on which this article is based.]



## Annual General Meeting, May 20th 1974

The Annual General Meeting of The Camberwell Society was held in the Vaughan Room of the United Reformed Church on May 20th 1974. There was an excellent attendance of over fifty people to discuss the annual report, to elect the committee and officers, and to talk over matters of current concern. The Annual Report (printed in Newsletter no 19) was received after fuller explanation from Michael Ivan and Valerie Kent about our Camberwell Green activities, in particular the questionnaire.

The Treasurer presented the accounts which showed that the Society this year had spent more than it had received; this was accounted for by especially heavy expenditure on the Camberwell Campaign, by the issue of a more frequent, more informative, and better printed Newsletter, and by a small loss on the sales of Christmas cards, of which there is now a considerable stock.

The constitution was, after lengthy discussion, amended, as had been proposed, to allow the Society to have additional officers. The amendment enabled Michael Ivan and Valerie Kent to be elected as Joint Honorary Secretaries; Nadine Beddington and Brian Allsworth were re-elected as Chairman and Hon Treasurer, and the new office of Vice-Chairman was filled by David Whiting who had been an Acting Joint Secretary for part of the previous year. The new Executive Committee is set out on page 1 of this Newsletter.

Among the items discussed were dutch elm disease (it was suggested that the Society should obtain and pass on information to the Council, and should urge the saving of important elms), front garden railings (good and not-so-good examples which have recently been put up prompted a call for a design guide), general improvement areas (why have Southwark done virtually nothing, when Lambeth have outlined a programme of fifty designations?), and possible extensions of the Society's area (in particular to include the north side of Grove Hill Road).

Discussion did not end with the formal close of the meeting just before 10 o'clock, when many members found their way to the Grove House Tavern.

## Staffordshire Street, Peckham, nos 13-25

A year ago the Society objected to an application by the Borough Council for consent to demolish this late Georgian terrace of seven houses which had recently been added to the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest (see Newsletter 13 page 4). We very much regret that in spite of the objections not only from ourselves but also from the Greater London Council and the Georgian Group, the Secretary of State for the Environment has given Southwark listed building consent to demolish yet another part of our dwindling heritage.

## Accounts for the year ending May 31st 1974

<i>Expenditure</i>		<i>Income</i>	
Camberwell Campaign		membership	
printing and materials	31.56	subscriptions	93.54
hire of halls	25.50		
newsletters			
printing and postage	41.23		
greetings cards	168.32		
less sales	158.65		
	9.67		
London Amenity & Transport Assoc, subscription	5.00	excess of expenditure over income	46.33
sundry expenses	26.91		
	<u>139.87</u>		<u>139.87</u>

## Balance sheet at May 31st 1974

		<i>Assets</i>	
balance at 1 6 74	132.08	bank balance	
less excess of expenditure over income	46.33	at 31.5 74	130.07
	<u>85.75</u>	less creditors	44.32
			<u>85.75</u>

## Accounts for the period December 31st 1970 to May 31st 1972.

*These have not been previously published; the intervening accounts appear in Newsletter 15 page 4.*

<i>Expenditure</i>		<i>Income</i>	
general expenses	45.35	membership	
hire of hall	3.15	subscriptions	63.50
excess of income over expenditure	52.22	donation	4.00
		sales of cards and maps	74.92
		less costs	41.70
	<u>100.72</u>		33.22
			<u>100.72</u>

## Balance sheet at May 31st 1972

		<i>Assets</i>	
balance at 31 12 70	43.37	bank balance	
excess of income over expenditure	52.22	at 31 5 72	78.07
	<u>95.59</u>	debtors	17.52
			<u>95.59</u>

Miss Gillian Whaite  
20 Love Walk  
S E 5

# THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

*Chairman* Miss Nadine Beddington 17 Champion Grove, S E 5  
*Vice-Chairman* David Whiting 92 Ruskin Park House, Champion Hill, S E 5  
*Hon Treasurer* Brian Allsworth 165 Grove Lane, S E 5 (274 0367)  
*Joint Hon Secretaries* Michael Ivan 24 Grove Lane, S E 5 (703 4564)  
Mrs Valerie Kent 38 Camberwell Grove, S E 5 (701 4758)

NEWSLETTER NO 21

September 1974

## PUBLIC MEETING — CAMBERWELL GREEN — THE QUESTIONNAIRE

We propose to arrange a public meeting towards the end of November to deal with the various issues at Camberwell Green. The replies to our questionnaire have now been fully collated and analysed and we are presenting the results at a meeting with the Council on September 24th and will soon after that release them publicly: we expect some extremely interesting facts to emerge and will be looking for the reactions of all those who are involved in the planning of the area and for some quick progress to follow up the survey.

