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NEWSLETTER NO 28

BURGESS PARK ISSUE

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APPEAL

FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS

DONATIONS

NEW MEMBERS

Our subscription has always been 50 pence a year: in 1966 50 pence bought a great deal more than it does now! As you can imagine, our costs, especially postage and the Newsletter, have soared during the past year and we are now spending more than our income, but we must keep our activities and our Newsletter going. Your Committee has, therefore, decided, in accordance with the constitution, to increase the subscription to £1 a year from May 1st 1976; we have also introduced a special rate for old age pensioners and students who may pay only 35 pence.

YOU can do several things to help —

- encourage new members: put them in touch with the Hon Secretary or the Hon Treasurer
- pay up outstanding subscriptions: if the slip of paper with this Newsletter is marked in red, your subscription is still awaited
- give the Society something extra: the subscription will have to go up in May, but we need more money now — a donation or another member in the household. Several members have already responded generously and topped up their 50 pence subscription with the same again or even more.

PLEASE ACT NOW AND HELP YOUR SOCIETY

MEMBERS' MEETINGS — *At the United Reformed Church, Love Walk* — **GUESTS WELCOME**

Tuesday January 13th at 8 o'clock

BURGESS PARK — DESTRUCTION AND CREATION

Most of this Newsletter is devoted to the subject - please study it before you come to see slides and plans and to discuss the attitude the Society should take in future.

Tuesday February 10th at 8 o'clock

CONSERVATION — THE RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

OWEN LUDER, FRIBA, is an energetic practising architect and has been involved both in restoration and conversion and in new developments that have aroused considerable controversy. He feels that conservation can go too far and prevent the community getting the new buildings which it needs, and he speaks as an architect very much at the mercy of planning authorities.

Come and see if you agree with his views!

PUBLIC MEETING — SELBORNE — Monday January 12th 1976 8 o'clock

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

WHAT AFFECTS SELBORNE AFFECTS ALL CAMBERWELL

The November Newsletter gave the latest news on Selborne - the unsatisfactory new plans by architects Sir Frederick Gibberd and Partners, the Council's reference back for revision and our criticisms, the case for rehabilitation (in whole or in part).

The purpose of the meeting is to make the case for rehabilitation: we are resolved to press Southwark Council by every possible means to instruct the architects to make a feasibility study with a view to preparing a rehabilitation scheme for the whole or for part of the Selborne area.

We hope to attract to the public meeting people from all over Camberwell. This was done by the Charteris Road Group in Islington: there also the compulsory purchase order was confirmed as at Selborne; many of the people had already been moved and only three owner-occupiers remained, but in spite of

everything *they won: so can we.* Determination is the crucial factor in Selborne as it was in Islington.

It is not too late: it is indeed the right time! The Gibberd scheme for Selborne (see Newsletter no 27) was severely criticised at a special meeting of the Housing Committee on October 30th and has been sent back. This allows a breathing space. We have already written formally to Southwark's Director of Housing and Director of Development and to 14 members of the Housing and Planning & Development Joint Sub-Committee. We are unable to reconcile the officers' subsequent attitude with what happened at the meeting of this Committee on November 4th which was attended by four members of the Society's Committee and by several residents of Selborne. *We all heard that rehabilitation would be looked at again!*

We are delighted that a councillor at this meeting asked for an assurance that whatever happened, rehousing from Selborne would continue; as we have said over and over again, there are people in Selborne who should have been rehoused years ago and are still waiting while others have moved who might have wanted to stay.

At the same meeting, before Selborne came up on the agenda, before-and-after slides were shown of conversion and improvement schemes at Philips Road (at its junction with Peckham Rye), 45-55 Scylla Road, 10-22 Nunhead Green, the Beer and Wine Trades Houses, Garden Road General Improvement Area, and many others. All of us who saw these were most impressed: it seemed an interesting accident that these slides were shown just before Selborne came up for discussion and it underlined that Selborne might similarly be improved. *Southwark can do it: we only need to persuade them to get on with it!* We have asked Southwark to lend us the slides and we hope to show them at the public meeting.

THE FATE OF SELBORNE VITALLY AFFECTS US ALL — THIS MEETING IS VITAL

COME COME COME COME

THE GREAT BULLDOZER BLUNDER

In the Observer of November 30th and December 7th Messrs Booker and Gray had two articles on Council spending on housing. May they be read widely!

It is in their second article that Messrs Booker and Gray will be most useful to us. For in it they deal not so much with costs as with what happens, as a result of housing policies, to people at grass-roots level.

We want to know, not why our borough follows somewhere in the wake of Camden, but why, if slightly more modestly, our council should make just the same sort of silly mistakes as Camden does and why both councils should go on repeating the same sort of mistakes; and why both should go on doing so quite unrepentantly and impertinently.

Messrs Booker and Gray tell us little of the resultant misery that we have not learned either from our own or our neighbours' housing experience. What they have done is to find unpublished and authoritative reports that give a statistical weight to what we already know. I will quote:

Four years ago the GLC conducted a survey - as yet unpublished - which showed that between 1967 and 1971 some 91,000 houses were destroyed in Greater London - one in ten of all the houses in the city. And of these, no fewer than 54,000 or 59% had been reported in the 1967 Housing Condition Survey as being in 'good' or 'fair' condition.

And again:

For the first time an Architectural Association research team . . . has made a detailed study of the actual effects of comprehensive redevelopment on the housing problem. . .

For the past three years two architects and an 'urbanist' have been working out precisely what happens in the course of a redevelopment scheme - measuring just what is gained and what is lost. . .

Their conclusions are startling. . . For every family Camden housed from its waiting list during this period the redevelopment programme 'dishoused' (*sic*) two who then had to fend for themselves. . .

This sober academic study lifts the curtain on what will probably come to be seen as one of the most appalling social disasters in post-war Britain . . . which caused untold suffering in terms of dislocation and the break up of communications.

Have the people been housed? Only now has anyone - let alone Camden itself - actually taken the trouble to measure just how far the council's claims are being borne out. The preliminary conclusion (of the AA report which is still in draft) . . . could not be more disturbing.

I have had to condense this last extract considerably.

I ask, how much longer must the existing mess continue? Unhappiness may depend on more than where and how one lives and using money wastefully may not necessarily be so bad in itself: what is unforgivable is when both bad policies and enforced human 'stress' (to use the mildest name for it) march shoulder to shoulder in building a kind of society based on contempt, delay, and secrecy.

I hope the Observer will reprint these two articles as a leaflet.

Michael Ivan

SELBORNE

THE CROCK OF GOLD

There is a rainbow hanging over Camberwell at the moment and the crock of gold to which it points is a Public Meeting organised by The Camberwell Society for January 12th 1976 to discuss the future of the Selborne Road area of our community.

The Camberwell Society's recent survey indicated that nigh on 80% of residents, many of them now sadly rehoused elsewhere, wanted to stay in the area if only they could have been given baths and proper loos and freedom from damp. The Gibberd redevelopment plan, well thought out though it is, has been sent back to the architects because of some fundamental and detailed criticism of its proposals. For example, overlapping of 2-person dwellings, which are on two floors, by 4- and 5-person dwellings on three floors,

is considered unacceptable. However, the main point at issue is not about the details of this or any subsequent redevelopment plan. It is about the systematic destruction of an entire community against its will.

For a close assessment of what happens when the bulldozers move in there is long article by Christopher Booker and Bennie Gray in the Observer of December 5th 1975. It's called The Great Bulldozer Blunder. Redevelopment means not only the tearing apart of the delicate membrane of relationships that constitute the heart and soul of a community. It also means that the whole site is razed to the ground. Where this has happened in the past, redevelopment has sometimes taken years to start, hence those lorn and depressing situations of corrugated emptiness characteristic of London since the last war.

It is this that The Camberwell Society seeks to avoid for the Selborne Road area. Rehabilitation - or a mixed plan

in which some houses are done up and there is some redevelopment - would still be possible, since no final decisions have been made. It is the more desirable course. What remains of the community could be maintained. The land need not be blighted. The cost could be kept down or kept at par. Just as many people could be housed. These and other arguments will be aired on January 12th! Do come and fight for the area in which you live!

God totally destroyed the community of man once, and once only, at the time of the flood. The sign of the rainbow was the sign of His absolute refusal to do so again. There is a rainbow hovering over Camberwell at the moment. Let the destroyers take note.

Revd Barry Thorley

This article also appears in the January number of Camberwell Candles, the St Giles Parish magazine.

BURGESS PARK

In preparation for our meeting on January 13th several aspects of the creation of the new park are discussed in this issue of the Newsletter. With this information we should be able to consider the crucial matter of choosing between a park which includes some of the interesting buildings described but with reduced amenities and a park which requires the removal of almost everything to provide the proposed layout. At the meeting it is hoped to open with a short showing of slides and plans.

Development Plan proposals and programme

Parts of inner south London have for long been recognised as deficient in open space of all kinds. The proposal to create a park in this area (at the boundary of the old Metropolitan Boroughs of Southwark and Camberwell) was first formulated in the 1943 County of London Plan by Forshaw and Abercrombie. It has been incorporated in all subsequent development plans for London. The Analysis of the Administrative County of London Plan 1951 refers to an open space of 120 acres of which one and a third had so far been acquired; later documents, including the Initial Development Plan, refer consistently to a park of some 135 acres. This figure falls short of the notional 150 acres minimum for metropolitan parks as defined in the Greater London Development Plan (GLDP), but the GLC is proposing that this park should function as a metropolitan park for this area.

The Initial Development Plan was approved in 1955 and is technically in force until superseded by the GLDP. It adopted a standard of 2½ acres of public open space per 1000 population as an interim objective in areas where the existing provision was below that standard; the long-term objective is 4 acres per 1000. On the basis of the 1966 census (now seriously out-of-date) it was estimated that as a whole the borough of Southwark had 1.4 acres per 1000; clearly within the vicinity of Burgess Park the figure was much lower.

Assessment of open space has been refined since the Initial Development Plan standards were set and in the GLDP, submitted for approval in 1969, there is in addition to the general space standards a hierarchy of parks comprising 'small parks' of under 5 acres, 'local parks' up to 50 acres, 'district parks' between 50 and 150 acres, and 'metropolitan parks' over 150 acres, with different functions according to the facilities which can be provided and the distance which people are prepared to travel for them. This hierarchy remains unchanged in the modified GLDP which has just been published.

A metropolitan park is defined in the GLDP as either natural heathland etc or formal park providing for both active

and passive recreation, e.g. boating, entertainments, and may contain playing fields, but at least 100 acres for other pursuits; adequate car parking is essential. (The latter kind of park is, of course, what we are concerned with.) Its catchment area would extend two miles or more and it would cater for weekend and occasional visits by car and public transport as well as for all the more local needs of smaller parks. Three areas have been identified in the whole London area as deficient in the provision of public open space at the metropolitan level; one of these areas is a long swathe of land covering most of Southwark and extending to Croydon.

The Initial Development Plan set out three periods in the programme of development, 1955-1960, 1960-1972, and 1972-2005. Large portions of the creation of Burgess Park (until recently called North Camberwell Open Space) were in the last period, so that although it has been known since the middle of the century that development would ultimately take place, nothing has actually happened in large areas for 25 years and another twenty-five may elapse before the last buildings are demolished and the misery of living under planning blight is finally eliminated.

Early last year the GLC's intention was to acquire and lay out most of the land west of Wells Way before 1980; this includes, of course, the Albany Road houses which were the subject of a public inquiry in April (see below). East of Wells Way (much the larger part of the park) it is expected that piecemeal interim laying out will continue as opportunity arises. At the public inquiry in April it was stated that altogether 45 acres had already been laid out with work currently in hand on another 6; work in 1976 would bring the total to 60 acres and by 1980 this would rise to 101 acres. However, the final layout, including the major facilities, will not be completed possibly before the end of the century.

The area now proposed for the park is shown on Map 1. Originally it included Addington Square on the west and Glengall Terrace on the east. Addington Square was excluded as the result of an intensive campaign by the Society in 1970 (see Newsletter no 2) and nos 1-9 Glengall Terrace

were also left out. These two groups of houses were subsequently included in conservation areas designated by the London Borough of Southwark. To compensate for the preservation of Addington Square (or 'loss' in Parks Department language) the GLC has proposed to take in an area south of New Church Road (Victory Square and the houses which face Southampton Way and Parkhouse Str.).

The proposal to develop the park formed part of the approved Initial Development Plan and remains in the GLDP; there was no challenge to the principle of the park in the GLDP inquiry in 1970-72 and there is every reason to presume that it will shortly form part of the approved GLDP. The Society made no representations at the time, perhaps because the major threat of the original GLDP was Ringway 1 which absorbed all our energies at the time. Approval does not mean, however, that individual amendments cannot be made to the area or the layout of the park, and therefore, when in June 1972 the GLC mounted an exhibition with a large model, plans and leaflets, and invited comments, the Society did send a long letter expressing concern about the retention of Wells Way across the park, the phasing of land acquisition, and the consequent blight for a very large number of residents, and a strong plea for the retention of a number of buildings to be considered. We did not, at that time, express a definite opinion on the priority between park and buildings, but we have now come to the point where we must decide which, in detail, is more important.

The Society has consistently welcomed the creation of the park and the provision of much-needed facilities, but it is by no means satisfied that the proposed layout (see Map 2) is the best one, and it is sure that the layout could be modified to accommodate at least some of the buildings of architectural interest without seriously impeding the purpose of the park. Unfortunately, any comments which have been offered to the GLC, either on the design itself or on the possibility of retaining buildings, have tended to be interpreted as an attack on the principle of the park.

The layout of the park

The layout of Burgess Park, shown on Map 2, is divided in two parts by Wells Way. Unfortunately it has been decided that this road must be kept open, as the distance between Camberwell Road and Old Kent Road/Glengall Road is considered to be too great to serve north-south traffic.

The western portion, rather less than a quarter of the whole, is devoted mainly to quiet or 'passive' recreation. It includes an animal enclosure, arboretum and quiet garden as well as landscaping and mounding to provide for informal enjoyment of parkland; it also contains a large children's play area next to Albany Road. The play area complex is now well on the way, with new enclosing embankments and a new building for the GLC's play leadership scheme; it provides adventure playground, one o'clock club, and play-park, and will, eventually, be linked to the Aylesbury Estate by a footbridge over Albany Road. The line of the old canal, which has been progressively filled in and landscaped, is preserved in the principal footpath which runs from Camberwell Road to Wells Way; a subway has been built under Wells Way where the canal bridge has recently been removed to connect the two parts of the park. To the north of the footway an animal enclosure is planned (including the land of the Albany Road houses, *see below*) and south an arboretum with a water feature; these two, thickly planted will make a dense screen across the narrow point of the park and will also hide from view the backs of

houses in Addington Square which the GLC find so offensive.

The eastern part of the park contains the active recreation. The most important element here is the 35 acres of pitches, of which 29 will be grass for general use and 6 are to be floodlit all-weather pitches. Associated with the latter are a full complex of changing and service accommodation, cafeteria, tennis courts, and car-parking, entered from Wells Way. Adjoining then are stables and yard with a horse ride of nearly a mile around the grass area; these are all to the north and east of the all-weather pitches. Further east are a new 14-acre lake of which 2 acres is for fishing and the rest for water sports, and to the north a 4-acre bathing and sunbathing area which can be used for skating in winter, with its own carpark. The landscaping and mounding associated with these two features will provide a complete screen across the eastern end of the park. The lake is to have a restaurant and boathouse and nearby a car park and children's playground; the entrance to them is off Glengall Road. Along the entire Old Kent Road frontage there is to be a boulevard, a long narrow swathe of separately landscaped space, in which the GLC has recently said it will retain the Lord Nelson pub.

There is a system of pathways linking the various areas and numerous entrances. Footbridges over Albany Road are intended but not built, but no such facility is proposed on the other very busy roads, Old Kent Road and Camberwell Road.

The facilities to be provided in the park have been decided as the result of detailed studies of deficiencies and requirements over a very wide area of south London. The large estates to the north and south, Aylesbury, Gloucester Grove, and North Peckham, have been planned at high densities on the basis of the proposed park development. The planning to provide the requirements of the brief within the 135 acres of the park has resulted in a very tight design with access related to the most intensive uses.

(This description and Map 2 have been prepared by referring to the GLC's plan 078.71.7C 'Burgess Park Southwark draft landscape proposals' dated 20.8.74, with minor modifications; there are inevitably changes in detail from time to time as the work progresses to take account of local views and changed needs.)

The original development

In the eighteenth century the area of Burgess Park was entirely fields, lying between the two villages of Walworth and Camberwell and bounded on the west and east by two important thoroughfares out of London, Camberwell Road and Old Kent Road. There was a straggle of isolated buildings along Old Kent Road, of which one probably survives in nos 1 & 3, but nothing else within the area of the park predates the nineteenth century.

The Surrey Canal was built in about 1800 and was intended to extend west and southwards, but it never got further than Camberwell Road where it had a small basin. It brought industry such as timber warehousing and lime kilns, one of which still survives from a group which is shown on Cary's map of 1820 (see extract in Newsletter no 17 page 3).

Camberwell Road was also developed at the turn of the century as a broad and formal thoroughfare with long terraces like Addington Place, flanking the entrance to Addington Square, and Grosvenor Place, which now looks across the road to Burgess Park. The Nelson's Head, now Lord Nelson Public House, commemorates the victory at Trafalgar

BURGESS PARK *Continued*

Addington Square and nos 1-9 Glengall Terrace were excluded from the park area in 1970, as has already been mentioned. Addington Square was laid out or at any rate proposed with an approach from Camberwell Road in about 1800. The houses in the square were built over a period of nearly fifty years (c 1810 to c 1855), the earliest being on the west side, the latest the northern portion of the east side. Those in Glengall Terrace form part of a most attractive group of the mid-1840s which includes houses on both sides of Glengall Road.

St George's Church (1822-24) is now derelict and vandalized and more threatened by its own condition than by the intentions of the GLC who showed it on their sketch plan in the 1972 exhibition and referred to it and the Addington Square and Glengall Terrace houses as 'providing increased visual attraction for the park'.

In September 1972 the Department of the Environment added the following buildings within the park area to the statutory list:

Albany Road: nos 349-361, 365-369

Coburg Road: nos 29 & 31

Glengall Road: nos 24-38

Trafalgar Avenue: Lord Nelson PH, nos 1,3, 16-64

Wells Way: public library, baths and washhouse.

These now have statutory protection and the GLC have to seek (as they have done in the case of Albany Road) listed building consent from the Secretary of State for the Environment to demolish them. A concurrent local list (of no statutory force) includes the following:

Albany Road: no 291 (lime kiln), nos 377-383

Chumleigh Gardens: almshouses nos 1-11

New Church Road: nos 49-55.

The houses in Albany Road stand on the edge of the park; nos 349-369 are described below.

St Mark's Church in Coburg Road is an early work of Norman Shaw, built in 1878, with a wooden clock tower added in 1931. Its main interest is concentrated on the west front and it has a spire over the clock tower which makes it a prominent landmark in the area. It is no longer used as a church but appears to be in reasonable condition. It stands within the area proposed for the new lake, close to the northern edge and not far from where the park layout shows restaurant and boathouse; suggestions have been made that it could be adapted for use for similar purposes.

The other listed buildings in Coburg Road, nos 29 and 31, are an early pair of brick houses with entrance wings and window brickwork typical of south London late Georgian. Also of interest but not listed at all are a group of chunky, rather austere, brick houses, nos 47-59, one pair of which has an oval tablet reading 'Rosetta Place 1822'; adjoining nos 29 & 31 is Victoria Terrace, a long range of two-storey houses which now enjoy a very open aspect across a cleared area.

The northern part of Glengall Road has two ranges of unusually attractive pairs of houses, four pairs on the west side, nos 24-38, and nine pairs on the east. They are stuccoed with a low relief decoration of Ionic pilasters supporting segmental arches above first floor windows; they were probably designed by the Brighton architect, Amon Henry Wilds and were built about 1843-45. Those on the east side are not threatened, although they stand in an area zoned for industrial use, and with nos 1-9 Glengall Terrace (houses of related design) form the Glengall Road Conservation Area, but those on the west are in the park area and have inevitably been less well maintained because of the threat. In spite of this, quite recently several owners have

decided to improve their properties and the change in appearance is quite dramatic. Like the Albany Road houses, nos 24-38 lie on the edge of the park and would show their backs to it.