There are still no decisions from the public inquiries on the Daneville Road and Selborne Road compulsory purchase orders (see Newsletter no 18 page 2), but one interesting change in the legislation puts the Council in a very different position legally on these and other clearance areas. Section 114 of the new Housing Act 1974 (still unpublished because of a printers' strike) allows councils to make 'rehabilitation orders' on houses in clearance areas, so they can now overcome what was previously an inescapable duty to clear the area as soon as practicable. Will our Council use this new power?

*For technical reasons Section 114 is not yet in force.*

## MEETINGS FOR MEMBERS

Two meetings for members have been arranged. They will be held in the Vaughan Room of the United Reformed Church (at the corner of Grove Lane and Love Walk, entrance by the basement door under the ramp).

Monday October 28th 1974 at 8 pm

### *SOME CAMBERWELL LANDMARKS AND LESSER LIGHTS*

STEPHEN MARKS will show a selection of slides of things you may not have noticed and give you a chance to try to identify them!

Monday January 27th 1975 at 8 pm

SALLY STOCKLEY will talk about CHINA and shew slides from her recent visit

Coffee and biscuits will be available after the meetings.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

Our Treasurer and members of the Committee will soon be asking you for your subscriptions if you have not already paid them.

*Can we keep the subscription at 50 pence a year?* All our costs are rising fast and our activities have expanded considerably, so we can only keep the subscription stable if members pay up promptly AND help to enlist new members for the Society.

50 pence is a *minimum*: more would give welcome assistance and strength, for instance by maintaining two or more subscriptions in a family.

If we fail to increase our numbers the subscription will have to go up soon.

## CHRISTMAS CARDS

We now have a large stock of our greetings cards printed in

the last three years and these will again be available. They will be obtainable from The Passage Bookshop and from members of the Society at 5 pence each, including envelope.

We are looking into the possibility of producing another card for this year with quite a different kind of subject. Announcement will be made towards the end of October.

## CONSERVATION AREAS — STILL MORE PROTECTION

Under a new Act of Parliament, the Town and Country Amenities Act 1974, all buildings in conservation areas are now protected: as far as demolition is involved they are to be treated as listed buildings and may not be demolished without listed building consent from the local authority. In Camberwell this means that the approval both of Southwark and of the Greater London Council has to be obtained. This procedure supersedes the protection which

could be given if a council chose to use permissive powers under a previous act which was referred to in Newsletter no 14 (page 4).

Two other provisions of the new Act are worth mentioning here. The Secretary of State has been given power to require councils to review their designations and himself to designate conservation areas if he thinks a local authority is failing to do the job. The help of the Secretary of State may be just what's needed if Southwark continue to be dilatory about designating the Holly Grove/Lyndhurst area which the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee has been pressing for over the last three years.

Under an earlier Act councils could carry out emergency works at seven days notice on empty listed buildings needing urgent attention, but they could not recoup their costs; the new Act allows them to claim their costs from the owner. This Act also permits them to take this action if unlisted buildings need attention, if the Secretary of State agrees that they are important to a conservation area.

### CAMBERWELL NEW ROAD — LISTING

Our appeal to the Secretary of State for the Environment to list many houses in Camberwell New Road (see Newsletter 19 page 6) coincided with the start of a listing re-survey of Lambeth by the Department's investigators. It is very gratifying to us that out of the 83 houses we recommended in the Lambeth stretch of the New Road 80 (nos 64-96, 106-138, 168-228 on the south side, and nos 185-213 on the north side) were added to the Statutory List in June as a matter of urgency and as a result of our submission in April. Unfortunately our suggestions in Camberwell were not accepted.

The next step is to get something done urgently to stop further deterioration of empty and derelict houses and to see that they are put to proper use again. This is fairly and squarely the responsibility of the Greater London Council who own many of them: do they still wish to demolish these fine rows of historic buildings for roads and redevelopment?

Among the houses which have just been listed on the south side fourteen are now empty and another three look very unoccupied, perhaps just vacated; these are a quarter of the total number which are so threatened. Empty houses suffer very quickly the effects of vandalism and neglect. We have therefore written to the GLC to take immediate steps to prevent further rot and to get them repaired and occupied.

#### 125-137 Grove Lane

In February 1969 planning permission was given to the Ogilby Housing Society for a block containing thirty one-bedroom flats, caretaker's flat and shop/Post Office on the site of nos 125-137 Grove Lane. The site was already vacant then and has remained empty ever since.

Planning consents normally lapse after five years, so a new application has recently been submitted for the renewal of the previous permission. The Housing Society regard the matter as a formality but when we looked at the proposal, on the invitation of the Council, we felt that it was essential to take the opportunity for reassessment.