Trafalgar Avenue, the next street west, has a long range of good three-storey houses of about the same date as Glengall Road; the most striking of these are nos 42-48, attached pairs with gabled roofs. At the north end, close to Old Kent Road, are the Lord Nelson pub, a handsome and unusual building, and nos 1 & 3 with their main fronts facing south and built before the rest of Trafalgar Avenue was developed; they may indeed incorporate houses of the eighteenth century.

The public library, baths and washhouse in Wells Way are good examples of the flourish of fine municipal architecture at the turn of the century. The combined building was designed, like the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts, by Maurice Adams, and was built in 1902 in red brick with stone dressings. Facing west is an asymmetrical composition incorporating three gables; the library entrance on Neate Street is most elaborate and decorative in Edwardian Baroque style.

Of these listed buildings a small number are not threatened: the library and baths building in Wells Way appears to have a future use, and they are next to a road which will be kept open; the Lord Nelson is also to be kept and will be entirely appropriate within the proposed boulevard along the Old Kent Road. The GLC are still considering the future of St Mark's Church, but are firmly committed to the demolition of all the houses in Albany Road, Coburg Road, Glengall Road (nos 24-38), and Trafalgar Avenue.

The GLC intend to retain the lime kiln which used to stand near the banks of the canal, but otherwise intend to demolish the other local-list buildings. Of these the most important, and indeed more important than some of the listed ones, is the Chumleigh Gardens group; there are three ranges built on the west, south and north sides of a garden. The west range was built in 1821 as 'The Female Friendly Society Almshouses for eight women who have seen better days' in a delightful late Georgian gothic, two storeys high with an emphasised central house. The other ranges were added in 1844 and 1847, matching exactly the original building. They stand right in the middle of the all-weather play area complex and appear to be well maintained.

Nos 349-361 & 365-369 Albany Road - public inquiry

Last April there was a two-day public inquiry about various buildings within the Burgess Park area. The inquiry covered several compulsory purchase orders and an application by the GLC for listed building consent to demolish ten listed houses in Albany Road. Evidence was given about the Society's objection by Stephen Marks who also cross-examined the GLC's witnesses.

The ten houses which the Council want to pull down were built around the early 1820s on a street newly laid out as a by-pass road to the south of Walworth (see Newsletter no 25 page 3). They are modest two-storey houses (except no 361 which is a storey higher) and are not a uniform group but a collection of small groups and individual houses of very similar scale and general design but varying in detail. They are typical of the situation where different owners and builders have taken one or more plots to develop, but have all employed the very limited architectural vocabulary of modest late Georgian detail.

Houses of this kind, small, dignified, pleasant, were built in

their thousands in the rapid expansion of London and its suburbs after the battle of Waterloo, but until recently little thought was given to their preservation in areas such as this and a very large number has been and is being demolished. Albany Road was composed mainly of such houses but these are now almost alone as survivors and are certainly the best representatives of their period in the road. Other contemporary groups in our part of London, such as those in Camberwell New Road and Peckham Hill Street, tend to be larger houses with a very different character. Almost all the original doors, doorcases, and glazing bars survive, and the brickwork is also original except for the rebuilding of several parapets.

Although they are modest houses their details are in most cases careful and pleasing. Most notable are the elegant timber portico of no 361, a rarity paralleled in Camberwell only at no 67 Grove Lane (recently restored) and at no 45 Camberwell Grove (in very poor state). The Doric order of this portico and of the doorcases of nos 351, 353, and 359 is very precise reflecting on a small scale the interest in Greek revival of which St George's Church (1822-24, architect, Francis Bedford) on the other side of the park is a very fine example. The Gothic-headed beading applied to the traditional door-panelling at no 361 is also very rare. All except no 357 have their original fanlights, the interlaced bars of nos 349-355 and 359 being particularly good; it is unusual for so many to have survived in one group of houses.

The main evidence of the GLC for their demolition was given by Kenneth Hyland, a senior planner. He outlined the past history of the park designation and planning, and pointed out that the houses were not listed when the park was first proposed. His case was based on the following points: that the park would be further reduced by retaining these houses, that demolition would achieve rationalization of the park frontage and permit continuity of treatment whereas their retention would create visual problems with the park because of the unattractive backs, that they would be out of place, and that there would be management and security problems for houses backing onto the park. It was also a point of objection that there would be no use of the houses for park purposes.

When he was questioned Mr Hyland said that they had not tried out any layout retaining the houses. He felt that backs of houses were always unattractive and inevitably created visual problems; he was also questioned about the comparative effect of the small two-storey houses and of the towering slab blocks of Aylesbury across the road.

Mr Walford Evans, the Parks Department Area Manager, said that if the houses were retained they would have to provide a wide screen of trees to hide them from the park; this would probably have the effect of having to omit the animal enclosure and of making the relationships within the park less satisfactory. However, no evidence was given by any of the witnesses about the precise effects of keeping the houses; another witness said that they probably would not acquire those they did not own already if they were not allowed to demolish them.

The GLC were very concerned that the retention of these houses would set a precedent for the preservation of other groups; they had already agreed to leave Addington Square and Glengall Terrace and were not prepared to see further reductions of space in an already undersize park. We feel, however, that there is a great difference between the retention of the Albany Road houses, which occupy less than half an acre on the edge of the park, and buildings such as

Chumleigh Gardens or Trafalgar Avenue which lie right across major portions of the site and on which the Society has not yet committed itself — this is why we are holding our meeting on January 13th.

The Society does not think that the retention of the houses in Albany Road would have any significant effect on the park, but in the GLC's view the issue boils down to deciding whether the approved public open space policy should prevail.

No decision has yet been issued at the time of writing this report, but a decision is believed to be imminent and may well be out when this Newsletter is distributed.

Burgess Park walk, June 28th 1975 - report

Some fifteen members of the Society were taken round the Burgess Park area in two parties by Mr Walford Evans, Area Manager, and Mr Dave Sadler, Parks Manager. The tour was most comprehensive; we started from Addington Square after a short introduction covering many of the points which have been set out above about the planning and programming of the park, and we walked round by the rose garden in the corner of Albany Road and Camberwell Road which was at one time designated as a 'quiet area' (this is now to be further south where a factory next to Addington Square has been demolished) with a good look along the backbone of the park on the line of the former canal, past the listed Albany Road houses and the new play-leaders' training centre and play park HQ (an attractively modest little building on the axis of Portland Street) with the adventure playground and new embankments. We saw how the new subway was already having terrazzo panels broken; beyond the new bridge a cycle track is to be laid out along the line of the canal.

Chumleigh Gardens almshouses were much admired and there was much dismay at the prospect of their demolition: could they not be kept and used? Our guides said there would be access problems if they were retained and that they lay in the middle of the new all-weather playing area complex. We found that there were some extensive, if rather dull, expanses of grass to the east of Wells Way as well as in the more advanced western portion: it was explained that it was now possible to plan the linking up of the random clearances.

Beyond the southern boundary are the GLC's Gloucester Grove and Elmington estates, both well advanced, on which houses and flats are being allocated for residents of the 'Island', an area of tightly-packed and very run-down streets next to Albany Road. The Lord Nelson pub would be kept, but all the rest of Trafalgar Avenue would have to go. The park managers thought that houses on the edge of the park, such as Albany Road and Glengall Road (west side) would suffer from problems of noise, security, and the proximity of football games: we thought there were plenty of compensations and that the park design could surely deal with these problems. Various temporary uses were providing facilities already such as a small overgrown bomb-site kept untouched as a school's nature area. After two hours we finished up at a hard surface football area being laid out, on a long-term temporary basis, where factories and warehouses had been cleared north of Neate Street, near where Mr Sadler himself lives.

It was a most interesting visit for which we were most grateful to Mr Sadler and Mr Evans.

Building preservation: the choice

There is a considerable body of opinion that a lot of small open spaces would be more practical than a large park whose creation causes so many problems and so much distress; the Society, however, fully supports the principle of the park and does not wish to hinder proper progress. The problems which we see arise over the details, especially on the question of using or ignoring the opportunities given by existing buildings. If their existing uses are not suitable they can often be adapted to provide accommodation which is required within the park anyway: it is a matter of approach - clean-sweep or careful integration of old and new?

Many people regretted the filling in of the canal, especially as new stretches of water are to be created. There is, however, still the opportunity to retain some of the better buildings within the area. Some would have relatively little effect on the layout, others would radically alter the planning.

In the former category come the Albany Road houses and those in Glengall Road. One of the GLC's main objections is to the view of backs of houses from the park. Another objection is that the park boundary would not be continuous, but surely it can add to the interest from the road to find, then lose, then find the park again. In Glengall Road there is the added claim to retention that the threatened houses are part of a group with others outside the park. The Albany Road houses have the dubious pleasure of facing Aylesbury.

The Lord Nelson is to be kept in the boulevard. Keeping nos 1 & 3 Trafalgar Avenue, also close to Old Kent Road, would form an attractive counterpart to the Lord Nelson and would have as little effect on the boulevard as the retention of the pub. On the other hand, the retention of other houses in Trafalgar Avenue, of Coburg Road houses, and of Chumleigh Gardens would have very considerable effects: they would reduce the actual space to be laid out substantially and would require quite a different layout.

It is difficult to make a proper assessment of the loss or change involved, so we wrote to the GLC for information on layouts which tested the effect of various retentions; they were unable, or unwilling, to give us any help beyond repeating assertions that they had considered the potential effects of the retention of the buildings and of the roadways and other facilities required to service them. So we shall have to try ourselves to see what retention means.

Chumleigh Gardens stands some distance from both Wells Way and Albany Road; if it was occupied independently of the park it would need separate access and would cut deep into the park at this point. The effect would be not visual, because a series of buildings for the playing area is proposed here, emphasising the dividing nature of Wells Way, but practical. The alternative is to consider the houses for park purposes, but obviously there is a limit to the number of dwellings required for park keepers. The complex of all-weather playing area etc would have to be reshaped substantially and perhaps wrapped round Chumleigh Gardens or would have to be split up or moved bodily eastwards. It would be an advantage to open up the park more to view from Wells Way instead of having the very solid obstruction of the proposed complex.

Retaining nos 16-64 Trafalgar Avenue would interrupt the continuity of the park, making it necessary to treat the resultant limb of parkland as a secluded area. It would be necessary to divide the boulevard to give access from Old Kent Road; alternatively, access could be had from Glengall

Terrace, or, more drastically, the rectangle north of Glengall Terrace and east of Trafalgar Avenue could be treated as a separate entity (perhaps a boulevard in depth, abutting on Old Kent Road at its short side); this would then re-open the possibility of designating a larger conservation area, taking in Trafalgar Avenue right up to Old Kent Road, as was proposed at one time by Southwark Council.

Retaining houses in Coburg Road (nos 29 & 31 on the statutory list and also nos 1-27 and 47-63) would likewise cut right into the park; it would become necessary to think in terms of a pattern of interlocking park and terraces. The design of the spaces would be subject to much tougher restraints but would equally stimulate the imagination. Keeping houses in Coburg Road would have a greater effect on the layout than keeping Trafalgar Avenue.

St Mark's Church is being considered for retention by the GLC. Although not an outstanding building (one of Norman Shaw's less important works), it would be a fine feature standing free at the water's edge; if used for park purposes, e.g. boat store, workshops, restaurant, it would not need any access beyond that already to be provided for these services and amenities nearby.

The retention of buildings within the park boundaries requires a change of concept: an acceptance of the idea of an urban park having urban features. The GLC referred at the public inquiry to the perimeter roads as 'natural boundaries', but surely buildings properly assimilated, are no less 'natural' in the urban context than roads. The principle of clean-sweep is surely very much out of tune with our age which has rejected comprehensive redevelopment in other spheres as the panacea for our urban ills.

If more buildings are to be kept the interim landscaping so far done need not be wasted in a change of plan, and, as the construction of the most costly features, the all-weather complex and the water areas, is nowhere near, their relocation and redesign could be achieved reasonably economically.

Our meeting on January 13th must weigh up the rival claims of park and buildings, decide whether we would like to keep any of the buildings described, and how far we ought to press for their retention.

TREASURER MOVES

Please note that our Hon Treasurer, David Main, has changed his address to 23 Rosendale Road, SE21. His new telephone number is 670 8770. Letters for him may be left with other officers of the Society, as they are often in touch, to save you postage.

COME TO THESE MEETINGS

January 12th SELBORNE

January 13th BURGESS PARK

February 10th OWEN LUDER on
CONSERVATION - THE RESISTANCE TO
CHANGE

SEE FRONT PAGE FOR DETAILS

Miss Gillian Whaite
50 Love Walk
S E 5

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

Chairman Miss Nadine Beddington 17 Champion Grove, S E 5
Vice-Chairman David Whiting
Hon Treasurer David Main 23 Rosendale Road, SE21 (670 8770)
Hon Secretary Michael Ivan 24 Grove Lane, S E 5 (703 4564)
Assistant Secretary Miss Sally Stockley 113 Camberwell Grove, S E 5 (701 2658)

NEWSLETTER NO 29

6th February 1976

SELBORNE

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In the High Court page 2
Consultation and communication page 8
Social Services Department letter pages 3,4,5
Diary of events pages 6,7
Public meeting report page 3

THE ROLE OF THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

On Tuesday Feb 3rd, after Monday's High Court hearing (page 2), we understand that Mr John O'Brien, Southwark's Director of Housing, told a Times reporter that he would carry on rehousing from the Selborne area, and as soon as houses became vacant he would render them uninhabitable. He would re-start demolition as soon as possible, he hoped this week, but certainly by next week. Should the plaintiffs after Monday's case go to appeal he would seek costs against them which he thought was a bit hard but he thought it was time the whole thing was got on with. He entirely accepted the right of the Camberwell Society to take an interest but not their right to guide and lever the six plaintiffs.

We do not know whether Mr O'Brien sees himself as the mastermind of Southwark, or its mouthpiece or its figurehead, but it is obviously very galling for him to find his bulldozing efforts thwarted by mere residents who dare to turn to the courts, and he cannot be surprised by the latest turn of events.

An appeal has now been lodged by the plaintiffs against the decision of Mr Justice Willis last Monday and an injunction is to be sought to restrain Southwark from doing any work in Selborne which might prejudice the outcome of the appeal.

The Society does not accept Mr O'Brien's comments about its role and the implied criticism. The Selborne area falls within the Society's area and very much affects it; many residents, including plaintiffs, are members. **The Society is fully entitled to help to the best of its ability both tenants and owner-occupiers, both those who want to stay and those who want and need to leave, and we have been, and still are, concerned that the case for rehabilitation, in part or in whole, should be fully considered.**

PUNITIVE MEASURES AGAINST INNOCENT RESIDENTS

Prevented by a High Court injunction on January 17th from doing further damage or demolition in the Selborne area, Mr O'Brien is reliably reported to have said ; *'I'm not prepared to see any more properties become vacant in that area and be the subject of squattings. Now the residents of the area will suffer because we shall not allow them to move to the new houses which are their full entitlement until we are ready to start full demolition in 1977'.*

Several families have already been allocated accommodation on new estates; they would, according to *continued on page 2*

DEPUTATION TO THE COUNCIL

February 11th

6 30

Town Hall Foyer

It is vital that as many people as possible come to the Town Hall on February 11th when a deputation from the Camberwell Society will be received by the Housing Committee (as announced at the public meeting on January 12th). They will discuss the question of rehabilitation as opposed to redevelopment in the Selborne area and the recommendation of the Camberwell Green working party that Wren Road be kept in the short term and Jephson Street retained and restored in the future development of the area. The report has already been accepted in principle by the Joint Housing and Planning & Development Committee.

MEET IN THE FOYER OF THE TOWN HALL, PECKHAM ROAD, AT 6 30

SUPPORT YOUR DEPUTATION

Mr O'Brien, be obliged now to remain even longer in their unfit houses in order to solve the Council's squatter problem. By thus linking this new delay (which is entirely in the hands of the Council) with the granting of the injunction to other residents who wish to stay, Mr O'Brien appeared to direct the blame on to The Camberwell Society which has helped to get the injunction. It is evident from this and other events that the Council is doing its best (or its worst) to drive a wedge between the Society and the residents whom the Society has always done its utmost to help.

After an angry scene in which tenants who want to leave were roused by misleading statements implicating the Camberwell Society, the Hon Secretary was able to reassure them that we are acting in their interests as well as helping those who want to stay; they all agreed that rather than squabble in the street with each other it would be better to take action together which would be effective. A meeting was held under the aegis of the Society at which a letter was signed by or on behalf of seventeen of the tenants from Kerfield Crescent, Daneville Road, Allendale Road and Selborne Road, asking for the retraction of the statement by the Director of Housing and the resumption of the process of rehousing. This was taken to the Town Hall and accepted by the Assistant Town Clerk. We told them we would seek help from councillors and a meeting was arranged for the next afternoon with Cliff Potter and Les Alden, who were left in no doubt that we are all acting together.

So that we can co-ordinate our efforts even more closely two residents from Kerfield Crescent were co-opted onto the Society's Executive Committee, Mrs Linda Seales of 11 Kerfield Crescent and Mrs Jackie Middleton of no 12.

REHABILITATION ORDERS AND THE INJUNCTION

Under Section 114 and Schedule 10 of the Housing Act 1974 (as amended) a Council can change its mind over the clearance of an area and make rehabilitation orders. Residents of unfit houses can also request the Council to make such orders, and if the Council decides to refuse the request it is obliged to reply in writing giving reasons for its refusal.

Thirteen owner-occupiers made formal requests in May last year for rehabilitation orders, but the Council refused at its meeting in July 'for the reason that the properties should be demolished and the sites used for the erection of new housing accommodation'.

On the basis that this was inadequate and invalid grounds for not making rehabilitation orders ten of these residents who are still in their houses were granted an interim injunction preventing further demolition or damage as this would prejudice the proper consideration and determination of the requests for rehabilitation orders. This injunction was granted at 7 p.m. on Saturday 17th January and is to be reviewed on Monday 26th with appearances on behalf of both Southwark Council and the residents.

IN THE HIGH COURT Monday 26th January

On January 26th the question of continuing the interim injunction restraining Southwark from damaging or demolishing houses in Selborne was considered in the High Court before Mr Justice Bristow. The owner-occupiers who had obtained the interim injunction were advised before the hearing that if the injunction were continued and the case lost Southwark could apply for costs and damages which could be very substantial.

Before the Judge, Counsel for the owner-occupiers, Desmond Keane, and Lord Colville of Culross, QC, for Southwark, agreed to a consent order on the following terms:

- i the existing injunction to be lifted;
- ii an undertaking from Southwark to comply with the terms of the former injunction (i.e. not to do any damage or demolition) until next Monday except that de-

molition of nos 10, 12, 14 Cuthill Road may continue because they are dangerous as a result of work already started, and that boring may continue for subsoil testing; there were no cross-underlings;

- iii speedy trial requested by both sides; the judge said he would do all in his power to see that it was heard on February 2nd.

The judge asked what would happen if the hearing were delayed and there was a gap between February 2nd and the hearing; Lord Colville said that Southwark would not agree to any extension beyond that date because people would be affected by not getting their flats.

It was stated that it was not the intention of the defendants [i.e. Southwark] to pursue damages, but earlier they had reserved the right to take such action as they think fit.

IN THE HIGH COURT Monday February 2nd

The case for the six plaintiffs (owner-occupiers in 'unfit' houses who had asked for rehabilitation orders) that Southwark had not given them adequate or valid reasons for not making rehabilitation orders was heard before Mr Justice Willis in the High Court. Mr Desmond Keane presented a most skilful case in the morning for the plaintiffs; Lord Colville replied for Southwark after lunch; he laid great stress on the public inquiry into the compulsory purchase orders in January 1974 and the decision of the Secretary of State; he claimed that the evidence on rehabilitation was fully discussed at the inquiry and the changing climate of opinion had been taken into account; therefore, he said, the plaintiffs were well aware of the reasons. He said that it was not possible to give an answer purely in terms of the individual houses, because it would not make sense to rehabilitate the plaintiffs' houses while all around was knocked down, and therefore that it was adequate to give an answer in the terms that had been used.

The judge gave a finely-balanced summing-up and only in the last few seconds did his decision emerge from his reasoning. He took into account that the Camberwell Society and some of the plaintiffs were present at the public inquiry;

he felt that it was sufficient and intelligible to use the form of words (that the house should be demolished and the sites used for building) and therefore refused to declare that Southwark had not carried out its statutory duty.

The plaintiffs were advised that they had twenty-eight days within which to appeal. Southwark asked for full costs against the plaintiffs, but the judge refused any.

SOUTHWARK SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The middle pages of this Newsletter contain a long letter signed by practically every member of the Area 7 Office of Southwark's Social Services Department. The letter is addressed to Mr K Sellick, Director of Social Services, and copies have been sent to Mr John O'Brien, Director of Housing, and to The Camberwell Society. We have been authorised to give publicity to this letter; notwithstanding one anachronism of substance (about plans not being agreed), we think it expresses so many important points so cogently that it ought to be printed in its entirety.

MASQUERADE AS 'TIMES' REPORTERS

The strangest incident at our demonstration on January 15th (see Diary of Events) - a little drama of impersonation - was unnoticed by demonstrators and bystanders.

As the demonstration began someone rang the Town Hall to ask what was happening at Selborne, 'what was it all about?', and shortly afterwards a car with driver and passenger arrived on the scene. They enquired and were told what they came to find out, and were themselves asked who they were: 'press', they replied; 'which paper?'. 'The Times', after some hesitation. Then while they refused to give their names, we spotted on the back seat bundles of Southwark's purple committee agenda folders which they were trying to conceal from our gaze, and at that moment the real 'Times' reporter came up and they heard him introduce himself.

The two gentlemen with the Southwark folders couldn't get away fast enough!

PUBLIC MEETING January 12th report

The public meeting on Selborne, held at the United Reformed Church, was extremely well attended with over 180 people present, including the Leader of Southwark Council, John O'Grady; all councillors had been notified but only a very small number came to the meeting.

Nadine Beddington outlined the purpose of the meeting: to press for the rehabilitation of Selborne to be seriously reconsidered, perhaps with a scheme of partial or phased redevelopment, which would allow those who wanted to, to stay. This would be quicker and cheaper, and would house more people; at the time of the compulsory purchase order Southwark had no choice but recent legislation allowed rehabilitation. She was not surprised that there were also people who desperately wanted to leave, and they must be helped too. Another matter of great concern was the rejection by the Council's Housing Committee of the Camberwell Green Working Party's recommendation that Wren Road and Jephson Street should be kept.

Before the general discussion opened there were short

statements from Jim Tanner, David Main and Michael Ivan. Jim gave a resume of the case put to Southwark in November on cost grounds and of the criticism of the scheme (see Newsletter no 27); the scheme for 250 dwellings, of various sizes, including some for the elderly and for the disabled, ably fulfilled the brief given to the architects, but there were serious shortcomings in the brief itself and arising out of the cost yardstick, so that the architects had had an impossible task. The Society has not prepared its own scheme of rehabilitation, but was asking Southwark to reconsider because there was no housing gain in redevelopment, rehabilitation costs were £1¼ - 1½ million (Southwark think £2million nearer the mark) compared with costs for redevelopment which must be well over £3million [later speakers thought it might be as much as £5million], rehabilitation need not involve all houses, thus reducing overall costs to the Council.

David Main drew attention to the process of deterioration during seven years waiting, affecting the physical and mental health of people living in such surroundings. A lot had now moved, but there were still some who can't wait to go who should be moved straightaway. Our survey in 73/74 showed that given a scheme of improvement, 78% would have liked to stay, but Southwark had no plan for rehabilitation and had not asked and would not listen to what people wanted. Although much of the community had been destroyed, many of those remaining had got together; it was a long time, if at all, before a sense of community grew in large new developments.

Michael Ivan ran through the interwoven tale of various Southwark committee meetings relating to Selborne and to Camberwell Green, which he and residents of Selborne and other members of the Society had attended. At the Joint Housing and Planning Sub-committee on November 4th our letter about rehabilitation was considered (see Diary of Events) and assurance given that rehabilitation would be looked at again. The Planning Committee on November 11th received and approved in principle the Camberwell Green Working Party report and congratulated the working party. The Housing Committee of December 17th had an agenda which contained an untrue account of the November 4th decision about rehabilitation in Selborne and the Director of Housing persuaded the committee to stick to their decision to demolish houses in Wren Road and Jephson Street in spite of the recommendation of the Camberwell Green working party; he stated inter alia that the Secretary of State had confirmed that houses in Jephson Street were unfit: this was simply not true as out of eight only 2 were left in that category by the Secretary of State. The big stumbling block at the Housing Committee was their avowed policy 'not to rehabilitate houses with basements'; when a councillor claimed that the policy was moderated and that there were successful rehabilitations of such houses, she was told that that was an exception to, not moderation of, the policy. Another objection to considering rehabilitation of Wren Road or Jephson Street was that it might lead others to claim rehabilitation orders; we spoke to the Department of the Environment about this and were advised informally that this was a very poor reason, more a fear of the 'contagion of rehabilitation', an admission of the weakness of the case, a reluctance to give justice to some in case they had to give justice to all.

An extremely lively and well-informed discussion followed. The most encouraging contribution came from Ann Power

continued on page 6

Area 7 Office,
Social Services Department,
London Borough of Southwark,
29 Peckham Road, S E 5

Mr K Sellick,
Director of Social Services,
London Borough of Southwark,
Castle House,
2 Walworth Road, S E 1

23rd January 1976

Dear Mr Sellick,

We are writing because as workers in the Social Services Department we are strongly affected by the present situation in the Daneville/Selborne Road area, Camberwell Green, and we would like to state our views to you.

There are three big issues that have a large bearing on our work. They are:-

- 1 Rehabilitation or redevelopment of the area.
- 2 The destruction of many habitable houses and the bad faith of the Council.
- 3 The effect on all those who live in the area, particularly our more vulnerable clients, of a) a rehousing process strung out over 5-10 years, b) the news that apparently no more rehousing of existing residents will take place until 1977.

1 The arguments for redevelopment, as at least summed up by Councillor Potter, Vice-Chairman of Planning at a public meeting on January 12th, are apparently:

- a) It is Council policy not to rehabilitate houses with basements.
- b) Rehabilitated houses are unpopular and hard to let.
- c) New properties are more durable than rehabilitated ones.

Our counter-arguments to these are:

- a) The Council accepts that it does make exceptions and has already done so, for example, in Wilson Road nearby.
- b) Considering the desperate need for houses in Southwark, it is impossible to believe there will not be takers from a waiting list of 8,000 for only 173 houses (as there are in the area) if rehabilitated.
- c) This surely depends on how well the houses are rehabilitated, and whether they are compared to new Council estates like Aylesbury that has for example had to have massive and costly improvements to the cost of over £2M. after only 5 - 6 years.

Our positive arguments in favour of rehabilitation and not redevelopment are that it:

a) **Is far cheaper:**

On the Council's own estimate the cost of rehabilitation is about £2M. as opposed to at least £3M. for redevelopment, though hopefully nothing like the £5M. supposedly quoted by certain Press.

In times of economic cuts, particularly of Social Services, we feel this enormous financial difference alone should be enough to win the argument. It seems amazing to us that our Council even considers such reckless spending, and we wonder who will eventually have to find the extra million or so. We guess our clients are bound to suffer indirectly.

b) **Saves what is still a potential small community:**

Certainly the area has been blighted for years with consequent unsettlement of community life in a once very close knit area. But we believe the Council can rectify damage already done by at least saving the physical structure of the community, its whole feel of history and not adding to the break up of community life for those residents who still wish to stay. A small core of people still remain in the area and could help revive it, if given a chance.

c) **Less disruption and speedier, especially for the elderly:**

There is evidence from Southwark that rehabilitation is likely to be achieved with less disruption than redevelopment and more quickly. Residents can be moved to nearby houses while properties are done-up, old residents can be moved out and new residents moved in with the minimum of disturbance. All residents have suffered from long blight, but those who suffer most are likely to be our clients, that is the most vulnerable, the elderly, sometimes in the area a lifetime, and single-parent families both of which groups provide us with a good deal of work. Their uncertainty should be cut to a minimum.

d) **Residents' own wishes for rehabilitation:**

In a complete survey in 1973/4 the Camberwell Society found that 78% of residents said they wanted to stay in the area. It is likely that residents' own vital sense of being taken into consideration has been rudely shaken by their representative's opposing policy. Confidence in one's area and the local authorities is crucial to a sense of responsibility. The lack of faith, confidence and responsibility in themselves and the Council that already exists because of blight in the area, should not be added to, but changed, so that people are pleased to live where they are and accordingly respond well. Council and residents are dependent on each other's mutual trust. The Council should recognize and act by residents' expressed wishes.

2 a) **Bad faith**

As we have made clear there are overwhelming arguments to us on the side of rehabilitation. Though we disagree with redevelopment for this area we do of course accept that decisions in such matters are in the Council's power. However, we would be glad to see clearly stated what precisely is agreed Council policy for Selborne and where precisely decisions have been made that rule out rehabilitation as opposed to redevelopment.

However, the history of events is that at the Housing meeting on December 17th, the Housing Chairman agreed that on February 11th the Council would be willing to receive a deputation from the area supporting rehabilitation, and that the Council would seek the views of the public, presumably before any redevelopment plans could go ahead.

On January 13th the Council demolition men began to knock down some of the houses. The Camberwell Society (which includes as members many residents of the Selborne area) sought to take out an injunction on the Council to prevent further hasty demolition. The weekend before this injunction could take effect on January 19th, Council workmen have apparently moved into about 70 vacated houses and smashed them up, so as to render them completely uninhabitable and perhaps hardly rehabilitable ever.

Since such action obviously furthers Council intentions to redevelop, some travesty is made of the Council's agreement to discuss rehabilitation at a later date. We object strongly to being officers of a Council that acts in such bad faith.

b) **Potential homes destroyed:**

No precise designs and plans are yet agreed by the Council for a new estate in the area. Many of the houses now either half destroyed or remaining occupied, could have been used as short-life accommodation to alleviate the housing shortage even if redevelopment does go ahead or as properties to be rehabilitated for future use. Such destruction seems to us an act of such extraordinary vandalism on the part of the Council that it makes the gravity of much of our court work with juveniles charged with crimes against property pale into insignificance.

- 3 The effect of the Council's present actions, not primarily, it may be said, of any other group, has been to increase the worries and problems of many of those in the area we know of and particularly of many clients of this office. We therefore feel that we are already thrust into a position of belonging to a split Council that destroys with one hand and tries to patch up through us with the other. The Council's corporate planning and action has not involved us, though we

wish it had.

Most difficult of all to take is that residents are now apparently told (we hope this is not so) that no one will be rehoused before 1977 (Ward Councillors of the area told a residents' meeting in Dec '74 that the Housing Chairman had said that everybody would be rehoused by Xmas 1975.) This seems grossly unfair to many of our clients. They are sometimes the least able to voice their defence, except to state that considering how the area has been allowed to run down, their prime wish is to be rehoused as soon as possible. That such people should be used as political pawns seems to us a most shameful situation. To not rehouse for at least a year is effectively to punish for example elderly people and children already in awful housing and social conditions. It is to blame those who are frequently the most vulnerable in the community for the disagreement the Council has with other residents over its extravagant and soul-destroying cause.

Because as you can see we feel so strongly about these matters we are sending a copy of this letter to the Director of Housing and to the Camberwell Society. We would like to ask you about this Department's present and future involvement in such crucial social issues which are in such need of corporate investigation, planning and action.

Yours sincerely

<i>D Barker</i>	<i>A Searson</i>	<i>Carole Watson</i>	<i>Barbara A Joel</i>
<i>L Scott</i>	<i>M Butterworth</i>	<i>R Buchannan</i>	<i>David Rogers</i>
<i>Richard Tetlow</i>	<i>Daphne Habibis</i>	<i>Michael Owen</i>	<i>Ian Cocks</i>
<i>W Lynch</i>	<i>Carol Delaney</i>	<i>Charlie Feast</i>	<i>Phyllis Smith</i>
<i>Judy Cann</i>	<i>Martin Plant</i>	<i>John Bakker</i>	<i>Kate Burns</i>
<i>E R Miller</i>	<i>N K Roy</i>	<i>R M Baker</i>	

continued from page 3

from North Islington: she recounted the experience of a similar campaign to get Charteris Road in Islington rehabilitated; similarly blighted, with the majority of houses empty, they had succeeded in winning a reversal which would mean keeping three-quarters and redeveloping in small pockets; thirty houses were already being repaired and the first units would be occupied in February, within a year of the change of policy. The plea that there was a shortage of money under s 105 showed up the problem of inefficiency of the Council: Councils spending money were getting it and Islington had got a special allocation for this scheme, so she told us to go to Anthony Crosland and complain about the corrupt and decadent ignoring of Government and people. Sara Neill told the meeting of Southwark's reputation at the DoE as 'The Great Bulldozers'.

Following comments from people who wanted to leave the area, Richard Tetlow, a social worker employed by Southwark, working in the area, emphasised that The Camberwell Society was not trying to make people stay who wanted or needed to leave. He was in favour of rehabilitation and was most concerned about the effects of redevelopment on those he met, the most vulnerable families.

Those who wanted to leave were countered by those who wanted to stay, like Beryl Johnson; she had lived in Selborne for 16 years and loved the area, but the blight had affected their health; they had been unable to get improvement grants while around them Southwark bought up and then neglected houses and increased the blight. She read out a resolution urging Southwark to instruct their architects to undertake a feasibility study of the rehabilitation of Selborne; the resolution was supported by all but four abstainers and one against.

Michael Ivan said that The Camberwell Society proposed to write to Mr Anthony Crosland, Secretary of State for the Environment, and circulated a brief letter for everyone to sign in support. There were finally 170 signatures of people who live in Selborne or who would be affected in one way or another by what happens in Selborne.

The meeting closed with a very brief summing-up by Sally Stockley and a call to everyone to sign the letter being circulated, to support the deputation to the Town Hall on February 11th (*see front page*), and to lobby local councillors on the issue.

STOP PRESS Interim injunction February 5th

An interim injunction was granted before Lords Justice Megaw, James and Lane, with agreed terms, restraining Southwark from demolishing and/or damaging houses in the Selborne area until the Court of Appeal hearing on Monday week (February 16th) or soon thereafter.

Mr Alan de Piro QC presented the case on behalf of the appellants (the plaintiffs in Monday's unsuccessful hearing in the High Court, *see page 2*) and agreed terms with Southwark's Counsel, Mr Moriarty, which allowed Southwark to complete the demolition of nos 10, 12, and 14 Cuthill Road, to continue site exploration work, and to gut houses except for their roofs as tenants are rehoused. Southwark asked for damages, but the appellants were not required to give any undertaking in the form normally required; one of the judges could not see what damages could arise from the

injunction.

Southwark said they could now, under the terms of the injunction, carry on with the rehousing of 7 tenants immediately and another 18 soon afterwards; at this a judge commented that he could not see the connection between the injunction and the rehousing issue, a point which we have been at pains to make clear ourselves.

The owner-occupiers whose appeal is to be heard and their lawyers and advisers now have just ten days to prepare the final case against Southwark.

DIARY OF EVENTS

London Borough of Southwark (Selborne Road) (No 1) compulsory purchase order 1973

1969 Southwark Council declare their intention to redevelop the Selborne area

1973 Compulsory purchase order made by Southwark Winter 73/74 The Society's survey of the Camberwell Green area (including Selborne). *Report* published; 78% of residents wanted to stay if the area was rehabilitated

January 1974 Public inquiry into c p o

April 1974 Inspector's report on inquiry, leading to December 1974 confirmation of compulsory purchase order

May 1975 13 resident owner-occupiers of 14 houses made formal request to Southwark for rehabilitation orders

July 1975 Southwark Council said no because the area should be demolished for new housing

30th October Special meeting of Southwark's Housing Committee severely criticised the proposed scheme and sent it back to the architects, Sir Frederick Gibberd and Partners

4th November Meeting of Southwark's Housing and Planning & Development Joint Sub-committee. Agenda included Camberwell Society letter about rehabilitation and redevelopment and our comparative costings (this is printed in Newsletter 27 page 2). Four members of the Executive Committee and several residents attended this meeting as observers. The Assistant Director of Housing gave several reasons why rehabilitation was not on, but every one of them was effectively countered by councillors on the Committee. We and the residents heard that rehabilitation would be looked at again - the door was certainly not closed: Southwark subsequently denied this.

17th December Meeting of Southwark's Housing Committee. The agenda contained untrue and misleading information and an inaccurate report of the November 4th meeting. We asked for but were refused a deputation for this meeting but will be heard on February 11th (*see front page*), and Michael Ivan managed to get a letter to every member of the committee beforehand to try to correct the errors of fact: his efforts were met with determined opposition in spite of valiant attempts by several councillors to get at the truth. Councillors were told that after hearing the deputation in February, and if they had changed their minds, they could try to put forward recommendations.

12th January 1976 Public meeting organised by the Society: short statements were made by Jim Tanner on the

technical and costings side, by David Main on the social aspect, and by Michael Ivan on the previous Southwark Council and Committee meetings, followed by lively discussion. Overwhelming support that the Society use every means in its power to press Southwark to instruct the architects to do a feasibility study with a view to preparing a scheme for rehabilitating the whole or part of the Selborne area. Over 180 people attended including the Leader of the Council, Mr John O'Grady, and Ron Watts, Chairman of the Planning and Development Committee; some 170 of these signed a petition to the Secretary of State for the Environment requesting his help and support.

13th January Three demolition men employed by Southwark were observed slowly and casually demolishing three houses in Cuthill Road, nos 19, 12, and 14.

15th January 10 residents of Selborne set in motion the procedure for interim injunction against Southwark to prevent further demolition. A peaceful protest demonstration was attended by some 60 people, including Canon Rhymes, vicar of Camberwell. Press were informed and much in evidence; Southwark were informed by the press.

16th January Failed to obtain interim injunction due to time factor; all set for Monday - press informed who in turn informed Southwark

17th January 7.45 a.m. Saturday: an invasion of wreckers from Southwark descended on all six streets simultaneously and began rapidly and systematically to smash out windows, rip up floorboards, break open roofs, etc; 69 houses were affected. Men said they were returning on Sunday. Many nearby residents were rudely awoken by the dim and children and old people terrified. Southwark say this work was to prevent an invasion of squatters.

As a result of this action, the ten residents, with the help of the Society, urgently sought and obtained an ex parte injunction at 7 p.m. from Mr Justice Kilner-Brown. The injunction was served on the Mayor, Cllr Charles Halford (as reported in the South London Press, Jan 20th), on the Leader of the Council, and on Ron Watts.

18th/19th January Newspapers (e.g. The Observer on its front page) reported the injunction and the Secretary's telephone never stopped ringing, and visiting reporters were taken to see the area and the people for themselves.

20th January Daily Mail feature article by Sally Brompton. Local residents very disturbed and angry at the pronouncement at the end of this article by Southwark's Director of Housing 'I'm not prepared to see any more properties become vacant in that area and be the subject of squattings. Now the residents of the area will suffer because we shall not allow them to move to the new houses which are their entitlement until we are ready to start full demolition in 1977'. Mr O'Brien, David Main and Sally Stockley were all heard in interviews on Radio London and LBC.

21st January Wednesday Residents living in sub-standard houses and wishing to leave met at 24 Grove Lane. The Hon Secretary of the Society drafted a letter of complaint to the Town Clerk at the request of the residents. 17 signed and it was taken to the Town Hall and accepted by the Assistant Town Clerk. They asked for the statement to be withdrawn, as it threatened punitive measures against innocent residents who were living in houses the Director of Housing himself insists are unfit for human habitation.

22nd January Thursday The Society arranged a meeting for the aggrieved residents at 24 Grove Lane, attended by two councillors from Southwark who were invited and offered to help. One resident asked a councillor to tell him who had authorised the statement and we were assured that the statement had been confirmed by the Policy and Resources Committee. They would look into the matter and would see what could be done, and would meet us all on Saturday at 3 p.m. to report.

23rd January Friday Letter with petition and numerous supporting documents, including a diary of events, taken by hand to the Department of the Environment in Marsham Street. An assurance was given on behalf of Mr Crossland's Personal Assistant that he would receive the letter urgently.

24th January Saturday Meeting of tenants at 24 Grove Lane with Cliff Potter; far from helping to obtain any retraction of Mr O'Brien's incredible and outrageous statement, Cliff Potter asserted that he knew Mr O'Brien well and that he believed that Mr O'Brien couldn't have made such a statement. (The affidavit submitted by Mr O'Brien to the High Court on January 26th in fact corroborates the essential substance of the report of his statement.)