The provision under which the permission lapsed was included in the 1968 Town and Country Planning Act to

enable changed circumstances to be taken into account.

The circumstances have changed substantially since 1969: the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area, although talked of for some time, was not designated till June 1970, nearly a year and a half after the permission was given, and as designated it did not include this site, which is in an extension recently recommended by this Society (see Newsletter 15 page 3) and approved by Southwark. Moreover, whether a development is in or outside a conservation area, it is now generally recognised that greater regard should be given to the relationship of new buildings to their neighbourhood and surroundings.

The proposal to provide much-needed accommodation is, of course, very much welcomed in principle, and we have been most reluctant to cause any delay to a housing association, but we could not let the disappointing treatment of this key site go without comment. Unfortunately the scheme falls far short of the requisite standard of design in many fundamental points and is a very poor neighbour to the existing buildings on either side, so we have written to the Council with our detailed criticism and with suggestions about the proper approach for this site.

#### 95 Camberwell Grove

The Society has recently asked the Council to do emergency works and use other powers to get no 95 Camberwell Grove repaired.

Permission was given in March 1973 for its conversion into five self-contained flats, and this was one of the cases which led to the Society's study of conversions of larger houses (see Newsletter 13 page 5). A certain amount of work, mainly clearance and stripping out was started, but also several external openings were left without any weather protection. When we inspected it recently no work had been done for many months, the rear addition roof and part of the main rear roof were without protection or covering, and water was cascading into the interior whenever there was any rain, bringing down ceilings and saturating floors and walls to such an extent that damp was also penetrating through the party wall into no 93.

We have asked the Council to get the house repaired, if necessary using all its legal powers which could ultimately result in compulsory purchase if the owner persists in neglecting this building.

### THE VANISHED GLORIES OF DENMARK HILL

*Shortly after 1900 a local or London newspaper (so far unidentified) published in a series entitled Talks about Old London the following account of The Vanished Glories of Denmark Hill, in which, we are informed, "Mr William Adams, of Harvey-road, Camberwell, tells of the transformation of his native suburb". This entertaining picture of nineteenth-century Camberwell was brought to our notice by Mr John Crawley, of 43 Grove Hill Road, the grandson of Mr Adams.*

Mr Adams has never had much fault to find with Camberwell. It was good enough for his father, he himself was born there, and for eighty-three years—all his life—it has been his home.

Even when he married he took his bride no further than a few doors' distance from his father's house, and pantech-nicon firms have had little of his money since then. He has

lived in the same house in Harvey-road for the past twenty years.

Mr Adams was born in Joiner's Arms-yard, at the foot of Denmark-hill. His father was an ostler at the inn and young William had plenty of interesting things on which to feast his youthful eyes.

"At the corner of our yard," says he, "was a cage which was used as a lock-up. It had two divisions—one for men, the other for women, and you can imagine how we children appreciated the spectacle of the poor unfortunate folk who were confined there.

"But we never approached very close—we always felt a certain amount of terror. I suppose we regarded the caged prisoners in the light of wild beasts.

"Opposite the Joiner's Arms the Canterbury coaches used to pull up.

"There was a booking office there, and the bustle was incessant, while a big public-house called the 'Fox-under-the-Hill' near by was an important staging-house. It was at this latter place, by the way, that I met my wife.

#### "VERY SELECT"

"As soon as I was old enough I started out to earn money by helping to clean knives and boots at the big houses which then stood on Denmark-hill.

"It was a very select neighbourhood, and many old families occupied mansions there.

"There were the Ruskins—Mr John Ruskin's parents—the Fishers, the Hibberds, the Stones, the Bignells, the Longsons, and many others. In one of the mansions lived Lady Robinson and in another Sir Claude de Crespigny. The latter's place was called Champion Lodge, and it had beautiful grounds of about thirty acres.

"In front of it stood a number of old cedars, and the iron gates which guarded the drives were said to be specially fine works of art. Champion House was pulled down somewhere about 1840. I think, and rows of houses put on its site.

"Camberwell generally was far from being overcrowded in those days.

"Coldharbour-lane really was a lane, and the fields on either side of it were largely used for strawberry growing. Just near Camberwell Station was Myatt's Farm, a picturesque place with gardens all around it, which were long

celebrated for their fruit.

"I got my schooling at the Greencoat School, on Camberwell Green. In those days the green was a rough sort of place. It was badly looked after and people shot rubbish all over it without hindrance.

"Just alongside the school was held the famous Camberwell Fair. It always began on August 18 and was kept up for a week.

"One of the favourite places of amusement there was Alger's Crown and Anchor Tavern. It stretched from one end of the green to the other, and was a rare place for dancing, while at Richardson's booth, you could always see the most thrilling plays acted.

#### POUND ON THE GREEN

"On the fair-ground was a pound, into which straying animals were put until they were claimed, and on the site of the town hall stood the stocks and alongside them the whipping-post.

"After I left school I got employment with a greengrocer, and my duty was the delivery of goods. This I did on horseback. I had an excellent horse and we made many a long and pleasant journey together.

"At last, in 1853, I took out a cab license, and ever since then I've stood on the rank at Camberwell Green. When I first knew it there were rarely more than four or five cabs there, and trade was good.

"I got many regular jobs from the Denmark Hill folk I'd worked for when I was a lad, and frequently drove Mr Ruskin, whom I always found a very nice gentleman.

"Sometimes I would be engaged to drive a party to the Peckham races, which were held in the gardens of the Rosemary Branch. These were most extensive, and cricketing, pigeon-shooting, and every kind of sport was carried on there.

"The tavern stood in Southampton-street, and although I think there is still a public-house there, the big grounds have long been built over.

"Yes, 'built over'—that's been the fate of all the green fields I knew in my youth.

"But I've stuck to Camberwell through it all, and at any rate I've got the consolation of knowing that there's little room for any more buildings."

*What would Mr Adams have thought of Camberwell now!*

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## SCENES FROM THE PAST

Southwark Council's Libraries Department has just published a second series of twelve facsimiles of prints in the Southwark Collection. It includes a very attractive view from Denmark Hill in 1779 and pictures of a farm on Peckham Rye in 1771 and of Casina House, Dulwich, in 1804. They are available from Southwark Libraries either as a set of twelve in a wallet with detailed notes (£1.00) or singly (10 pence each).



# THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

*Chairman* Miss Nadine Beddington 17 Champion Grove, S E 5  
*Vice-Chairman* David Whiting 92 Ruskin Park House, Champion Hill, S E 5  
*Hon Treasurer* Brian Allsworth 165 Grove Lane, S E 5 (274 0367)  
*Joint Hon Secretaries* Michael Ivan 24 Grove Lane, S E 5 (703 4564)  
Mrs Valerie Kent 38 Camberwell Grove, S E 5 (701 4758)

NEWSLETTER NO 22

October 1974

## CAMBERWELL GREEN AREA – PUBLIC MEETING – THE SURVEY AND THE FUTURE

Thursday November 21st is the date for our public meeting at the United Reformed Church (at the corner of Grove Lane and Love Walk) at 8 pm.

The public meeting is being held to discuss what has happened and the next steps in which we expect useful co-operation with the Council. The results of last winter's survey are now available. They have been published by the Society and make good reading if you are at all interested in the future of the Camberwell Green area. The *Report of the Survey of the Camberwell Green Area 1973/74* can be bought from the Hon Secretary, Mrs Valerie Kent, 38 Camberwell Grove, S E 5, for 75 pence; members may have it for 50 pence.

There is still no result from the two Public Inquiries in November 1973 and in January this year; after nine months we are assured by the Department of the Environment that the orders are 'under active consideration'! Meanwhile the Council's Housing Department is going ahead on the quite unwarranted assumption that the orders will be confirmed: their officials are calling on owners in the Clearance Areas and at least one of these officials, with her foot firmly in the door, is telling them they will have to move anyway so they might as well face up to reality. This is very distressing and is driving at least one woman hysterical: we think this is not far short of harassment and is disgraceful and irresponsible action for a local authority.

By the time you get this Newsletter there will have been on October 23rd a Council's Committee meeting at which a planning brief for the redevelopment of the Selborne Road area will have been considered, also assuming confirmation of the compulsory purchase orders. The Council, in some quarters at any rate, clearly regards the outcome of the Public Inquiries as a foregone conclusion, and treats the protesting residents with disdain and contempt. On the other hand, we are, of course, relieved to hear that the Council is beginning to organise the rehousing of those who both need and want to move.

We have written to the Secretary of State for the Environment about the Council's behaviour.

## MEMBERS' MEETINGS

*Don't forget*

Monday October 28th at 8 pm, when Stephen Marks will show slides and talk about

*SOME CAMBERWELL LANDMARKS AND LESSER LIGHTS*

This will be in the Wren Hall of the United Reformed Church

AND

Monday January 27th at 8 pm. Sally Stockley's

*LIFE IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA*

*Some themes for discussion, with slides from a recent visit*

## DON'T SPOIL YOUR FACE

We have seen how easily the Gas Board can put up long and hideous flue extensions on the facades of buildings (e g nos 32 and 34 Camberwell Grove) and in spite of any protests we make it's very difficult or impossible to get them taken down again. We wrote to the Borough Development Officer about nos 32 and 34 but nothing has happened so far. Also unsuccessful were our efforts on no 69, almost opposite,

STOP PRESS  
Another empty listed building  
gutted by fire

Thousands of pounds have been added to the bill for making 92 Camberwell New Road habitable by wilful failure to protect this and other recently listed buildings.