25th January Sunday Radio 4 programme and commentary including several members of the Society and Mr O'Brien.

26th January Monday Hearing in the High Court: injunction lifted, but undertaking given by Southwark to limit demolition to three houses already started (see separate report)

27th January Tuesday Joint Housing and Planning and Development Sub-committee meeting approves revised plans for Selborne development, with major changes and meeting several of previous objections. Committee also considers report on Communications with residents who may be displaced by Council proposals (redevelopment, Housing Action Areas, etc) - see separate report.

2nd February Monday Hearing in the High Court: plaintiffs' case dismissed, but they can appeal within 28 days (see report)

3rd February Tuesday Mr O'Brien states that demolition will start towards end of week or beginning of next.

4th February Appeal lodged against decision of Mr Justice Willis; process of getting injunction under way.

5th February Thursday Hearing of interim injunction application --- see page 6 STOP PRESS

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

On January 27th the Council's Housing and Planning and Development Joint Sub-committee were presented with a most useful and interesting document, *Report of the Working Party on improving Communications in Areas of Redevelopment etc*; the working party comprised members of the Housing, Town Clerk's, Borough Development, and Social Services Departments, and the leader of the Community Development Project, under the chairmanship of Mr W B Goddard, Chief Environmental Health Officer.

The working party was set up in March 1974 because (to quote the introduction to the report) 'for some time, concern has been expressed at the need for an improvement in communication between the Council and members of the public likely to be affected by redevelopment, etc, schemes. It has become apparent that in some cases, residents have not been fully aware of all the issues involved and the effect upon them of major policy decisions by the Council. In consequence, serious delays have occurred in the implementation of schemes as a result of "last ditch" opposition involving, in some cases, legal proceedings to secure possession of premises, and adverse publicity in the news media.'

The main body of the report contains a series of recommendations for a general procedure for communicating with persons being displaced by Council development activities (including conversions, General Improvement Areas, etc) and procedures in each kind of special area (e.g. redevelopment, Housing Action Areas). The stages of the general procedure, as recommended, are: initial inspections (as part of the Council's statutory duty periodically to review the housing stock); a preliminary report to committee setting out broader issues; a public meeting in or close to the area affected, with personal invitations, embodying a plan etc, sent to residents and other interested bodies; a questionnaire to residents; further report to committee for decision; letters to residents and second public meeting; further public meetings to explain any major policy changes. It is recommended that there should be a 'lead

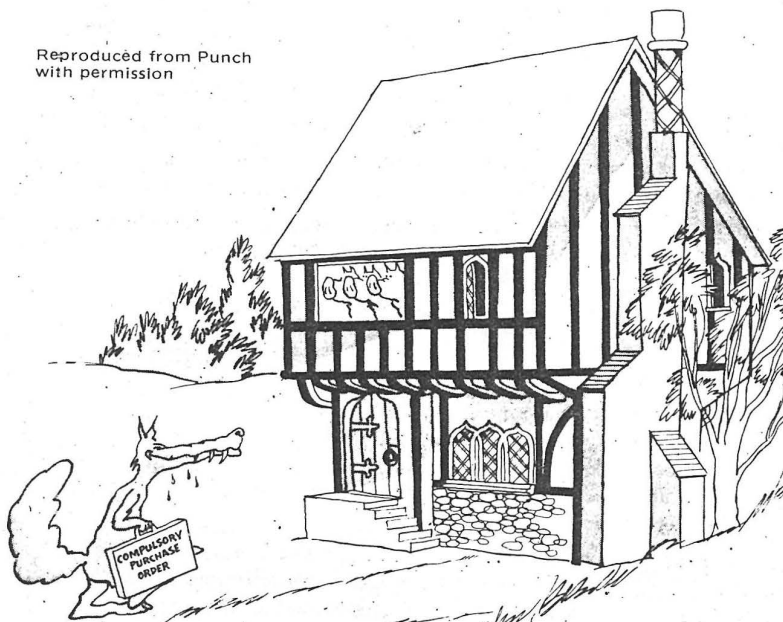
officer' responsible for organising the whole process and setting up an appropriate working group. For redevelopment areas an exhibition is recommended.

The report is to be welcomed, but it is far too late to repair the damage done and the bitterness created through past failures of communication. Selborne is a prime example: declaration of intention to redevelop in 1969, no prior consultation with residents (as admitted in the schedule to the report); in such circumstances the Council should not be surprised that when they have failed others should provide the necessary means of communication, hence the Society's detailed questionnaire in the winter of 73/74, the most relevant results of which were made known at the time of the compulsory purchase order inquiries and a report of the whole survey published later in 1974.

Most of the excellent report was accepted, but it was modified in one important and worrying aspect. The working party recommended that 'interested parties including amenity associations and other bodies having a genuine interest in the area should be invited to attend' the public meetings (paragraph 3.6). A long argument ensued about who should be invited, exposing all the frightened pusillanimity of councillors who cannot understand their failure, as in Selborne. Without naming the Camberwell Society it was clear that councillors were seeking a formula which would exclude us from invitation but not exclude, for example, a headmaster or vicar working but not living in the area. Eventually they resolved that only residents should be invited, though they could not prevent others from attending. This is certainly acceptable if it is a question of discussing improvements on an estate, but just as a man now expects to be, and is, consulted about plans that affect him so should a body whose declared aim is the improvement of planning of the area be consulted about plans affecting its area.

This is exactly the situation over Selborne which lies close to the Green, close to the heart of Camberwell, where any redevelopment will vitally affect the whole of Camberwell, not just the residents of a small part of the area.

Reproduced from Punch
with permission



"I miss the old huffing and puffing"

GR The process of consultation

Don't forget ----

MEMBERS' MEETING

Tuesday February 10th

CONSERVATION - THE RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Owen Luder, FRIBA, feels that conservation can go too far and prevent the community getting the new buildings it needs.

At the United Reformed Church
Love Walk/Grove Lane

Tuesday February 10th 8 pm

GUESTS WELCOME

Miss Gillian Whait
30, Love Walk
S E 5

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

Chairman Miss Nadine Beddington 17 Champion Grove, S E 5
Vice-Chairman David Whiting
Hon Treasurer David Main 23 Rosendale Road, SE21 (670 8770)
Hon Secretary Michael Ivan 24 Grove Lane, S E 5 (703 4564)
Assistant Secretary Miss Sally Stockley 113 Camberwell Grove, S E 5 (701 2658)

NEWSLETTER NO 30 & NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

April 1976

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Monday May 17th 1976

The Annual General Meeting of The Camberwell Society will be held on May 17th 1976 in the Vaughan Room of the United Reformed Church, Love Walk, at 8 o'clock.

Please turn to page 3 for the agenda

THE SOCIETY'S COMMITTEE

All the Society's officers and committee have to retire each year, so the way is open, and anyone is welcome to seek election. If you want to know what is involved please ring one of the officers (see top of this page) or members of the present committee and look through the Annual Report printed below.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

It was decided at the beginning of the year to increase the subscription to a minimum of £1 a year, starting with the subscription due on June 1st this year. A special rate has been introduced for students and pensioners who may pay only 35 pence if a pound is too much for them. There have been many heavy expenses in the last year, so prompt payment of subscription would be very helpful: reminders will go out later in the year to those who haven't paid.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR 1975/76

Two major issues, closely interconnected, have absorbed, once more, a large part of the efforts of the Society and its committee; they are the Camberwell Green area and the redevelopment or rehabilitation of Selborne, in one case working closely with Southwark and in the other most vigorously attacking the Council, in both more deeply involved than ever before.

The working party on the Camberwell Green area which was set up in October 1974 met several times during 1975; its final report, after several drafts, was presented to Southwark's Planning and Development Committee on November 11th 1975. The committee congratulated the working party and accepted its recommendations in principle (see report in Newsletter 27 page 7). The report was then sent for consideration by other committees of Southwark, by EPIC and The Camberwell Society, and by the Greater London Council. The GLC have approved the adoption of the recommended road pattern and the report came back to Southwark's Planning and Development Committee on April 6th when they decided that there should be public consultation in the early summer, using a shop window for a small exhibition and holding discussion groups and a public meeting.

The failure to get the future of Selborne reconsidered has naturally come as a very bitter disappointment after a series of moves by residents to persuade or force Southwark to change their minds: rehabilitation order requests, injunctions in the High Court, and a hearing in the Court of Appeal were all unsuccessful, and the efforts of the Society to bring reasoned argument to bear fell on stony ground.

The Society has been accused of manipulating residents and indeed severely criticized for getting involved in the issue at all. This we cannot accept; there are several justifications for our involvement, most important, perhaps, that what affects Selborne affects everyone in Camberwell, and the Society is fully entitled to help to the best of its ability those who live in its area, several of whom came to the Society for help and some of whom have been members for some time. The Society will say what it thinks the Council does right and certainly has a duty to criticize what it thinks is wrong.

The Society is certainly not alone in deploring the actions of the Council over Selborne: vigorous criticism was voiced by the Area Office of the Council's own Social Services Department, press comment

has severely castigated Southwark for their determined extravagance and their inhumanity in creating so much misery.

Failure over Selborne must be accepted, but the campaign, the publicity, and the furore will not have been wasted if they have had some effect on our councillors. We believe they must have been affected, however little they may care to admit it in public, and we are sure that this will show in future attitudes to the housing problems of the people of Southwark.

The Society's Executive Committee met at least once a month and smaller groups of committee members and others have met frequently to deal with urgent and more detailed matters.

There has been a much larger programme of meetings of the Society than before, with a public meeting in January on Selborne, a walk through Burgess Park last June, a visit to the Council's partly-finished Lettsom development in November, and five members' meetings: talks on The Local Development Plan by Drew Stevenson (October), Some Aspects of Social Work in Camberwell (November), Post-war Buildings in Camberwell, with slides, by Stephen Marks (December), Burgess Park (January), and on Conservation - the Resistance to Change, by Owen Luder (February). We also held a very successful party in the Crypt of St Giles before Christmas.

Decisions to preserve several groups of listed buildings came during the past year: 6-12 New Cross Road, about which there was a public inquiry in 1973, 349-369 Albany Road (public inquiry last April), and Clifton Crescent, which stands in the middle of Southwark's Brimington development but was listed early last year and is now to be retained by the Council.

We have published six newsletters this year, including three eight-pagers in quick succession, a coloured greetings card of Bessie who sold beetroot in Camberwell between the wars, and a set of six postcards of old Camberwell. Sales of earlier publications have helped to produce these and also now make a significant contribution to the Society's funds.

Our increased activities and steeply rising costs have made it necessary to put up the subscription to a minimum of £1 a year with a concession for old people and students, and we held a successful drive for new members, donations, and payment of subscriptions which were in arrear at the beginning of the year.

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

The accounts for the year from May 1st 1975 to April 30th 1976 will be presented at the meeting and printed in the next Newsletter.

SOUTHWARK FORUM ON THE SINGLE HOMELESS

Another organisation in our midst has sent us the following short paragraph for insertion.

The Southwark Forum on the single homeless is a local group concerned about housing and homelessness as it affects single people. The Forum has been campaigning for the past three years for a wider recognition of the housing needs of single people and action on the part of the housing authorities to meet these needs. Working in their spare time, Forum members have produced a number of reports on aspects of homelessness and housing for single people and have followed these up with meetings with Southwark council committees, sub-committees, individual councillors and officers as well as the GLC. Their most recent reports, 'Empty property in Southwark' and 'Homeless Children in Southwark', can be obtained, price 30 pence each, from Southwark Forum, 131 Camberwell Road, SE5 (701 2209, 701 4319).

TO COME

The next Newsletter will contain reports of various members' meetings in the past year and of the Annual General Meeting and the new committee. There will also be an article on 'Intermediate Action' and letters from former residents of Camberwell.

DIARY OF EVENTS NEWSLETTER NO 29

On reflection we realise that under 22 & 24 January 1976 of the Diary of Events we ought to have pointed out that Cllr Potter was most helpful in assuring residents who attended the meeting that the Council's programme was that rehousing and clearing the site at Selborne was scheduled for early 1976 with the beginning of rebuilding in February 1977.

The objections expressed by residents about long-standing residents not being rehoused while newer residents had been rehoused was partly due to the fact that many of the older residents had asked to go to D'Eynsford which was not quite ready.

The Director of Housing was now aware of the situation, thanks to Cllr Potter, and would take special care to see that the older residents were rehoused as quickly as possible.

Cllr Potter was also able to tell the residents that the departments were now aware of the nuisance caused by drilling rigs starting operations without warning and that in future notice would be given to nearby residents when a drilling rig was about to start work.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Monday May 17th 1976

The Annual General Meeting of The Camberwell Society will be held on May 17th 1976 in the Vaughan Room of the United Reformed Church, Love Walk, at 8 o'clock.

A G E N D A

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 previous minutes and matters arising
- 3 Annual Report of the Executive Committee for the year 1975/76 (see pages 1 and 2)
- 4 Treasurer's report
- 5 Election of officers and committee

All the officers of the Society and the members of the Executive Committee retire annually in accordance with the Constitution of the Society and are eligible for re-election. Nominations are required for the officers and 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 Hon Secretary, 24 Grove Lane, SE5.

The retiring officers are shown at the head of the Newsletter; of these David Whiting is not standing for re-election. The retiring committee comprises Brian Allsworth, Jeremy Bennett (co-opted), Beryl Johnson*, Valerie Kent, Stephen Marks, Jackie Middleton (co-opted), Dick Oliver, Paul Sandilands*, Linda Seales (co-opted), Jim Tanner*, Shirley Tanner*, Bill Wells; those not standing for re-election are marked with an asterisk.

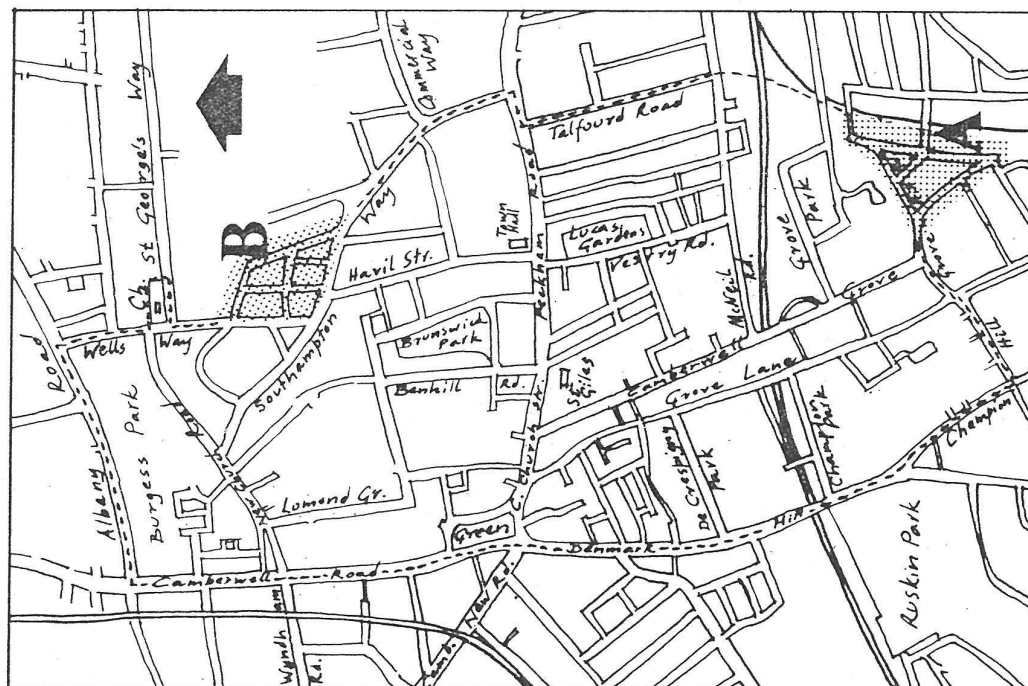
- 6 Proposed amendment of the Society's area of benefit

Two societies whose areas are defined in terms of postal districts adjoin our area. The Peckham Society, to the east, covers S E 15, and the East Dulwich Society, to the south, S E 22. Between us and each of their areas there is small pocket which is within S E 5, much of which we already cover and it is proposed that we should take these small areas in.

One of these covers Grove Hill Road, Bromar Road, Ivanhoe Road, and Malfort Road, an area once known as the Denmark Park Estate, developed in the 1870s and 1880s. The other is a group of streets north-east of Wells Way and Southampton Way, namely Coleman Road, Rainbow Street, Dowlas Street, and Bonsor Street. In both these areas, marked A and B respectively on the map, there are members of the Society.

- 7 Any other business

Michael Ivan Hon Secretary



THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY'S AREA

SELBORNE

HOW THE PRESS TOOK UP THE CAUSE

'London Demolition Halted' was the headline in the *Observer* on Sunday January 18th and two days later the *South London Press* reported 'Mayor Kicked Court Order into Street'. This really started the press campaign to save Selborne.

Many of us remember the last public meeting organized by the Society on January 12th at the end of which some 170 people signed a petition to the then Secretary of State for the Environment, Mr Anthony Crosland, requesting his support for rehabilitation of the Selborne area rather than demolition and redevelopment. That meeting must really have shown the Council that the residents of Selborne, supported by the Camberwell Society, meant business. The Council reacted quickly by sending in the demolition men next morning and on Saturday January 17th at 7.45 a.m. Council wreckers moved in in force attacking six streets simultaneously, smashing windows, floorboards, and creating gaping holes in roofs. It was as a result of this action - which many of us felt was simple retaliation for the opinions expressed and the petition signed at our public meeting earlier that week - that an injunction was granted by a High Court judge to ten residents of Selborne restraining the Council from further action. The injunction was served on the Mayor and his reaction was reported by the *South London Press* in the headline mentioned above. From that moment the Press took up the cause - the cause first and foremost of those living in the Selborne area who were immediately affected by the Council's plans, and the cause of the Camberwell Society in its supporting role. Overall we got remarkable help from the newspapers.

The *Daily Mail* gave Selborne a whole page on January 20th, a feature written by Sally Brompton called 'Change for the Sake of Change - and It's tearing the Heart out of Us'. It brought out very clearly the unnecessary distress caused to people living in the area by a Council that refused to listen to reason and it contained a quotation from Mr John O'Brien, Southwark's Director of Housing, which caused considerable anguish - 'Now the residents of the area will suffer because we shall not allow them to move to the new houses which are their full entitlement until we are ready to start full demolition in 1977'. It appeared that residents were to be victimized because the Council's plans were being held up by objections.

After this there was a deluge of Press reports. 'Council Acting like a Vandal' was the headline in the *Evening News* which reported that Southwark Council had been criticized in a public letter by 23 members of its own Social Services Department who came out strongly in support of the residents of Selborne and the Camberwell Society in their fight for rehabilitation of the area rather than wholesale destruction and redevelopment. The *Evening News* went on 'In a letter to their Director 23 members of Southwark's Social Services Department say they "object strongly to being officers of a Council that acts in such bad faith"'.

The hearings in both the High Court and the Appeal Court were reported fully in the *Times*, *Guardian*, and both the London evening papers. The headlines all showed which way the sympathy of those reporting the case lay. 'Appeal Bid to Save Homes' (*Evening Standard*), 'Residents Lose Fight to stop Council Demolishing

Houses' (*Times*), 'Residents Lose Fight with the Bulldozers' (*Evening Standard*), 'Bulldozer Nearing the Embattled Terraces' (*Guardian*), 'Battle to Keep another Corner of London' (*Evening News*), and so on. This last report had a picture of Mrs Pairo, one of the Selborne residents most critical of the ways of the Council, standing defiantly outside her home in Selborne Road.

As we all now know, the appeal was lost. The judges ruled that the Council had not acted illegally and decided that they were not empowered to investigate further into whether the Council had gone through the proper decision-making process. Following the case the *Times* printed a long letter from the Chairman and nine committee members of the Society pointing out the likely effect of the Appeal Court judgment and arguing that this 'test case' of the rehabilitation clauses of the 1974 Housing Act had really settled nothing.

Most cheering of all was the *Evening News* Editorial on February 25th headed 'Keeping the Bulldozers on a Lead'. It argued strongly that although Southwark had won in the courts their policy of wholesale redevelopment was out of date and contrary to national policy. It concluded 'Schemes of the kind Southwark is now imposing on Camberwell's Daneville Road district, far from adding to the sum of human happiness, tend to mock it'.