Guess who owns it - the GLC, of course!

which is festooned with prominent white vent outlets: we wrote about this one too, and the Borough Planner promised to get them removed (see Newsletter no 17 page 7).

It's so simple to solve some problems with outside drain pipes, ventilators, television cables, and bright red burglar alarms conspicuously placed. They proliferate so quickly and their impact on the appearance is out of all proportion to their size. Of course our buildings must be brought up to date, made safe, secure, and habitable, but there are always a number of ways of achieving these aims, and if we are to care for our heritage and pass it on as well as we can we have to make special efforts to avoid harming our buildings and their appearance.

If the technical expert says the pipe, burglar alarm, or whatever, *must* be in a particular place where it will look awful, tell him he has *got to think again*, because he usually means that that's the usual place or the easiest place: unfortunately the alternative is sometimes more expensive and occasionally less than perfect but these are part of the obligations we take on with our houses.

So, please don't disfigure the face of your house with warts and weals, and when you have the chance do try to undo the harm done in the past.

### CONSERVATION AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Conservation Areas Advisory Committee is a committee of the London Borough of Southwark and is composed of representatives of various local societies, including The Camberwell Society, other bodies such as the Victorian Society and the RIBA, and councillors; the present Chairman is Ron Watts, Chairman of Southwark's Planning and Development Committee.

The Committee began life in 1970 with its first meeting on June 1st. Meetings are held three or four times a year, though unfortunately this year the overtime ban made a meeting in the summer impossible.

The function of the Committee is to advise the Planning and Development Committee and the Applications Subcommittee on the more important applications affecting conservation areas, on the care and enhancement of conservation areas, and on the applications to demolish listed buildings in conservation areas. It can also consider suggestions for designation and several proposals have gone through the Committee, some with a satisfactory outcome, such as the extensions to the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area, while others, like the Lyndhurst/Holly Grove area, are still having a difficult passage because of a strongly held but quite unsubstantiated belief elsewhere in the Council that conservation is bad for tenants.

The opportunity to look at applications in conservation areas in all parts of the borough is a particularly valuable process in bringing home the wide variety of areas and their problems to those who are normally concerned with a small area only.

Much of the Council officers' good work that goes into trying to get improvements to schemes is revealed at these meetings, work that is seldom acknowledged in the brief public notices that an application has been approved or refused. Presentation of material is invariably excellent, with large photographs and maps and slide shows by officers or societies' representatives. While obviously such a committee may sometimes overemphasize the visual aspect its work is frequently rewarded with the acceptance of its recommendations or views by the Planning

and Development Committee and the increasing interest shown by the Council.

The Camberwell Society's representative is Stephen Marks.

### CONSERVATION AREAS EXTENDED Camberwell Grove and Sceaux Gardens

Last year through the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee we suggested that there should be two substantial extensions to the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area (see Newsletter 15 page 3). The two extensions covered Grove Park to the east of Camberwell Grove and Champion Grove and the upper part of Grove Lane to the west. We are glad to report that the Council has approved these extensions, one of which contains the site of nos 125-137 Grove Lane where there is a current planning application (see Newsletter 21 page 2).

It is also very satisfactory that the Council has extended the Sceaux Gardens Conservation Area: the original designation covered the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century houses now used as Council offices, including the very attractive Lucas Gardens to the south, and the post-war Sceaux Gardens Estate, where the landscaping and trees surviving from the earlier gardens have been used to harmonise the old and new developments. The extensions take in additional buildings in Peckham Road (nos 29, 61-65, and 67-77 odd) and give the conservation area a frontage on Southampton Way with nos 292-302 (even) and Oliver Goldsmith Primary School.

### 300-302 Southampton Way

The extension to Southampton Way is particularly important because the Council has recently refused consent for the redevelopment of nos 300 and 302. These are an attractive pair of mid-Victorian houses with large well-treed gardens, an obvious target for the developer. Unfortunately, no 302 is empty, but no 300, which has most of the garden space, is lived in and well loved. As well as refusing consent, the Council served preservation orders on a very large number of trees in the gardens. There has been an appeal and the outcome is now awaited.

## CAMBERWELL GREEN AREA – REPORT OF THE SURVEY

Our survey of the Camberwell Green area was carried out in the autumn and winter of 1973/74. We now have the full results which are published in *Report of the Survey of the Camberwell Green Area 1973/74*. Copies of the report have been sent to the Council and to the press. Below we print the Summary from the report and the conclusions you will find in the enclosed leaflet announcing the public meeting.

The *Report* is available from the Hon Secretary, Valerie Kent, 38 Camberwell Grove, SE 5 and costs 75 pence; members may have it for 50 pence.

The overall impression is that people do not want to see widespread demolition in the area. The same sorts of answers were given, whether to 'demolition for wider roads', wholesale demolition of shops around the Central Site, or demolition for comprehensive redevelopment of the Clearance Areas. It might perhaps be argued that this merely indicates a reluctance to see change, to lose the familiar aspects of Camberwell. However, this argument does not hold when all the rest of the questionnaire is taken into account. It then becomes clear that the sorts of complaints people have, their suggestions for improvements, the amenities they would like to see (especially on the Central Site) are entirely compatible with gradual change, with small-scale projects. There is no justification for a cynical approach to the opinions expressed, in the sense that people are not demanding that there should be 'no change', while simultaneously wanting shops, better roads, large projects. On the contrary, the internal consistency of the responses should add considerable weight to any conclusions drawn.

In addition to the 'consistency' factor there is that of 'degree of consensus'. For an attitude survey of this nature, the extent of agreement on major issues is remarkable. On topics such as 'demolition for wider roads', placing of crossings, restrictions on cars, not wanting the shops around the Central Site cleared at once and completely rebuilt, wanting to live in the houses in the Clearance Areas, at least if they are repaired, living nearby, facilities to be provided on the Central Site - in all these cases 75% or more of respondents favoured one of the offered alternatives. This is not to say that the dissenting 25% (who may, of course, not be the same people on each issue) is a minority to be ignored. However, by any standards the opinions on these issues constitute a 'landslide', and this underlines the importance of taking a majority opinion very seriously indeed. Nowhere, perhaps, does this apply more than in the Clearance Areas where concurrence with the minority view would have disastrous and irreparable consequences for the majority.

Finally, it would seem that people are not demanding the most expensive solutions to their problems. Throughout, and regardless of sex, occupation, or locality, the general request is for 'cleaning up', 'renovating', 'raising standards of what is already available' - a cry for a run-down area to be revitalised but not redeveloped. While any way of dealing with local problems must involve a heavy financial burden, it appears that less cost might be incurred by the solutions which the majority of people would like to see.

### No 27 De Crespigny Park - hospital encroachment

The Maudsley Hospital want to use no 27 De Crespigny Park as a day nursery for hospital staff with a matron's flat. On the face of it this is a worthy use for the house, but the implications need serious thought.

South of De Crespigny Park a very large area of land is zoned for hospital use; northwards is a residential zone. The use of a house for a day nursery is ancillary to the hospital's functioning and would reduce the available residential accommodation of which there is already a serious shortage.

In the past the Council has supported the maintenance of residential use: in 1971 it refused the Institute of Psychiatry permission to use nos 7 and 9 as research laboratories and offices on the grounds of the zoning. We have, therefore, written to the Council setting out our opposition to the present proposal.

### THE CHANGING SEASONS – THE WILDLIFE OF SOUTHWARK

Have you ever seen a falcon over Old Kent Road? Did you know that deer were once hunted across Peckham Rye? Are you aware that there are hundreds of different wild flowers and trees in Southwark?

The exhibition at the Livesey Museum, open till December 18th, looks at the animals, birds, trees and wild flowers in Southwark today and glances back into history at those which lived here once.

The Livesey Museum is at 682 Old Kent Road, and was formerly the Livesey Library, erected in 1890 as the first Camberwell Public Library. The rear portion was irreparably damaged during the war; the front part, no longer required for library purposes after 1966, has been converted into the first museum to be opened by the London Borough of Southwark.

## CHRISTMAS CARDS

Unfortunately this year so much of our effort has gone on planning issues, especially the Camberwell Green area business, that we have not been able to organise a new greetings card. However, we have a good stock of previous years' cards which are available at 5 pence each, including envelope.

These cards are:

- 1 Lettsom's Fountain Cottage (1797)
- 2 Camberwell from the Grove (1776)
- 3 Old St Giles Church (1792)

They may be obtained from

The Passage Bookshop, Canning Cross  
Valerie Kent 38 Camberwell Grove (701 4758)  
Brian Allsworth 165 Grove Lane (274 1367)  
Elizabeth Betts 126 Grove Park (274 6532)  
Trevor Pattinson 3 The Hamlet, Champion Hill (274 8045)

## OLD VIEWS AND MAPS MAKE GOOD PRESENTS

The following publications of the Society are available from The Passage Bookshop or from Stephen Marks, 50 Grove Lane (703 2719):

A set of fourteen Views of Old Camberwell, printed in collotype, with leaflet (also available separately at 10 and 20 pence each)	£2.00
A Plan of Grove Hill, Camberwell, Surrey, belonging to J C Lettsom MD engraved from a survey taken in 1792	30 pence
A Map of the Parish of St Giles, Camberwell 1842 (36" x 24")	£1.10
A Map of Peckham and Camberwell in about 1861 (10½" x 14¾")	10 pence

## CAMBERWELL CANDLES

Has anyone got copies which they don't want of nos 11, 12, 41, 42, 44, 45, 46 of the parish magazine? Stephen Marks is trying to complete his set but is missing these, and would be grateful to anyone who can supply them. Please ring 703 2719.