If Southwark thought the press criticism would stop after the court decision they were wrong. If anything it increased. Christopher Booker's whole-page article in the *Evening Standard* 'Mrs Johnson and the Nightmare of Daneville Road' told in very moving terms the story of Beryl Johnson, one of our Executive Committee members, whose house in Daneville Road is threatened with demolition. It brought a number of letters of support to the *Evening Standard*, one from a lady in Kent to say she had already written to protest about Southwark to the Secretary of State for the Environment. This was followed a fortnight later by another article from Christopher Booker in the same paper entitled 'The Misery Men' - the five housing Chairmen of the councils whose strategy 'is wrecking the lives of scores of Londoners'. Needless to say Alderman Charles Sawyer of Southwark was one of them.

Some of the most telling comments came from Judy Hillman (Planning Correspondent of the *Guardian*) on April 12th. Called 'Housing Block', her article chronicled the appalling way in which council like Southwark treat people in their development areas. She points out the weaknesses of Southwark's case on Selborne and regrets how unassailable a council like Southwark appears to be. She argues that the new Environment Secretary, Mr Peter Shore, might well consider withholding financial approval for the new development scheme until he has sufficient proof that alternative possibilities have been properly considered, but, as she points out, 'as the Council has already punctured a number of holes in the Victorian terraces, that task would admittedly now be harder'.

The final article (at the time of writing) is by Richard Woolveridge in the *South London Press*. Called 'An Offer you can't Refuse', it told the stories of a number of Southwark residents who were receiving much less from the Council than they should for their houses which are under compulsory purchase orders. 'When the Council slap a c.p.o. on your house', the article said, 'you can be sure it will cost you thousands.'

Why did the press give us such remarkable support? I asked a journalist this and he said simply 'The issues speak for themselves'. The questions that were asked continually by us were also asked by reporters - why this wasteful destruction of a living community which causes so much misery? - what evidence is there that rehabilitation was ever properly considered? - why this waste of taxpayers' and ratepayers' money on redevelopment when rehabilitation would be £2½ million cheaper? - why is there a total lack of sensitivity on the part of the Council to the views of the local people? - has the Council taken the trouble actually to find out if anyone really wants to live on a 7-acre Council estate? - what above all are the real reasons

for the Council pressing on with their plan? We never got the answers to these questions nor did the newspaper reporters. That deafening silence from the Town Hall was what condemned Southwark Council to what has probably been the most critical press campaign on any housing issue which any council has had to face in recent years. We believe it has had its effect on certain councillors in Southwark who take some pride in their borough and who have had their eyes opened to what the Council's Housing Committee is doing in their name. It may, we hope, have had some effect on the Department of the Environment whose declared policy is blatantly contradicted by Southwark's plans for Selborne.

Jeremy Bennett

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES TO REDEVELOPMENT?

Housing Acts, especially the 1974 Act, provide a legal framework for alternatives to redevelopment in areas of housing stress where some action must be taken. In this article DICK SHEPPARD, a Principal Planning Officer who has been involved in the housing field for several years, sets out what these alternatives are. In the next Newsletter we hope to print an article on Southwark's activities and attitudes in this field.

The provisions of the Housing Act 1974 gave statutory backing to the widespread realisation that improvement of the existing housing stock could in many areas provide satisfactory housing accommodation for the future without the need for wholesale clearance and displacement of existing residents, and would probably cost less and be completed within a shorter period than in the case of redevelopment.

The 1974 Act reinforced the idea of dealing with house improvement on an area basis which had been introduced by the Housing Act 1969 in the form of General Improvement Areas (GIAs). GIAs are areas of predominantly residential accommodation declared by a local authority within which they may carry out environmental improvement works with the help of central government grant. These works, such as road closures, tree planting and provision of children's play areas, were seen as aids to the improvement of the housing conditions.

This area approach has been a success where GIAs contain a large proportion of owner-occupiers who naturally benefit from and support environmental improvement schemes and take advantage of the improvement grants (now 60% of the eligible cost of the work), but has not been a success in areas where there is serious housing stress. A characteristic of these stress areas is that they usually contain a high proportion of tenanted properties and until the Rent Act 1974 gave security of tenure to most furnished tenants the GIA approach when applied to stress areas often resulted in notices to quit for many of the existing residents and gentrification of the area. Even where the tenants have security of tenure in stress areas, the lack of financial incentive for landlords to improve their properties and the consequential indefinite timescale for the remedying of the bad housing conditions still made it attractive to local authorities to consider such areas for comprehensive redevelopment rather than improvement.

The Housing Act 1974 gave more powers to local authorities to enable improvement to replace comprehensive redevelopment. In a Circular (13/75) on the implementation of the Act the Department of the Environment stated that 'Alternative courses of action (to demolition and redevelopment) in older neighbourhoods have become increasingly possible. In its provision for general improvement areas the Housing Act 1969 gave many such districts the promise of a new lease of life. The provisions of the 1974 Act for housing action areas and priority neighbourhoods strengthen the hand of authorities need-

ing to tackle, more effectively than hitherto, those areas of stress where progress depends on a determined concentration of effort. This area approach, integrated with other programmes designed to meet various social needs, is central to the Government's policies.'

The Housing Action Areas (HAAs) are declared areas of housing stress usually containing between two and three hundred houses. In declaring the area the local authority must have regard both to physical and social conditions and must be satisfied not only that living conditions are unsatisfactory but also that they can most effectively be dealt with within a period of five years without prejudicing the interests of the residents.

The importance of achieving the improvement of the housing accommodation in the area within five years (or exceptionally seven years) is paramount and to enable this to be achieved additional powers are provided within HAAs. These include improvement grants of 75% of the eligible cost of the work subject to conditions (90% in special cases), increased powers of compulsory improvement and compulsory purchase by the local authority, and the requirement that owners notify the local authority of notices to quit or disposal of rented property. Local authority action arising from this notification procedure is intended to be one of the major safeguards for residents with a corresponding duty on the local authority to inform owners within four weeks of any action it intends to take on the notification.

To secure a significant improvement in the living conditions in the area within five years the local authority must prepare an action programme setting out the detailed action needed by the local authority, housing associations and the private sector. It is possible within HAAs to secure improvement to a variety of standards having regard to the individual circumstances, and involvement of residents in the action programme is vital. To achieve this local authorities are encouraged to set up a local team of officers with a base in the area.

Priority Neighbourhoods (PNs) are areas whose main purpose is to protect the housing position in or around stress areas from deteriorating further and to stop stress from spreading out from areas, usually HAAs, which are the subject of concentrated action. This spreading effect is likely to occur where landlords feel that improvements in an adjoining area may create more favourable conditions for the upgrading of their own properties, with subsequent changes in rent levels and tenure. In these areas, which must adjoin an HAA or GIA, owners must notify the local authority of notices to quit or disposal of rented property, with a corresponding duty on the local authority to inform owners within four weeks of any action it intends to take on the notification.

Central government policy accords priority in the allocation of resources for local authority and housing association activity in HAAs, PNs, and GIAs.

The complex nature of house improvement on an area basis dealing as it does with individual existing owners and residents, varying standards and reliance on the private sector to a greater or lesser extent, compares unfavourably in ease of administration and implementation with the clear cut procedures for comprehensive redevelopment. If the area improvement approach is central to the government's policies, as is indicated by the priority allocation of resources to it, a more co-ordinated and flexible approach is needed to make the new legislation a success.

CAMBERWELL GREEN

THE WORKING PARTY REPORT - PROGRESS

In the November Newsletter we reported that the findings of the Camberwell Green working party had been approved in principle by Southwark's Planning and Development Committee on November 11th and had been referred to other committees and to the GLC, EPIC and The Camberwell Society.

The Highways and Works Committee thought that the recommended road scheme (see Newsletter 27 page 7) presented a reasonable long-term proposal for the area, although they were concerned about the extra traffic which would have to use the junction of Denmark Hill and Coldharbour Lane. The Libraries and Amenities Committee would like to see a site provided for a purpose-built library or suitable premises allocated for this purpose and welcomed the extension of the Green.

The Housing Committee, meeting on December 17th, were advised by the Director of Housing that reconsideration of their previous intention to demolish houses in Jephson Street and Wren Road would involve Rehabilitation Orders under s 114 of the Housing Act 1974 and this might lead to other owners wanting rehabilitation orders. The report to that committee stated that the houses in Jephson Street and Daneville Road were basement-type houses [half-true: they have semi-basements] which are unfit for human habitation and this had been confirmed by the Secretary of State [untrue: several of the houses in Jephson Street had been recognised as not unfit leaving only two out of eight as unfit]; it was not mentioned that all but one of the Wren Road houses were without basements. Thus guided (? misguided) the committee stuck to their previous decision 'to demolish the properties in Jephson Street, Wren Road and Daneville Road and proceed with housing development as soon as possible'.

By the time we knew about the misleading nature of the advice the Housing Committee were to receive it was, apparently, too late for Southwark to allow us a deputation for that meeting, but a deputation was received by the Committee on February 11th.

The spokesman of our deputation of seven was Jim Tanner; with diagrams placed before all members of the Housing Committee he read out a statement; his most important points were that the area which includes these houses is not a housing development site but primarily a commercial area, that there is no scheme to 'proceed with as soon as possible', indeed that it was the purpose of the working party to recommend what should be done, and that demolition now would extend for an indefinite period the area of devastation and further prejudice the chances of recovery as a viable commercial area of importance to Camberwell as a whole. The deputation were not asked anything about their statement and it was quite clear from the discussion that the majority of the committee members were not in the least interested in any issues beyond demolition and using the occasion as an opportunity for casting aspersions on The Camberwell Society.

One good but irrelevant point was, however, made by Cllr Fowler, Vice-Chairman of the Housing Committee; he suggested that since the Society was so keen on rehabilitation it should form a housing association. We are now looking into this and are testing the good faith of the Council. Although two members of the Committee did attempt to broaden the discussion, our deputation had not the slightest effect on the Housing Committee as a whole who stuck to their previous decision.

The GLC's South Area Board considered the working party report on March 29th and agreed with its broad conclusions; most importantly, they support the road proposal of the report and they consider that Camberwell Green should rank in the first priority grouping for highways investment, although finance is not likely to be available till the 1980s; the levels of increased shopping and offices are acceptable to the GLC.

EPIC, the owners of a sizable chunk of the central area, welcome the removal of blight which would result from the road proposals, but think the levels of shopping and offices as set out in the report would not be viable; so further investigations are needed by Southwark and the GLC to see what would be acceptable.

Southwark's Planning and Development Committee received all these comments and ours as well at their meeting on April 6th, and decided to obtain views on the proposals from residents and other groups (such as traders and shoppers). The consultation, which will be carried out jointly with the GLC, should take place in the early summer with leaflets inviting people to look at a small exhibition in a shop window and to attend a public meeting. The meeting (or meetings) will contain a display of broad proposals and will comprise small discussion groups followed by reports to a larger gathering. This is a method used successfully by other boroughs in London. The results will then be reported back to the Planning and Development Committee for final decision.

From Gillian Whate
50 Laro Walk

plication for its purposes shall be invested by the Executive Committee in or upon such investments securities or property as it may think fit, subject nevertheless to such authority approval or consent whether by the Charity Commissioners or the Secretary of State for Education and Science as may for the time being be required by law or by the special trusts affecting any property in the hands of the Executive Committee.

11 TRUSTEES

Any freehold and leasehold property acquired by the Society shall and if the Executive Committee so directs any other property belonging to the Society may be vested in trustees who shall deal with such property as the Executive Committee may from time to time direct. Any trustees shall be at least three in number or a trust corporation. The power of appointment of new trustees shall be vested in the Executive Committee. A trustee need not be a member of the Society but no person whose membership lapses by virtue of paragraph 3 hereof shall be thereafter qualified to act as a trustee unless and until re-appointed as such by the Executive Committee. The Honorary Secretary shall from time to time notify the trustees in writing of any amendment hereto and the trustees shall not be bound by any such amendments in their duties as trustees unless such notice has been given. The Society shall be bound to indemnify the trustees against all expenses incurred by the trustees in their duties (including the proper charge of a trustee being a trust corporation) and liability under such indemnity shall be a proper administrative expense.

12 AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority of members present at an Annual or Special General Meeting of the Society, provided 14 days notice of the proposed amendments has been given to all members, and provided nothing herein contained shall authorise any amendment the effect of which would be to cause the Society at any time to cease to be a charity in law.

13 NOTICES

Any notice required to be given by these rules shall be deemed to be duly given if left at or sent by prepaid post addressed to the address of that member last notified to the Secretary.

14 WINDING UP

The Society may be dissolved by a two-thirds majority of members voting at an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting of the Society confirmed by a simple majority of members voting at a further Special General Meeting held not less than 14 days after the previous meeting. If a motion for the dissolution of the Society is to be proposed at an Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting this motion shall be referred to specifically when notice of the meeting is given. In the event of the dissolution of the Society the available funds of the Society shall be transferred to such one or more charitable institutions having objects similar or reasonably similar to those hereinbefore declared as shall be chosen by the Executive Committee and approved by the meeting of the Society at which the decision to dissolve the Society is confirmed. On dissolution the minute books and other records of the Society shall be deposited with the Civic Trust.

Issued by the Hon Secretary, The Camberwell Society, 24 Grove Lane, London SE5

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

Approved July 9th 1970, amended May 20th 1974 and May 17th 1976

1 NAME

The name of the society shall be The Camberwell Society.

2 OBJECTS

The Society is established for the public benefit for the purposes set out below in the area, hereinafter referred to as the 'area of benefit', which is defined by a line drawn as follows: southward along Camberwell Road from its junction with Albany Road to Camberwell Green, along the west side of Camberwell Green, along Denmark Hill to its junction with Champion Hill, along Champion Hill from Denmark Hill to the top of Grove Lane, eastward along the western part of Grove Hill Road to the west of the houses in Bromar Road, southward on a line to the west of the houses in Bromar Road extended to meet the railway, northwards along the railway behind the houses in Ivanhoe Road to a point where the railway would be cut by the southward extension of the line of Talfourd Road, northwards along such a line and along Talfourd Road and along Southampton Way as far as Coleman Road, northwards and westwards to include the whole of Coleman Road, northwards along Wells Way, including St George's Church, to Albany Road, and westwards along Albany Road to the starting point in Camberwell Road.

- a To stimulate public interest in the area of benefit
- b To promote high standards of planning and architecture in the area of benefit
- c To secure the preservation protection development and improvement of features of historic or public interest in the area of benefit

In furtherance of the said purposes but not otherwise the Society through its Executive Committee shall have the following powers:

- i To promote research and to publish the results of any such research
- ii To act as co-ordinating body and to co-operate with the local authority, planning committees, sanitary, drainage, and all other local and statutory authorities, voluntary organisations, charities and persons having aims similar to those of the Society
- iii To promote or assist in promoting activities throughout the area of benefit in furtherance of the cultural and artistic life of the inhabitants thereof
- iv To publish papers, reports and other literature
- v To make surveys and prepare maps and plans and collect information in relation to any place, erection or building of beauty or historic interest within the area of benefit
- vi To hold meetings, lectures and exhibitions
- vii To educate public opinion and to give advice and information
- viii To raise funds and to invite and receive contributions from any person or persons whatsoever by way of subscription, donation and otherwise; provided that the Society shall not undertake any permanent trading activities in raising funds for its

primary purposes

ix To take and accept any gifts of property, whether subject to any special trusts or not

x To sell, let, mortgage, dispose of or turn to account all or any of the property or funds of the Society as shall be necessary

xi To borrow or raise money for the purposes of the Society on such terms and on such security as the Executive Committee shall think fit, but so that the liability of individual members of the Society shall in no case extend beyond the amount of their respective annual subscriptions

xii To take such action as may be appropriate to protect the amenity, planning or architecture of the area of benefit from any activity whether arising or taking place within or without the area of benefit

xiii To do all such other things as are necessary for the attainment of the said purposes.

3 MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall be open to all who are interested in actively furthering the purposes of the Society. No member shall have power to vote at any meeting of the Society if his subscription is in arrears at the time. Junior members shall be those aged less than 18 years at the time their subscription is due, and they shall not be entitled to vote at any meeting of the Society. The subscriptions of a member joining the Society in the three months preceding 1st June in any year shall be regarded as covering membership for the Society's year commencing on 1st June following the date of joining the Society.

4 SUBSCRIPTIONS

The annual membership fee for individual members shall be 10/- or such other reasonable sum as the Executive Committee shall determine from time to time, and it shall be payable on or before 1st June each year. Membership shall lapse if the subscription is unpaid three months after it is due.

5 MEETINGS

An Annual General Meeting shall be held on or about 15th May of each year to receive the Executive Committee's report and audited accounts and to elect Officers and Members of the Committee. The Committee shall decide when ordinary meetings of the Society shall be held and shall give at least seven days notice of such meetings including the Annual General Meeting to all members. Special General Meetings of the Society shall be held at the written request of members representing not less than 10 percent of the existing membership of the Society and whose subscriptions are fully paid up. Twenty Members personally present shall constitute a quorum for a meeting of the Society.

6 OFFICERS

Nominations for the election of officers shall be made at or before the Annual General Meeting. Such nominations shall be supported by a seconder and the consent of the proposed nominee must first have been obtained. The election of officers shall be completed prior to the election of further Committee members. 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 offices each year and shall be eligible for re-election at the Annual General Meeting. A President and Vice-President may also be elected at a General Meeting of the Society for periods to be decided at such a meeting. The Executive Committee shall have power to fill casual vacancies occurring among the officers of the Society.

7 THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the management and administration of the Society. The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers and not more than ten other members. The Executive Committee shall have power to co-opt not more than five further members. Co-opted members shall be full members of the Executive Committee and have the right to vote. The Executive Committee shall have power to fill any casual vacancies occurring among the members of the Executive Committee. The officers and members of the Committee shall normally be resident or work in the area of benefit but the Committee shall have power to co-opt members from outside the area of benefit. The President and Vice-President may attend any meeting of the Executive Committee but shall not vote at any such meeting. In the event of an equality in the votes cast, the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote. Nominations for election to the Executive Committee shall be made in writing at or before the Annual General Meeting. They must be supported by a seconder and the consent of the proposed nominee must first have been obtained. If the nominations exceed the number of vacancies, a ballot shall take place in such manner as shall be determined. Members of the Executive Committee shall be appointed annually at the Annual General Meeting of the Society. Outgoing members may be re-appointed. The Executive Committee shall meet not less than six times a year at intervals of not more than two months and the Honorary Secretary shall give all members not less than seven days notice of each meeting. The quorum shall, as near as may be, comprise one third of the members of the Executive Committee.

8 SUB-COMMITTEES

The Executive Committee may constitute such sub-committees from time to time as shall be considered necessary for such purposes as shall be thought fit. The Chairman and Secretary of each sub-committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee and all actions and proceedings of each sub-committee shall be reported to and be confirmed by the Executive Committee as soon as possible. Members of the Executive Committee may be members of a sub-committee and membership of a sub-committee shall be no bar to appointment to membership of the Executive Committee. Sub-committees shall be subordinate to the Executive Committee and may be regulated or dissolved by the Executive Committee.

9 EXPENSES OF ADMINISTRATION AND APPLICATION OF FUNDS

The Executive Committee shall, out of the funds of the Society, pay all proper expenses of administration and management of the Society. After the payment of the administration and management expenses and the setting aside to reserve of such sums as may be deemed expedient, the remaining funds of the Society shall be applied by the Executive Committee in furtherance of the purposes of the Society.

10 INVESTMENT

All monies at any time belonging to the Society and not required for immediate ap-

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

Chairman Miss Nadine Beddington 17 Champion Grove SE5
Vice-Chairman Jim Tanner 107 Camberwell Grove SE5 (703 8624)
Hon Treasurer David Main 23 Rosendale Road SE21 (670 8770)
Hon Secretary Michael Ivan 24 Grove Lane SE5 (703 4564)
Assistant Secretary Miss Sally Stockley 113 Camberwell Grove SE5 (701 2658)

NEWSLETTER NO 31

July 1976

THE SOCIETY'S OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

At the Annual General Meeting on Monday May 17th 1976 the officers, as shown above, and the following members of the Executive Committee were elected.