## THE BOROUGH PLANNER

Ian Lacey, since 1971 the Borough Planner within the Borough Development Department of Southwark Council, has been appointed Chief Planning Officer of Westminster City Council, so there will be a vacant and very hot seat when he leaves Southwark in November. Some of the Borough's planning problems, such as Bankside and dockland development, are singularly intractable, perhaps indeed insoluble in present day conditions; many other less difficult tasks, conservation studies for example, are getting done very slowly because there are acute shortages of competent planning staff, though this situation is not, of course, confined to Southwark.

The new man, who will be under the overall direction of Ceri Griffiths, the Borough Development Officer, will need to be courageous but not rough, persuasive without concealment, imaginative *and* realistic, tactful but not to the point of reticence, above all determined to overcome difficulties, procedural, technical, financial, legal, and social, which can so easily foil the best intentions.

We wish the Council fortune and perspicacity in their coming search.

## S O L T A C

The South London Traffic Area Committee

This new organisation said in its press release on August 16th 'Our aim is to bring together societies and individuals in the South London area who will form a representative group voicing, on behalf of residents, the growing anxiety over traffic problems of the area. We will seek to present well-informed and lucid arguments for immediate investigations by Local Government into the existing traffic conditions with particular regard to the opening of Covent Garden Market in October 1974. It is hoped that SOLTAC will undertake its own traffic survey and residents' research in order to substantiate its demands and proposals.'

The first meeting was held on October 8th at which quite a number of people were present, although unfortunately the Society's representative, Sally Stockley, was not informed early enough to be able to go. Further support is needed, particularly to provide information on your local traffic conditions; if you can help, please get in touch with the organiser:

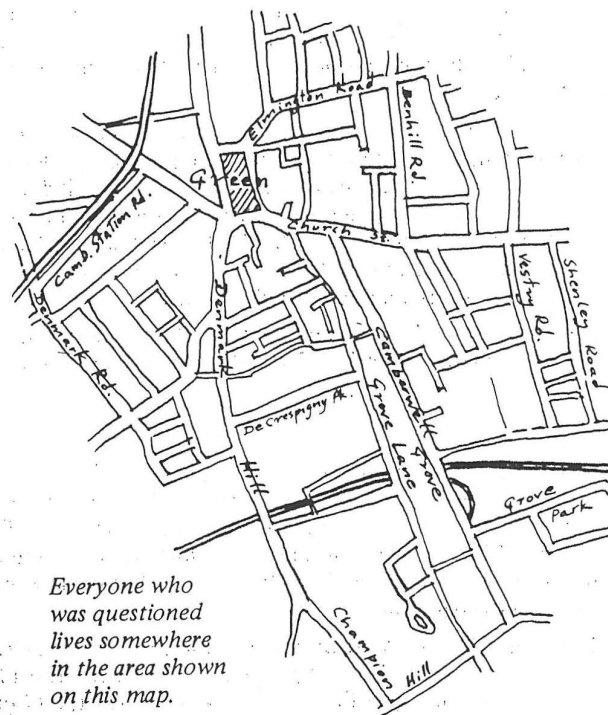
Mrs Judith Feeney 46 Lansdowne Gardens, S W 8  
(tel 720 6113, after 6.30)

Miss Gillian Whaite  
30 Love Walk  
S E 5



The report is not the end: the study was undertaken because we all felt that there was not enough information to plan for the future of the area. Copies of the report have been sent to the Council: now we will get together to work out how to give people what they want.

As some of you may know, small groups of residents (sometimes just of those who live in a single street) are forming in our area. These groups can do a great deal for you, so please join them as well and let them know what you think.



**DON'T MISS THE PUBLIC MEETING – THURSDAY 21st NOVEMBER**

The Camberwell Society, 24 Grove Lane, S E 5

## CAMBERWELL

Thursday 21st November 1974 at 8 pm

**PUBLIC MEETING – CAMBERWELL GREEN AREA**

**THE SURVEY AND THE FUTURE**

at the United Reformed Church (corner of Love Walk and Grove Lane)

Come and talk about what has happened so far and what should be done

You may remember a public meeting last year when many people came to discuss the problems of the Camberwell Green area. It was decided then that everyone – especially the Council – needed to know much more about what people living here were thinking.