Brian Allsworth 165 Grove Lane SE5 (274 0367)
Jeremy Bennett 30 Grove Lane SE5 (703 9971)
Mrs Linda Hobson 11 Kerfield Crescent SE5 (701 1199)
Mrs Beryl Johnson 70 Daneville Road SE5
Stephen Marks 50 Grove Lane SE5 (703 2719)
Miss Sara Neill 22 Maude Road SE5
Dick Oliver 89 Grove Lane SE5 (703 4949)
Canon Douglas Rhymes St Giles' Vicarage, Camberwell Church Street
Bill Wells 21 Cuthill Road SE5

CAMBERWELL GREEN AREA

EXHIBITION at 3 Denmark Hill (between Midland Bank and the Silver Buckle)

July 12th to 17th

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday	11 am to 7 pm
Friday	11 am to 8 pm
Saturday	10 am to 1 pm

PUBLIC MEETING — CAMBERWELL FORUM

Monday July 19th at 7 30

Crawford Primary School (Main Hall) Crawford Road

This is the promised consultation about the proposals put forward by the Camberwell Green working party, a study group with representatives of Southwark, GLC, Epic, and The Camberwell Society. The exhibition is being mounted jointly by Southwark and the GLC to show in graphic form the proposals of the working party; it will be manned the whole time so that you can ask questions.

The Forum will not be the usual type of public meeting. The evening will be divided into two parts. In the first, local people will be able to discuss the proposals informally among themselves in small groups; each group will have someone assigned to help with taking notes, framing questions, and generally getting views together, and members of the working party, other Council officers and members and local councillors will be available for information and advice. In the second part, the views of the small groups will be presented to the whole meeting as a basis for general information and discussion.

The response to the exhibition and public meeting will be vital in the final decisions which are made by the two councils, the GLC, who are mainly concerned with roads and office policy, and Southwark.

The proposals establish a framework for future action. If they are accepted it will give everyone involved

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CAMBERWELL SCHOOL OF ART AND CRAFTS

Mr I E Tregarthen Jenkin, Principal of the School, has sent us the following appeal for accommodation for his students. Because all arrangements would be made with the School and not with individual students, he can give an assurance that security of tenure problems would not arise.

As a member of the Society, I wonder whether through your columns some publicity could possibly be given to one of the major problems at this School: that of securing accommodation for our students, at a price they can afford and within reasonable travelling distance.

In all, we have over 800 students of whom some 250 are part-time, most of those living locally. The real difficulty is felt by the six hundred or so full-time students. In addition to those whose homes are near

continued on back page

a clear idea of what they can and can't do: the uncertainty of road plans which has blighted the area for at least twenty years will be lifted and owners and traders in Church Street and Denmark Hill will be able to plan with confidence, whether they want to renovate and improve, to expand, or to redevelop where this is appropriate.

There are many important points about the working party proposals (see report in Newsletter 27 page 7) but we would like to emphasise just two:

- the adoption of the road pattern recommended and the cancellation of all previous proposals for road widening and realignment not related to this pattern;

- the retention of the houses in Jephson Street as an integral and interesting feature of the area and of Wren Road until it is needed for other purposes in the plan.

Camberwell Green concerns you: your views are wanted. Please read carefully the newspaper which the Council is distributing, go to the exhibition and the public meeting, and say what you think.

INTERMEDIATE ACTION

"No land or building may be left unused". So started Charles McKean, architectural writer and editor and a new member of the Society, when he talked to your committee the other evening. Camberwell, with the wasteland of Lettsom only now brought back to life, is about to suffer another, at its heart, in Selborne. Perhaps this principle could help.

The idea, said McKean, is a very old one. In mediaeval Britain a house or land within the walled city risked seizure if left vacant for more than three months. The modern world still has such laws - in Brazilia, for instance, land or buildings left empty for two years are forfeit.

So can land or buildings, awaiting the tortoise moves of local authority once it had compulsorily purchased, be put to use? How? *Intermediate Action* is the answer: this catch-phrase covers methods of putting to temporary use without great expenditure. Even a month was usable - the Friends of the Earth organisation could suggest quick-maturing crops. With longer periods, more ambitious projects were possible. In Islington a kids' adventure playground had taken over a site awaiting a long-delayed school; in Covent Garden the Japanese garden blossoms where otherwise there would be useless mud. If several years of use were available, then it was worth putting up temporary buildings on empty sites, with permission renewed from year to year. Temporary buildings escaped the restrictions of the building codes that applied to permanent structures. And if the houses hadn't been destroyed then there were even generous government grants for 'patching up' to make them habitable for a short time.

Who was to do all this, though? Local authorities either weren't interested or would be uneconomic for such work. The best technique was probably for a 'do-it-yourself' operation by the people who wanted the facilities. McKean cited one man who wanted some trees in the streets so our arboriculturalist friend went out early in the morning, lifted flagstones, and planted trees - all in central London. He now hoped to get tree preservation orders for at least some of his trees. If he'd asked the local authority he'd still be waiting for an answer, but this way his almonds are now blooming at the roadsides. Trees cost money - but begging can be very fruitful - London Transport had given materials for the pond in the Japanese garden, and a paint firm paint for a fence. The biggest cost was always man-hours - and who better to give these than the people who wanted the benefit?

What could happen like this in Camberwell? Why not grow vegetables on vacant sites: Southwark's corrugated iron would hide the crops from prying eyes. How many

crops of onions and tomatoes might have been got from the site between the George Canning pub and no 139 in Grove Lane? How many could Lettsom have fed? Street paintings on flank walls could brighten the neighbourhood - imagine a sea-side scene painted in the arches of Denmark Hill station.

Finally there's an idea for providing a sort of self-financing housing association. Shares would be sold but instead of paying high interest they would rise in the value of the property. This technique could help rehabilitate and repopulate the empty rooms over shops in Camberwell - and thus also help to provide customers for the shops who'd lost trade through clearance schemes. Perhaps the Chamber of Commerce might support such a scheme, particularly as the rents could be reasonable without the burden of massive interest rates.

Overall, McKean's message seems to be that, if the local authority can't or won't, then someone else can and should. Small groups can get things done cheaply and quickly. And *Intermediate Action* self-help might even be an answer to vandalism. In China the schoolchildren build their own schools - and they rarely smash them.

Is this a fundamental point: does man actually need to build, to create for himself?

Report by Dick Oliver

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING May 17th 1976

More than forty members attended the Annual General Meeting of The Camberwell Society on May 17th 1976. The minutes of the previous meeting were read out and agreed without discussion. In presenting the Annual Report Nadine Beddington emphasized the pioneer efforts of a local society which had led to the setting up of the Camberwell Green working party. It was the overwhelming view of the meeting that the press criticism which greeted Southwark over Selborne was fully justified and the Society's activities in the matter were in no way a vendetta against the council as one member feared.

Sara Neill, a new member of the Society, said she had joined the local Labour Party and referred to a ward member who agreed with the Society over Selborne but felt bound nevertheless to support the Council and thought the Society was only interested in the protection of its members' property, thus missing the vital point that those who suffered most were those whom Southwark claimed to champion. There is, she said, a small caucus in power, and the truth is that we have the wrong councillors: it was only necessary to refer to the recent statement of Mr Peter Shore, the new Secretary of State for the Environment, that the onus of proof was now on those who wanted to redevelop, to see how out of touch our councillors are.

The Annual Report (see last newsletter) was accepted. David Main in presenting the accounts (printed in this newsletter) said that we had some 211 members who were paid up with 90 subscriptions outstanding; the increase in membership was some 35 to 40 in the past year. We had spent, in a year of exceptional activity, more than we had received; he hoped everyone would pay the increased subscription of £1 and keep the Society on a sound footing. The accounts were accepted and our Hon Auditor, David Steel, thanked.

Nadine Beddington was re-elected as Chairman, and David Main, Michael Ivan, and Sally Stockley as Hon Treasurer, Hon Secretary, and Assistant Secretary respectively. Jim Tanner was elected as the new Vice-Chairman in place of David Whiting who did not stand for re-election. The new committee (see page 1) comprises 7 former members and Sara Neill and Canon Douglas Rhymes as new members. The two small extensions of our area were agreed.

We learnt that contact has been made with the Camberwell School of Art and Crafts through their new Principal, Ian Tregarthen Jenkin, and look forward to useful relations. On the Camberwell Green working party Jim Tanner said that its report had been generally well received and that it speci-

fically recommended the retention of Jephson Street and Wren Road; Dick Oliver pointed out that the destruction of Selborne meant the loss of some 700 or 800 people from those who might shop at the Green; according to the Camberwell Peckham and Dulwich Chamber of Commerce the real trouble at the Green was the uncertainty: this would be removed and they supported the working party report. Several people expressed concern at the closing of the shops, especially the small corner shops; Cliff Potter explained that this was a problem all over London, not just in Camberwell, and that subsidies were among the measures considered by the Council. It was suggested that when the Council rehoused from Jephson Street the houses should be used for temporary accommodation rather than be broken up to make them uninhabitable; one possibility was that students from the Art School could use them. A petition was to be raised to ask the Council not to take irreversible action before the consultation in July on the Camberwell Green working party report.

The meeting finished at 10 but discussion went on informally to a late hour.

Accounts for the year May 1st 1975 to April 30th 1976

Expenditure

hire of halls	14.00	
newsletters	80.50	
greetings cards	170.00	
other printing	39.27	
photocopying	116.27	
subscriptions		
LATA	5.00	
LPAC	2.50	
SAVE	1.00	
	8.50	8.50
sundry expenses	81.24	
	<u>509.78</u>	

Balance sheet at April 30th 1976

balance at 1.5.75	92.70
excess of expenditure over income	54.35
	<u>38.35</u>

Income

membership subscriptions		
including donations	221.85	
sales of publications		
greetings cards	165.04	
other	68.54	
	<u>233.58</u>	233.58
		455.43
excess of expenditure over income	54.35	
	<u>509.78</u>	

Assets

bank balance at 30.4.76	149.31
less creditors	30.96
Selborne fund	
(including loan)	80.00
	<u>110.96</u>
	110.96
	<u>38.35</u>

LETTERS FROM EXPATRIATES

Happy memories of former residents of Camberwell abound in these two letters we have received.

Now living in Worthing, Mrs Doris Turner writes

Dear Mr Ivan

I saw the letter in the Mail about Selbourne Road area, and I felt sad for the people and hope the people will be rehoused or stay where they are. I was born at no 18 Selbourne Rd. so was my brother who died at 18 years he would have been 61 years now, also I have a sister who is 60 she was born there too! My mother was 20yrs when she had my brother, we moved to Lewis Trust buildings when I was 8 mths old and I lived in Camberwell for 22 years. Today I also had a card from a friend in Clapham - I was so pleased it was a picture painted by Molly Capes of 'Bessie' who sold Beetroot hot on the curb of Camber-

well Church Street - How it brought back memories of all the years I lived in Camberwell and remember seeing 'Bessie'. I went to Denmark Hill School Grove Lane - I was only yesterday telling my husband about dear old Camberwell in the 20s and 30s, also the Blitz we moved 1941 in April. So many memories. I wondered if I could join the Camberwell Society as it was a big piece in my life - I think of the Camberwell Palace in those and how people were all so friendly - Kennedy's I think of where we bought veal and ham sausage and their lovely shrimp paste - the pie man who came round on a 3-wheeler bike calling out Hot Pies 2 pence and Sunday the winkle and shrimp woman and man who had them on a sheet on a barrow, and the muffin man ringing his bell, the organ man on Friday nights outside the buildings - and how we played top & wip and chalked the tops in different colours, how we played games with cigarette

cards 'Cigy ago'! What a very happy community we all were I remember when Denmark Hill was a smart Rd. - the drapers Russells and dear Ruskin Park.

I went to Crawford Street as an infant up to I was 10 yrs I remember the very nice little park Myattes Park I think I have spelt that wrongly and also I remember the Library near there - those were happy days. I would like to buy another card of 'Bessie', Do you have them to sell. If there is any Literature to the Camberwell Society if I could join would you please let me know.

With very best wishes I hope to hear from you, and may we all have Love. Peace. Happiness.

From Doris Turner
my single name was Burton.

Miss Molly Capes who now lives in Middlesbrough kindly allowed us to use her painting of Bessie for our recent greetings card, so we sent a batch of them. She replied

Dear Mr Marks

Thank you very much for the twenty 'Bessies' - the card is beautifully printed and the slight tone on the background is a great improvement - as Bessy herself would have said "That's a nice piece of orl right that is" - I expect the true Cockney has now been hideously eroded by trans-atlantic illiteracies. Incidentally the use of the appellant 'duck' which was in general use in the 1930s seems to have died out and I only discovered a short time ago that 'duck' was a corruption of 'duke' and the whole phrase was one which a little nurse maid that we had at home used to apply to me when I was good "My duck o' diamonds" (otherwise the knave of diamonds, the most important card in the game of bezique) - I always imagined that the reference was to the glittering brooches in the shape, generally, of pheasants or other unlikely birds which decorated the resplendent ladies who used to come on 'At Home Days' to no 181 Grove Lane, white gloves, feather boas, parasols and all.

Dear Grove Lane -
Yours sincerely
Molly Capes

SOUTHWARK COMMITTEES

New Planning & Development and Housing Committees have been selected for 1976/77. Both Chairmen retain their former seats; both Vice-Chairmen are new but Cliff Potter remains Chairman of the Planning Applications Sub-Committee.

Planning & Development Committee

Chairman: R Watts

Vice-Chairman: Ald W R Allen

P Cather, E A Davies, J H K Fowler, C C Gates, F A Goldwin, J Gordon, B G J Hoskins, J J Lauder, Mrs J Lee, J S Lees, N B Parry Jones, H C Potter, W A Slater, Miss J M Somerville, L T Tucker, D J Whiting

Housing Committee

Chairman: Ald C A Sawyer

Vice-Chairman: Ald Mrs E A Ackroyd

G Byfield, Mrs C M Clunn, M J Dalton, J Dower, R J Dunn, C A G Halford (Deputy Mayor), W F Jones, S J Kippin, Mrs A McNaught, P E McSorley, W H Payne, C J Rouse, Mrs A Stevens, Mrs A S Ward, Rev J W Watson, A E Wright, H W G Young

NEW CAMBERWELL - POST-WAR BUILDING

At a well-attended meeting on Dec 9th Stephen Marks gave an illustrated talk about post-war buildings in and around Camberwell. Nowadays we so often look at buildings in relation to their surroundings and have to deplore them, even if we can sometimes say 'it's a good building but in the wrong place'; in this talk the speaker set out to take us away from the criterion of context and to give us an opportunity to look at our modern heritage on its own merits. In looking around systematically, it is surprising how much one finds has been built or rebuilt since the war; much has become part of the familiar background and we hardly notice it and we tend rather, to be critical of change as such.

The greater part of the post-war buildings of Camberwell is housing, either private or by councils and other public and semi-public agencies such as Peabody and housing associations. Private development is mainly infill on undeveloped land, whereas council development has been, apart from post-war infill on bomb sites, primarily redevelopment of areas cleared under slum clearance programmes. The subsidies, sometimes based on the number of dwellings, sometimes on how many people in need have been rehoused, have until recently been heavily in favour of redevelopment rather than improvement of existing; this factor has been coupled with an attitude towards old buildings which has an understandable historical basis in the frightful conditions of the worst Bermondsey and north Southwark tenements and terraces and has led to a common and misguided assumption that old is bad by definition.

There are many technical and practical requirements to comply with, such as means of escape, fire protection, refuse collection, lifts, car parking, insulation, daylight and sunlight; these radically affect the process of designing, and the client will lay down other factors such as density, dwelling mix, and special kinds of accommodation. Since the mid-60's council housing has been obliged to fall within complicated cost limits which have become increasingly restrictive.

In the first major housing redevelopments there was a revulsion from the terrace house and an attempt to provide more open space around buildings, on the principle demonstrated by Le Corbusier in his Unite d'Habitation. The function of the high blocks, typically of eight or eleven storeys, was to provide extra space, *not* to increase the density; thus, the LCC's Ackroyden and Roehampton estates of the early and middle 50's were at a density of about 100 persons per acre. On these estates there were also low blocks which gave an element of townscape counterpoint; parking and garaging, provided for 5% of the dwellings, made relatively little impact on the appearance of these estates.

Then came a trend to separate the lower density, detached and semidetached, from the higher blocks of flats and this led to the increasing scale of the late 60's when much larger areas, such as North Peckham (40 acres) and Aylesbury (60 acres) were redeveloped. These two in particular have been regarded as the essential housing bank which would enable Southwark to get on with a continuing programme of decanting and rebuilding what it saw as outmoded areas of housing.

Economies of scale were claimed for these very large developments, but the very hugeness of the area brought other problems, acquisition, length of contract, organisation, and severely increased the period the site was unoccupied. More recent developments by Southwark have been smaller,

such as Lettsom (11 acres) and Selborne (7 acres). Densities also rose, reaching 185 on North Peckham, then began to drop: Lettsom is at 135 persons per acre, Selborne is designed to Southwark's currently preferred density of 100, and it is interesting to note that the GLDP lays down a range for general application of 70-100, with families at the lower density.

Styles range from the strictly traditional forms of Langford Green through the modern use of traditional materials, such as at The Hamlet, Harfield Gardens, North Peckham, to the machine-age, soulless product of industrialised building, officially encouraged in the 60's, of which Aylesbury is the most obvious and most prominent example in our selection.

Housing inevitably takes the bulk of the survey, but there are many other types of building in our area, schools, magistrates' court, art school, prefab offices, hospitals, church.

After these preliminary remarks, 180 slides, most of them taken during the previous summer and autumn, were shown in about an hour with commentary, roughly in chronological order. One of the most interesting things to emerge was the distinctive character which can be discerned in buildings of quite short periods so soon afterwards. The speaker enjoyed himself greatly and the audience was most appreciative.

THE STORY OF PECKHAM and other historical booklets

Just published by the London Borough of Southwark, *The Story of Peckham* is the third booklet in the series of *Neighbourhood Histories* prepared and designed mainly for young readers. This booklet, with text by John D Beasley, and its predecessors, *The Story of Camberwell* (1972) and *The Story of Dulwich* (1975) by Mary Boast, have short chapters on different aspects of life and history in each area, with notes on further reading and things to do. Further booklets are intended in the series.

In each there are sketches, redrawn by David Burch from old photographs and engravings, and *Peckham* and *Dulwich* have maps with places of interest identified but, regrettably, no north point which really would help as the maps are turned sideways to fit the page. These 20-page booklets costing 20 pence each are attractive and informative and provide a useful starter for an interest in the areas they cover.

Other booklets which Southwark have published on our history are: *Southwark, a London Borough* (35 pence) and *The Mayflower and Pilgrim Story* (30 pence), both by Mary Boast, and *Charles Dickens and Southwark* (1974, 20 pence) by Graham Prettejohns, Brenda Mann, and Larry Ilott.

All these booklets can be bought from Southwark Libraries.

BURGESS PARK report of meeting

At the members' meeting on January 13th Stephen Marks gave a brief outline of the issues involved in the creation of Burgess Park. Most of this was already printed in the preceding newsletter (no 28) and at the meeting was illustrated by some specially drawn sketch maps and slides of the existing buildings. The result of the public inquiry about houses in Albany Road had just been published: the ten houses are to be kept on the edge of the park (see item below). The decision gave even more importance to the application which the GLC were expected to submit for

the demolition of houses in Trafalgar Avenue; these are also listed buildings and their retention would have much greater impact than those in Albany Road. Chumleigh Gardens, a group of almshouses, should also be listed.

It was decided at the meeting that the Society should try to get Chumleigh Gardens listed, oppose the demolition of Trafalgar Avenue and press for the preparation of an alternative layout, set up a combined study group with other societies and interested bodies, and see if we could enlist the help of the students of the Polytechnic of the South Bank who had been instrumental in getting Clifton Crescent listed and had prepared studies of its rehabilitation.

ALBANY ROAD public inquiry result

Just after our special issue on Burgess Park, the Secretary of State for the Environment's decision to keep the ten listed buildings in Albany Road was published.