Many people got together afterwards to design a questionnaire about the way residents felt about traffic, shopping, housing, local amenities, and the future development of the area between the Green, Denmark Hill, Grove Lane, and Daneville Road. (The housing questions were only asked of those in the 'Clearance Areas' north and south of Daneville Road.)

Volunteers, almost fifty of them, undertook to go to people's houses and ask the questions – each interview lasted about twenty-five minutes (though occasionally we had to leave the questionnaire to be filled in and collected later). Since we wanted to know the views of people who lived in quite a wide area (see map on the back) we could not go to everyone, so we knocked on people's doors at random and talked to someone from about one house in eight; in the 'Clearance Areas' where redevelopment is planned by the Council we spoke to many more.

It was a long questionnaire and a lot of interesting information came out. On the next pages you will see a summary of the findings; the full text, *Report of the Survey of the Camberwell Green area 1973/74* has just been published and is available from the Hon Secretary of The Camberwell Society, Mrs Valerie Kent, 38 Camberwell Grove, S E 5, for 75 pence. Members of the Society may have it for 50 pence.

## WHAT PEOPLE THINK

### TRAFFIC

People were clearly concerned about the volume of traffic in the area, principally because it was seen as dangerous, noisy, and dirty. Worries were in some cases different across sub-groups: for example, those living in flats were much more likely to say that they were anxious about danger to children.

General opinion was against demolition of houses and other buildings for wider roads.

A strong majority felt that movement by car should be restricted if public transport were really good. Car drivers were as much in favour of this as non-drivers.

Street-level crossings were preferred by 75% of respondents, whether or not they were car drivers.

### SHOPPING

78% of respondents do some of their household shopping other than in Camberwell, and many were clearly not satisfied with the choice, quality, and cost of goods available in Camberwell.

There is no evidence of a demand for a shopping precinct, although many people would like to see Marks and Spencers and Sainsbury's or a large department store. Other than this, it would seem that people would want to retain the present shops, at least in physical terms, while improving the quality of the goods. A lot of people would like to see something done about the traffic in the shopping area. It would seem that those people who shop in the area two or three times a week are more likely to suggest 'small shop service'.

### AMENITIES

Only half the people who work said that they would like to be able to work in Camberwell. Of these, there were proportionately more women than men. There was a further group of women who do not work at present who would like to be able to work locally.

Many people go outside the area for the amenities listed in the questionnaire, often for reasons directly related to the quality of the local amenities.

Many people would like to see the park enlarged.

### THE CENTRAL SITE

59% said that they would like to see chances for jobs provided on the Central Site. Of these, it was in the main women, whether working or not, who said they would *both* like to see chances for jobs *and* also expressed a wish to work in Camberwell.

93% wanted entertainment, recreation, or community facilities, which fits well with the sorts of answers spontaneously given when asked to suggest improvements for Camberwell.

The specific ideas for the development of the Central Site were also consistent with earlier suggestions, with the provision for youngsters, including playcentres, day nurseries, and sport facilities figuring prominently. As noted under 'Shopping' little interest was expressed in a shopping precinct or market, despite the dissatisfaction with shopping in the area.

Among other ideas for the site were a theatre or concert hall, and an open space or small park. Some, but much less, interest was shown in providing a cinema. Since there were requests for more entertainment, it might be that a small development of this nature would meet with local support. These ideas were put forward in more or less even proportions by all sub-groups. The third-ranked idea in this section, the 'tube', should be considered in the light of the data on attitudes to traffic, and of the support for the idea of restricting cars 'If public transport were really good'.

54% wanted to see the existing shops around the Central Site smartened up, and overall 75% chose an alternative *other* than 'Everything cleared at once and completely rebuilt'.

### HOUSING

People in the Clearance Areas were very concerned that hygiene should be improved. Clearly they felt the area had been allowed to deteriorate, but not irretrievably - several people wondered 'where and why the trees had gone' from Daneville Road and Kerfield Crescent. There was great local pride, if somewhat frustrated - 'This used to be the best little street in England - still is really'. Residents wanted to see it cleaned up rather than knocked down.

50% of respondents wanted to stay in their houses if the area were not cleared. The major reasons for not wanting to stay were the state of repair and the inadequacy of facilities. Asked if they would stay if these defects were put right, 60% of the remainder of respondents said that they would. Overall, more than 78% of the sample living in the Clearance Areas would like to remain.

If the area were cleared most of the people would like to live nearby (84%).

90% of respondents in the Clearance Areas would like to have a garden.