In his report the Inspector, Mr K Dodds, an architect and planner, said "*The layout of the park has yet to be finalised and guidelines should be laid down or broad policy established before irreplaceable listed buildings are removed for all time. It may well be that a selective process could be adopted based on a comparison of the merits of the various buildings (listed or of local importance), their location, and the contribution they could make to the environmental quality of the public open space.*"

"*I find, therefore, it would be inopportune and premature to grant listed building consent for the demolition of these properties before all planning considerations are fully appraised and assessed. Their future can only be decided in conjunction with that of the other buildings of merit in the projected area of the park - both as part of an overall exercise in conservation and in the light of the value of the terrace to the street scene when isolated from other development and influenced by the proposed footbridges over the road. If these houses eventually appear as little more than incongruous vestiges of a past era, the possibility cannot be ruled out that the balance of advantage could lie with the preservation of other buildings. These listed buildings, however, should not be demolished until and unless it is proved beyond doubt that either the use of their sites is essential to the operation of the park or that their removal would help to preserve better buildings in the park area.*"

The Secretary of State, however, took a different view. "*as they occupy only about ½ acre of land on the edge of a proposed metropolitan park of some 135 acres their exclusion from the park area and the consequential loss of recreational land by tree screening would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the park as a whole. These factors are thought to outweigh any possible disadvantages of retaining the properties in isolation from other buildings and in close proximity to the proposed footbridges linking the Aylesbury development with the park. The Secretary of State takes the view that the arguments for preserving these listed buildings are overriding and that it would not be right to postpone a decision on their future in order that their merits might later be judged against those of other listed buildings in the park area.*"

It is a particularly interesting decision not only because of the difference of attitudes of the Inspector and the Secretary of State, but also for the Inspector's conclusions on the lack of a park layout. It is believed that some time before this decision the GLC were on the point of making an application for listed building consent to demolish houses in Trafalgar Avenue. The emphasis placed by the

Inspector on the need for more information has evidently made its mark, because more than half a year later no new application has been made and we can only hope that the GLC Parks Department has begun to realise the imprudence of its ruthless and insensitive clean-sweep policy.

CAMBERWELL SCHOOL OF ART AND CRAFTS

continued from page 1

enough for daily travel, a large number come from all points of the United Kingdom and from abroad. The reputation of the School is such that we receive many times more applications than there are places available each year, and in consequence only those showing real talent and potential are admitted.

Enough publicity is given in the press and elsewhere to the financial difficulties found by many students, and I will not dwell on that issue here. It would be sufficient to say that constantly rising costs, particularly in the materials they must use, have made life extremely difficult for young, learning artists and craftsmen of today.

What we need for them are three types of accommodation:

- 1 furnished or unfurnished rooms, preferably with cooking facilities, in private houses; ideally giving the degree of privacy that most young people hope for, and where the householder will not object to, say, painting being done in the room;
- 2 self-contained flat-type accommodation, furnished or unfurnished, that could be shared by more than one student or by married students;
- 3 unfurnished houses, preferably large, for long lease or purchase, that could be suitably adapted to our needs.

If you were able to bring this to the notice of other members, I would ask that anyone with or knowing of such accommodation should write to me. I should be most grateful for any suggestions or offers.

History of the school

Whilst writing to you, I feel it may be of some interest to members to know something of the history of this School which has, over the years, played such an important part in art and craft education, always with an emphasis on drawing, and with an interest in the local community.

During the last quarter of the 19th century, expansion of technical and art education took place against the background of unease about British manufacturers shown in the Great Exhibition of 1851, of increasing foreign competition, and of views expressed by liberal thinkers, like Ruskin, that the study of art was necessary not only for full education but also for human development. There had, moreover, been a growing demand for 'further education' since the introduction of compulsory elementary education in 1870. The Technical Instruction Act of 1889 thus empowered County and Borough Councils to raise a penny rate for technical instruction. In 1893, when the LCC established the Technical Education Board, providing public money to supplement existing charitable funds from City Companies, the only facilities in the Metropolitan Borough of Camberwell to receive funds from the Board were the evening classes (carpentry, joinery, building construction, botany and steam) at the Science and Art Institution, Camberwell Green.

In 1896, the Governors of the City Parochial Foundation transferred to the Vestry of Camberwell the South London Art Gallery, Peckham Road, and Mr Passmore Edwards gave £5,000 to build next door a School of Art in memory

of Lord Leighton. The Board contributed to the cost of equipment and undertook the management, leaving detailed administration to an Advisory Committee containing local representatives. The School, having cost £8,400, was opened by the PRA, Sir Edward Poynter, on Monday 10th January 1898, 'to provide instruction in those branches of design ... which directly bear on the more artistic trades, and to give the best artistic and technical education to all classes in the district to supplement the knowledge gained by craftsmen in workshops, and to help the craftsman become the designer of his work'.

Additional accommodation was already needed in 1901, and an extension was built after further help from Mr Passmore Edwards. In 1905 the Borough leased the premises to the LCC for 900 years at a shilling a year, ridding themselves of their initial financial burden. Some years later a further substantial extension was built by the LCC. Until the first World War, courses were provided for tradesmen in printing, in building (including plumbing, described in an early prospectus as 'one of the more artistic crafts' and discontinued in 1918), and for craftsmen making pottery and furniture. Between the two World Wars, a Fine Art Department and a Junior School for children aged 13-16 were started. The Junior School later became the Secondary Art School, closing in 1958 when national policy changed. After the second World War the design and craft departments, other than Typography, enhanced their 'artist-craftsman' rather than industrial direction; the Fine Art Department gaining greatly from a succession of eminent artists and teachers.

Finally, additional accommodation and greatly improved facilities have recently been made available in the new building opened in 1975 and, from next year, in the former Wilson's Grammar School.

LET'S TALK - COUNCILLORS' SURGERIES

Councillors in every ward hold regular surgeries to help with any problems you may wish to bring before Southwark Council. If you require further information, telephone 703 6311 ext 126 or 117.

Brunswick Ward

Councillors Ernest Pruce, Ronald Watts, JP, Jeremy Gordon; Sceaux Gardens Tenants' Hall, Havil Street SE5.
Alternate Saturdays from 3 April; 11 am to 1 pm.

St Giles Ward

Councillors Mrs Ethel Dalton, Leslie Alden, Raymond Wedlake, JP; Room 71, Town Hall, Peckham Road SE5.
Alternate Fridays from 2 April; 7 to 8 pm.

Lyndhurst Ward

Councillors Bill Payne, Cliff Potter, David Whiting; Dog Kennel Hill Primary School, Dog Kennel Hill SE22; first Friday of month 7 to 8 30 pm. Alleyn's School, Lower School Building, Hillsboro' Road SE22; every fourth Friday 7.15 to 7.45. Blanedowne Community Centre, Denmark Hill Estate SE5; last Friday in the month, 7 to 8 30 pm.

This information is taken from the April issue of Southwark Civic News.

Miss Gillian White
10 Love Walk
SE 15 9

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

Chairman Miss Nadine Beddington 17 Champion Grove SE5
Vice-Chairman Jim Tanner 107 Camberwell Grove SE5 (703 8624)
Hon Treasurer David Main 23 Rosendale Road SE21 (670 8770)
Hon Secretary Michael Ivan 24 Grove Lane SE5 (703 4564)
Assistant Secretary Miss Sally Stockley 113 Camberwell Grove SE5 (701 2658)

NEWSLETTER NO 32

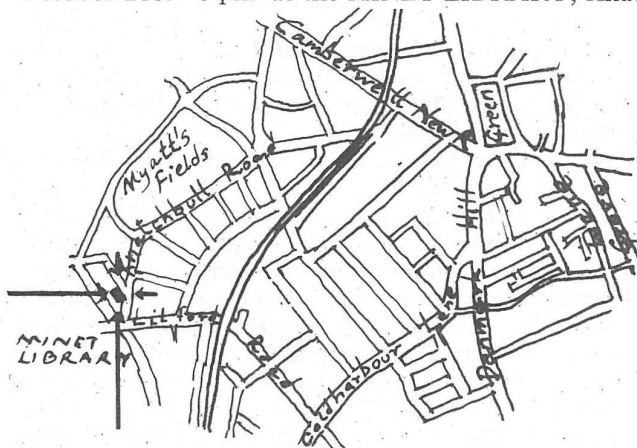
September 1976

MEMBERS' MEETINGS EVERY MONTH

Almost every month on the third Thursday there will be something for members, usually a meeting at the United Reformed Church, Love Walk. Please mark in your diaries all the dates below even though we have not fixed the subjects of the later ones.

September 16th 8 pm We'll start off with a **MEMBERS' FORUM** to discuss the Society's activities and functions —
United Reformed Church Does the Society get too involved?
Is it interested in a wide enough variety of issues?
Is your Committee too isolated?

October 21st 8 pm at the MINET LIBRARY, Knatchbull Road, SE5



VISIT to the SURREY ROOM of the Minet Library where the Archivist Miss YVETTE WILLIAMS

will show us some of the plans and records of Camberwell and Peckham.

Please arrive before 8 pm; if you arrive after 8 you will find the main door closed and should use the side door in Burton Road.

November 18th 8 pm
United Reformed Church

ASHLEY BARKER, Surveyor of Historic Buildings, Greater London Council, in charge of the Historic Buildings Division, will talk to us on a subject to be announced in the next Newsletter, probably with slides.

December

No meeting

January 20th 1977

STEPHEN MARKS will talk with slides about
THE DE CRESPIGNY FAMILY IN CAMBERWELL.
(This talk was originally prepared for a series on *Personalities of South-East London*, given at Goldsmiths' College last March.)

February 17th

March 17th

April 21st

May 19th

June 16th

Meetings still to be arranged: we hope to include another members' forum, a talk about other societies' work, current planning issues, and a visit to Nunhead Cemetery.

facsimile reprint
to be published
by Stephen Marks

THE PARISH OF
CAMBERWELL
BLANCH 1875

ready in November
watch out for
further details

THE PROVIDENT HOUSING SOCIETY LTD

You may have noticed a recent article in the South London Press about members of the Society forming a housing association and be wondering what this means. You will remember that on February 11th 1976 the Society took a deputation to Southwark's Housing Committee and put forward reasons for the retention of Jephson Street, Wren Road, and the northern side of Daneville Road. At this meeting Councillor John Fowler, then Vice-Chairman of the Housing Committee, told the Society that if it was really sincere in its desire to do something about housing in the area it should 'put its money where its mouth is' and form a housing association.

The Society's committee thought that this was a very positive and constructive suggestion and quickly formed a sub-committee to set about investigating the matter. As it happened the Society's chairman, Nadine Beddington, was a member of a housing association which had become inactive and it was suggested that this should be taken over, thus enabling us to get off the ground a little more quickly than if we started from scratch.

The take-over has now been accomplished and share transfers completed, but it is important to point out that the association is financially and constitutionally completely independent from The Camberwell Society. However, the activities of the association do of course vitally interest the Society's members and committee and four of the latter, Jim Tanner, Michael Ivan, David Main, and Sally Stockley, are members of the association's management committee. Jim Tanner is its Chairman and David Main works for a local housing association and has some useful expertise.

At about the time that the sub-committee was making preliminary enquiries and taking advice, your committee was also having meetings with Mr Ian Tregarthen Jenkin, Principal of the Camberwell School of Art and Crafts, partly to see what contributions we could jointly initiate for the improvement of Camberwell's environment, and partly to discuss the accommodation problems of the art school students (about which you will have read in the July newsletter). It became clear that these students could benefit enormously from the activities of the housing association, and Mr Jenkin is now its very enthusiastic Vice-Chairman; his secretary, Miss Rosalind Nash, is Secretary of the association and Mrs Julie Bloomfield, Student Services Officer (with accommodation as one of her main areas of activity) another committee member. It has been suggested that the President of the students' union should be invited to join. One original member, a quantity surveyor, has remained to join the new committee.

The name of the association is the Provident Housing Society, although this may well be changed in order to indicate its local character. Its new address has been registered with the Registrar of Friendly Societies: c/o the Camberwell School of Art and Crafts, Peckham Road, SE5.

A housing association (a term which can now include housing societies although historically there were differences) is a body which aims to augment the total housing stock by improving or constructing houses or hostels without trading for profit. The Housing Corporation is a Government body set up in 1964 to finance housing associations and it provides loans at low interest rates. It is essential for an association to be registered with the Corporation if it wishes to borrow public funds, either from the Corporation or from the local authority. The registration is by no means automatic, but it is the next step that the Provident Housing Society hopes to take, since so far it has no funds apart from the £1 share contributed by each member of the management committee. If registered with the Corporation, it is then necessary for a housing association to be

"zoned" by the local authority, amongst other things to ensure that there are not several associations catering for the same needs in the same area. The housing association hopes to specialise in housing students or lecturers from colleges in the area as well as nurses, doctors, teachers, and patients from such hospitals as Kings College, the Maudsley, and Guy's. There is clearly an urgent need for housing at reasonable cost for these groups of people. There are many houses in our area which should be rehabilitated, because they provide the type of accommodation preferred by many, and also for reasons of cost and historic interest. The association hopes to make its contribution.

While we felt that on February 11th Councillor Fowler was perhaps testing the sincerity of The Camberwell Society in its wish to help housing problems, we cannot believe that he would make such a suggestion if he was not himself sincere and sure of his facts. The housing association therefore has hopes of being able to go ahead in the manner described above, with local authority encouragement. As a start it has formally written to Southwark Council suggesting that it should undertake rehabilitation of the houses in Jephson Street, and there is no reason why it should not suggest the same for Wren Road. The Camberwell Green Working Party Report recommended that these houses should be kept (Jephson Street permanently and Wren Road at least in the short term) and at a recent public meeting organised by Southwark Council and the GLC as a result of this report, to discuss the future of the Camberwell Green area, there was overwhelming support for the retention of these two streets (only one person voting against the idea). In July the housing association received a reply from the Council saying that the matter was under consideration. It should be added that while The Camberwell Society welcomed the suspension of "gutting" or demolition plans for these two streets while public consultation was being carried out, it was very disturbed by reports that re-housing had been halted. As we have emphasized so often before, plans for the rehabilitation of houses should not prejudice the re-housing of people living in unacceptable conditions who wish to leave. Empty houses *can* be secured without resorting to breaking them up.

Finally the Provident Housing Society has already received one offer of work from local people skilled in rehabilitation and building work, and of course if anyone has ideas, comments, or offers of help its committee would be very glad to hear from you.

Sally Stockley

CAMBERWELL GREEN *There will be a full report of the Camberwell Green exhibition and public meeting, together with the latest news, in the next Newsletter in October.*

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

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Hon Treasurer [see below]
Hon Secretary Michael Ivan 24 Grove Lane SE5 (703 4564)
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NEWSLETTER NO 33

November 1976

TREASURER

David Main, who took over from Brian Allsworth as the Society's Hon Treasurer at the AGM in 1975, has found that the pressure of other work prevents him from fulfilling his duties as Treasurer, so he has decided to resign. With reluctance your Committee has felt obliged to accept the resignation.

For the time being the books of the Society will be maintained by Stephen Marks. Subscriptions should now be sent to him at 50 Grove Lane, SE5.

The search is now on for someone who is willing to be the Society's Treasurer.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The subscription to the Society is **£1 or more** a year due on June 1st (increased from 50 pence in 1975); there is a special rate for students and old age pensioners who may pay 35 pence if a pound is too much.

1975 (June 1st 1975 to May 31st 1976)

1976 (June 1st 1976 to May 31st 1977)

If according to our books you have not paid your subscription(s) you will find the relevant year(s) underlined in red. ***Please pay promptly*** so that you don't rely on others to keep your Society in funds. Please send your subscriptions or queries to Stephen Marks 50 Grove Lane, SE5.

PS Only paid-up members can take advantage of the reduced price offered on the reprint of Blanch's *The Parish of Camberwell* (see page 8).

MEMBERS' MEETINGS

November 18th 8 pm

United Reformed
Church

THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN TIMES OF FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

a talk by ASHLEY BARKER with slides

Ashley Barker is the Greater London Council's Surveyor of Historic Buildings, in charge of its Historic Buildings Division. Among his responsibilities are the control of what developers and owners want to do to listed buildings (the 'statutory' work) and the maintenance and restoration of historic buildings in the ownership of the GLC, such as Kenwood and Marble Hill House. His division is by far the largest group of experts in any local authority dealing with historic buildings.

*1977 meetings
see page 2*

TOM PHILLIPS AT THE CORACLE PRESS GALLERY November 25th 8 30

20 sites, 12 years

a slidework based on a circuit in Camberwell and Peckham
the first five years of a long-term project (duration about ½ hour)

Drawing 1976

also involving slides/film (about 20 minutes)

Members of the Camberwell Society are invited to this quasi-topographical slide show by Tom Phillips at the new local art gallery, the Coracle Press Gallery, 233 Camberwell New Road. There will be wine. The Coracle Press Gallery is open during normal shop hours and has changing exhibitions.

BESSIE

and the Society's other greetings cards are available from
The Passage Bookshop 10p each with envelope

MEMBERS' MEETINGS IN 1977

January 20th 8 pm	<i>THE DE CRESPIGNY FAMILY IN CAMBERWELL</i>
United Reformed Church	a talk by STEPHEN MARKS with slides
February 17th	<i>meeting to be arranged</i>
March 17th 8 pm	<i>THE WORK OF SOME OTHER SOCIETIES</i> Discussion and comparison
United Reformed Church	with contributions from representatives of The Peckham Society, the South West Rye Lane Residents Association, and The Dulwich Society
April 21st	<i>meeting to be arranged</i>
May 19th	VISIT to Nunhead Cemetery
June 16th	Annual General Meeting

LIVING IN SOUTHWARK

Perhaps not many members of The Camberwell Society will have the time and opportunity to read right through the two copious reports that the Social and Community Planning Research Centre submitted to Southwark Council in March and April 1976. *Living in Southwark* and *Moving out of Southwark*. I have, therefore, taken short quotations from the Summary of Results in the former document with only such slight alterations, mainly to punctuation, as were necessary to preserve continuity.

pp 15 & 16 *The relationship between official classifications of housing and perceptions of it by the people housed would be worth further investigation. There are very big differences between households in different tenures. According to their own assessment of the condition of their housing owner-occupiers were by a wide margin the best off, then local authority tenants. Private tenants were in the worst housing especially those in furnished accommodation.*

p 11 *People attach great importance to the appearance of their neighbourhood.... Facilities such as shopping, transport and entertainment also contribute to satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with the district. But none of them seem to be quite so closely related to satisfaction with the district as its appearance is.*

p 12 *If the general look and feel of the environment are wrong, that is a more basic matter which can - and often does - cause a move. It is the quality even more than the facilities, that counts. And it is a measure of the quality of the environment in Southwark that almost half are dissatisfied with the appearance of their local area.*

p 13 *Solutions to housing problems have indeed created the environment that exists over substantial areas of the borough.*

p 14 *Half of all housing in Southwark has been built since the war. Three in every five dwellings are located on an estate, and over a third are in high rise blocks. Over half the dwellings are flats, mostly purpose-built, and there is virtually no semi-detached or detached housing.*

pp 16 & 17 *If we relate amenity provision to housing satisfaction we do not find as close a relationship as might be expected. It is true that those lacking amenities are more likely to be dissatisfied with their housing than those who have them; but cramped or otherwise poor conditions seem to influence satisfaction even more than amenities.... At least one householder in every twelve is overcrowded.... Among the remainder there will be a not insignificant number who are in cramped conditions.*

p 18 *People attach a great deal of importance to adequate space. There is, proportionately, as much overcrowding in*

local authority housing as in the remainder... nine out of every ten overcrowded households contain children.

p 11 *The presence or absence of nearby parks and other open spaces is important in determining whether a district is liked or disliked. They contribute to the look of an area as well as providing places to walk in, sit in, and play in.*

p 21 *In passing, it should be noted that 20% of all children aged 3-9 in the borough never normally play out of doors. The fundamental change in Southwark since the war has been the massive redevelopment which has created an environment very different from what it replaced. In recent years attitudes seem to have been swinging towards the renovation of existing properties, and we felt that we should ask Southwark householders for their views about the comparative desirability of redevelopment and renovation. Over three-quarters of Southwark households would prefer to see old properties rehabilitated rather than pulled down and replaced by a modern development. Those who live in property in poor internal and external condition, however, were fairly evenly divided in their views, although on balance they agreed with the majority view.*

This report was commissioned by Southwark Council who are at this moment preparing their Housing Strategy (see below). Remarks upon the local preference for rehabilitation rather than redevelopment must please, even if they do not surprise, The Camberwell Society. The Social and Community Planning Research Centre made a very real and valuable attempt to get below the surface scum of contemporary planning. They tried to seek out the basic needs for contentment and active happiness. What, if anything, they asked could really make people (young or old) really want to stay in Southwark? They ended up with something very simple: *the general look and feel of the environment.*

But this precise simplicity is nicely calculated to arouse the fury of certain types of officers and councillors. What could it lead to, they will say, only to something snobbish and subjective? - an unnecessary expense, impractical, unwanted. Indeed, on September 28th at a meeting of the council's Planning and Development Committee, when

Southwark's Housing Strategy was approved in principle, one of these councillors was heard during discussion to say 'To me rehabilitation is justing taking an old drum and tarding it up'. The Research Centre reports must have made unpleasant reading to some councillors and officers whom we might expect to pigeon-hole and forget these reports: it would be a great pity if this were to happen.

And it is just here that the Research Centre, amongst its modern statistics, reiterated the ancient Vitruvian demands for an environment that couples convenience with *delight*. It is here that the finest line must be drawn between environmental excellence and failure. It is here that good workmanship must replace our current metropolitan fashion for the shoddy and pretentious. And it is in drawing these hair-line distinctions that experienced amenity groups are most needed.

No one any longer believes that local government can succeed all by itself.

SOUTHWARK'S HOUSING STRATEGY

On Tuesday September 28th Southwark's Planning and Development Committee approved in principle proposals contained in *Southwark's Housing Strategy* (already approved by the Housing Committee on July 29th).

Mr John O'Brien, Director of Housing, highlighted various aspects of the paper to the committee. It was not a drama-

tic change, he said, but a gradual one which had been taking place over a number of years. By 1980 large-scale redevelopment in the borough would be completed.

Rehabilitation would be linked with gradual renewal. 14% of Southwark households were home owners and only 16% could become home owners. Housing associations (of a limited nature), equity sharing, and co-operatives were being recommended. They would think again about allocation policies to include key workers (hospital, transport, etc) and young people, who had not been previously helped.

It was important to know what the housing need in Southwark was and a questionnaire was being prepared to find out. Rooms were too small and tenants should be allowed to decide how they wanted to divide up rooms. Children should be able to do homework without the constant temptation of TV and a more generous allocation policy was needed so that tenants could have one more room than they actually needed.

All present housing schemes were low rise as opposed to high rise. Since August 1st acquisition of old properties was being restricted to those suitable for single family occupation; lateral conversions which were clever in planning terms but not in practice were being abandoned.

The Committee agreed that they welcomed the Housing Strategy paper.

Michael Ivan

REHABILITATION — THE RIGHT ANSWER?

In the April newsletter (no 30 page 5) we printed an article entitled 'What are the alternatives to redevelopment?' In this article ANN WARD, a councillor for Alleyn Ward (part of East Dulwich) and a member of Southwark Housing Committee, expresses some of the problems that are coming to light in Southwark's rehabilitation programme.

Southwark has one of the highest programmes of rehabilitation in the whole of London. This may surprise many people, particularly if they have lost the battle to keep one particular street or group of houses and deduce that the whole of the Borough is due for the bulldozer. If, in fact, Southwark had been luke-warm in seeking to rehabilitate acquired houses, then we had every opportunity to cut our programme when the DoE announced cuts in the Section 105 allocations (money used for and modernisation). However, I was one of the councillors who, earlier this year, went on a deputation to the Minister not to plead for extra money, but to produce hard evidence that our programme was sufficiently well-gearred that we could spend it sensibly on an achievable time-table. Southwark in fact pioneered a system of group contracts for rehabilitation which has resulted in speeding up the Ministry approval stage and has enabled us to get major contractors such as Wates carrying out rehabilitation contracts. As a result of the deputation the Section 105 allocation was increased to allow us to continue our programme virtually intact. Leaving aside the question of modernisation of older council dwellings, Southwark's rehabilitation programme will produce 6,694 dwellings in the next five years (about 1,300 a year) as against 6,493 new dwellings to be built in the same period. [These figures are always subject to no government intervention to change the programme].

Having indicated the size of the programme, however, I want to express some words of caution over the major shift to rehabilitation that is taking place. It is easy to answer the question, why do people express a strong preference for rehabilitation as against redevelopment. Keeping the familiar street patterns gives a feeling of security and stability. Familiar architecture with which people have grown up, is almost universally preferred to new styles, irrespective of whether future generations will judge them better or worse. Rehabilitation, to most people, means keeping the existing community together, retaining familiar small shops and local traditions.

But the real test of rehabilitation must be whether people actually like living in the dwellings that are created. The external appearance is important, but housing must be judged on whether people like living in it, not whether other people like looking at it.

It is on this test that some questions are now starting to arise. In fact, some of us who are strongly in favour of rehabilitation are beginning to be worried whether we are creating a serious problem for which, in ten years time, we will be criticised because of our failure to anticipate it. The real problem arises over the size of much of the housing created in Victorian times. Where the houses are small enough to be modernised and let as single family units, they are wholly successful and very popular indeed. The small cottages in Scylla Road, for instance, make ideal two-bedroom houses, and much of the housing in the East Dulwich 'triangle', including the Housing Action Area of Pellatt Road, is the right size for modern families.

However, many of the three-storey houses throughout the Borough are too large for single families and have to

be converted into two units. That, in my experience, is where the real problem begins, and I don't know the solution.

There is no way, within any budget conceivably possible to local authorities, to get adequate sound proofing in these converted houses. Their structure, coupled with the tremendous need for single bedroom groundfloor accommodation, dictates that the conversion produces a maisonette over a ground floor flat, so that those who inevitably make the most noise are over those who need the most quiet. The stairs leading to the upper floors produce sideways noise, and however thick the carpeting, noise is carried from one floor to another through the wooden joists. The problems are not confined to families over old people. I have a case of two retired couples in a converted house, with the bottom flat dweller completely unable to stand the noise from the very quiet couple above.

It is no answer to say that there is noise on the estates. The experiences I have in the ward I represent have proved to me that the noise transmission in converted houses is sufficiently bad to make life intolerable for many people. The number of transfer requests, and a heartbreaking case of an old couple spending all day in the library or parks rather than stay at home have made me very aware of the problem. I myself lived upstairs in a converted flat for many years and did not appreciate at that time how my typewriter had made life intolerable for the people underneath.

I have attended special seminars on conversions, had talks with many experts and Ministry representatives, and yet none of them are able to tell me of any satisfactory solution to this problem — within limits that councils can afford. The Household Survey carried out by Southwark showed that the largest single reason for moving was noise, an indication of how important a factor it is in people's satisfaction with their housing.

Those favouring rehabilitation must also be prepared to take fully into account the total environment in which people will have to live. It is, in my opinion, totally irresponsible to spend large sums of money rehabilitating houses for long-term use when they are near a railway line or have other fixed conditions which will create a bad living environment for the tenants.

One other objection I meet from people offered or living in converted houses is that they lack privacy. The shared front door off the street is not popular and gives many people a feeling that it is not a proper home. This is a lesser objection than the question of noise, but it is nevertheless real.

The real test of popularity of dwellings is not what people say they like, but what they choose when the opportunity offers.

There is no doubt that individual houses are, for the majority, the most popular, whether they are new or rehabilitated. Next in popularity, judged by ease of letting, are flats in small blocks. Then, a long way behind come flats on large estates and converted flats.

Council housing programmes are still very much geared to the provision of family dwellings, although the emphasis is changing and I am convinced will change even more rapidly in the future. My own feeling is that our converted houses should be geared to the needs of young or middle-aged people, single or married, but without children. I am sure that they do not produce satisfactory dwellings for the old, or for families with children.

CAMBERWELL GREEN PUBLIC MEETING July 19th

A highly successful meeting was held in Crawford Road Primary School as the culmination of the public consultation over the Camberwell Green proposals of the Working Party. It was a departure from the usual sort of meeting: it started with small groups of eight or ten people, informally guided by neutral helpers, who sat round tables and discussed what interested them most. At half time all their ideas were gathered and collated for the second part at which the most important aspects were discussed by councillors, officers, and members of the public. By starting the meeting in small groups everybody had a chance to have their say and felt that the meeting was really concerned with what they had said, unlike the usual public meeting.

There was, in fact, general agreement with the Working Party's recommendations; most important was the approval of road option 7. Most heartening also was the overwhelming support for the retention of Jephson Street, although nothing had been indicated about this contentious matter in the exhibition plans on display during the preceding week. Many other matters were, of course, raised at great length, such as the falling custom for shops, public transport, heavy lorries. All of us felt a lot happier that we really had taken part in a discussion on the future of Camberwell Green and that the authorities were listening to what we said.

We would like to congratulate Southwark, and in particular David Hayes, the chairman of the Working Party, most heartily on the meeting, and both the GLC and Southwark on their exhibition in Denmark Hill.

The views of the meeting and comments made at the exhibition were reported to the Planning and Development Committee on September 28th. Road option 7 was approved and the entire report, including Appendix A which sets out the comments, was referred to other committees for their approval.

DOES THE SOCIETY GET TOO INVOLVED ?

This was one of the questions put to members at an open forum on September 16th.

Founded in the mid 1960s as a fairly conventional residents' association concerned with the interests of a comparatively small group of people, The Camberwell Society developed in the late 60s and early 70s into an amenity society whose interests centred on the quality of the physical environment.

A significant shift in emphasis demonstrating a matching concern for social issues was signalled by the survey on the Camberwell Green area carried out by members in the winter of 1973/74. The report on the findings of the survey was a source document for the Camberwell Green Working Party set up by Southwark Borough Council in 1974 to consider the future of the Green. The Society was represented on the Working Party and its proposals for vehicular traffic reorganisation (road option 7) were adopted by the Working Party.

But the involvement of the Society in the affairs of Camberwell can probably be said to have culminated in the recent efforts to save the Selborne area from destruction as a community to make way for redevelopment.

These events of recent years show a fair record of involvement: does the Society get too involved?

At a lively and stimulating meeting the general reaction appeared to be that we are not involved enough. Ideas

were not wanting for greater or more intense commitment at local community level until it was pointed out that agencies already exist for many of the needs put forward as requiring fulfilment. Comment on the shortcomings of some of these agencies was answered with the question: Could a voluntary body such as The Camberwell Society do better?

It was at this point that the idea of a shop or centre manned by members began to emerge. Such a centre could provide the focus for other voluntary bodies such as tenants' associations and action groups whose common interest was in the local community. It would aim to direct members of the public who came to it to those organisations available to offer information or help on specific problems. It would

MARY DATCHELOR SCHOOL

Mary Datchelor Girls' School is threatened with closure as a result of the current changes in secondary education. At a meeting of the Society's committee it was decided that we should write both to the Chairman of the School Governors and to Mrs Shirley Williams, Secretary of State for Education and Science, to ask if the future of the school could be reconsidered. Many members of the Society have said how sorry they are that it is extremely unlikely that there will be a school on the present site after 1981.

This is our letter to the Secretary of State.

Dear Mrs Williams

We understand that all those interested in the continuation of a school on the site of the Mary Datchelor School in Camberwell have been asked to write to you.

We, as members of the residents association in Camberwell, would very much like to see the school continue. We realise that under current regulations the nature of the school would have to change.

As a Society we all very much favour the idea of the school continuing as a comprehensive. We therefore add our support to those who have already written to you asking you to examine the current situation at the Mary Datchelor School. Many in this area feel that small comprehensives are highly desirable for a great number of reasons, most of which will already be known to you. As the present school has facilities for some 600 children, it would seem an ideal site for just such a small comprehensive. We feel further that if such a school were to continue on the present site as a small comprehensive it would receive very considerable local support.

We therefore appeal to you as residents of Camberwell to investigate these possibilities. We realise there are diffi-

also aim to take up or publicise issues on behalf of an individual or a group of individuals where these issues had a common relevance. In this way the Society would have early access to causes it should be committed to defend.

At the end of the meeting those present were promised that the ideas put forward would be considered by your Committee and that there would be a reporting back to the membership. Although lively and articulate, there were not many people at the meeting: we are seeking, therefore, through the Newsletter the reaction of all members on this vital question of the future form and direction of the Society. We want your views: please write to the Hon Secretary or to the Editor of the Newsletter.

Jim Tanner

culties but feel that they could be overcome given the goodwill of the Clothworkers who own the school, the ILEA, and the many parents and staff who would like to see the school continue.

Yours sincerely

In mid-October we received an acknowledgment from the Department of Education and Science saying that our comments had been noted and would be taken into account when the Secretary of State considers the future of the school 'under Section 13(4) of the Education Act of 1944'. We are not certain what this means. We hope it may mean that there will be some reconsideration. In the meantime anyone who thinks that it would be a good idea to have a small comprehensive in our midst on the present site *please write now to*

The Secretary of State for Education and Science
Elizabeth House
York Road London SE1 7PH

quoting the reference

MARY DATCHELOR SCHOOL No 4635.

The Chairman of the School Governors has still not acknowledged our letter written on July 14th.

Jeremy Bennett

CONSERVATION AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Conservation Areas Advisory Committee is a consultative body run by the Council. The membership consists of Southwark councillors and representatives nominated by bodies like our own Society (see Newsletter 22 page 2 for details of its work). Your Committee has just nominated Dick Oliver, to relieve Stephen Marks, who has been the Society's representative for six years, of a little of the workload he carries for the Society.

The Advisory Committee both makes recommendations on policy matters - for example, what sort of development should be considered permissible in 'backland' as our back gardens become in planning terms - and on specific matters, such as the design of a building to fill in an empty corner of a square of listed buildings.

Until recently the Committee has met about three times a year, but it was hoped to arrange to meet much more frequently. The next two meetings, however, are on Decem-

ber 13th and March 28th, so there has not been much improvement.

On October 9th the CAAC visited the recently restored and converted Trinity Church, now an orchestral rehearsal and recording centre (see below), and went on from there to Southwark Cathedral, where the Provost is having limewash which was put on some parts at the end of the last century cleaned off, and the Hibernia Wharf scheme between the Cathedral and the river.

Hibernia Wharf seems destined to cause some heated feelings - some feel that the maximum possible area should be cleared and set down as open space round the Cathedral, and others feel that it's essential to preserve the present character of the area where the existing close-spaced buildings produce a very 'tight' indoors-outdoors feeling. There would be open space a-plenty in this second way too, but in many small areas rather than one windswept riverside plain.

(continued)

TRINITY CHURCH

Trinity Church, in Trinity Church Square just off Borough High Street, is well worth a short diversion from the headlong rush to or from the City.

It was built in 1823/24 to serve the 'new' Trinity Estate. The land it was built on was originally known as 'tenter-ground' where cloth merchants hung out their cloth to dry on tenterhooks. The church is of the 'Classical Revival' type, designed by Francis Bedford who also designed St George's Church in Wells Way, next to Burgess Park, and St Luke's in Norwood. Trinity Church cost £16,000 to build - and many thought the money ill-spent at the time, with much criticism of Bedford's abilities as an architect in the classical style. He was much criticised for 'capricious setting of a Doric steeple above a Corinthian portico'.

In fact, Bedford's fine and beautiful building served well till the war when it was damaged. Restoration from war damage funds was completed in 1951, but again the church fell into disuse and became derelict. It was not until 1971 that someone found a possible use for it - Arups had been asked to look at redundant churches with a view to conversion into a rehearsal and recording hall for symphony orchestras. Eventually, in December 1972, technical and practical tests established that Trinity was ideal - despite the fact that cats, kestrels, and pigeons, which had taken up residence, had to be evicted. The building had to be disinfected before a test concert, during which the players wore 'bone-dome' helmets to protect them from falling plaster, could take place. So, with the tests over, Arups drew up a schedule for restoration and conversion. But disaster struck Trinity again: having survived 150 years, including enemy action, a catastrophic fire completely destroyed the interior.

Fortunately the insurers were generous and paid out the maximum possible, so Trinity was restored yet again. All the detail had been photographed before the fire, so replacing the plaster and woodwork was not too difficult a task. In the restoration the gallery was reduced in size, the organ replaced, the windows double-glazed to keep the noise out - and in - the crypt became music libraries and a magnificent canteen. Toilets and washrooms were built to cope with the biggest choirs, new heating and lighting were installed, and recording control rooms were built. A huge lift was installed. The foundations were underpinned with concrete; they were, incidentally, the typical inverted arches on wooden sleepers and piles - and much of the wood thought to be rotted proved to be only too good still and took a great deal of getting out.

The finished building is a tremendous success, both from the point of view of restoration of a fine building and in the provision of an excellent rehearsal hall. The acoustics are such that there's a warmth of tone and - usually the two don't go together - a definition that allows players to hear themselves and their colleagues very clearly. Indeed, the acoustics of some of the auditoria in which the orchestra perform must seem very uncongenial after rehearsing in Trinity.

One point, though, is not settled. This is the question of ghosts. Although the Church Commissioners' records showed that all burials had been removed before the church was handed over, many more dating from the early decades of Trinity were uncovered during restoration. These old bones now rest beneath the sighing pines of Brookwood, rather than remaining to risk being raised, perhaps, by

Saintsaen's 'Danse Macabre', to dance a bizarre ballet amid a late night rehearsal.

Dick Oliver

NB According to a list of subscribers to a book on St Giles published in 1827 Francis Bedford was a resident of Camberwell Grove, but the actual house he lived in has not yet been identified.

CONSERVATION - THE RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Owen Luder gave us an entertaining and salutary talk on February 2nd about the dangers of too much preservation. He said he was very pleased to talk to us because he had grown up in this part of London and knew it well: he had done his first courting in St Giles Churchyard.

Cities thrive on change, gradual change, otherwise there is stagnation. While we must keep what is good and still usable, wholesale preservation is just as harmful as wholesale clearance: too many buildings are listed. It is a particular failing of local societies that they concentrate on keeping existing buildings instead of making sure the replacements are worthy. If there had been the same restraints in the past we would not have had many of the Victorian buildings we so much admire or Wren's St Paul's. Taking refuge in the good old days is now a national characteristic in these difficult times, when the future is uncertain and the past looks comfortable.

He is very worried that when everyone has a chance to criticise architecture is judged by the criterion of general acceptance and an average mediocrity is the inevitable result. The architect's lot is not a happy one when everyone knows his job better than he does. We now have 'planning control by the angry neighbour'.

The present obsession for new buildings to 'match in' is stifling the growth of good architecture; it never happened in the past which was often a hotch potch which we now find familiar and admire. We must keep an open mind: collective design doesn't work: architects must be allowed to lead and be prepared to get criticism.

RAILWAY TREES

Some months ago, members noticed that scrubby trees, but nonetheless welcome green, above the railway between Denmark Hill and its station had been savagely lopped, leaving split and broken stumps open to infection. Your Committee tried to find the responsible person within the railway organisation to lodge a protest, but without success. The next approach was to Miss Roberts of Southwark's Planning Department; she deals with trees. Where the Society had failed Miss Roberts succeeded. She gained an assurance that no more lopping would take place without consultation. Sadly this assurance was soon broken, for the next casualties were some of the more mature trees down the bank from Windsor Walk. Again the railway was stopped from further vandalism - but again the stumps have been left snagged and split, a prey to every fungus spore that blows on the wind.

The difficulties of dealing with this case are not helped by the fact that the railway is almost a law unto itself, like the Crown generally, and in any case, this bit is outside the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area. Inside a conservation area, as a general rule, trees are automatically protected and may not be lopped or cut down without permission.

The latest outrage from the railway is the erection of a

shiny barbed-wire Stalag-type fence that can be seen from the road. Is it now necessary to protect those who can still afford tickets from the depredations of bandits who might sweep down upon them from Windsor Walk? Or is there a more sinister purpose in the erection of barbed wire and the clearing of trees? And is it to keep people in, or out?

Dick Oliver

COMPENSATION FOR SHOPKEEPERS

A little-known section of the Housing Act 1957 gives a local authority power to help financially shops which are affected by clearance area action.

63(2) Where, as the result of action taken by a local authority under the provisions of this Part of this Act relating to clearance areas, the population of the locality is materially decreased, they may pay to any person carrying on a retail shop in the locality such reasonable allowance as they think fit towards any loss involving personal hardship which in their opinion he will thereby sustain, but in estimating any such loss they shall have regard to the probable future development of the locality.

We have been told that when they were approached on this point the response of Southwark's Valuation Department was that no sums had ever been paid out under this section.

Many of the shopkeepers near the Green have lost a substantial proportion of their custom as clearance and demolition in Selborne have proceeded; although in the long-term Selborne will be re-inhabited we feel that there is good reason for the shopkeepers to take up their case with the borough council.

We understand that applications for rate rebates can be made because of the proximity of a clearance area and that some applications have been successful.

SOME RECENT PLANNING CASES

45 Camberwell Grove

Nearly two years ago work started without permission on this listed building and had to be stopped while proper details were agreed. This summer work has been in hand again, with a new roof-storey over the side wing of the house. We understand that the extension has been approved, but not the new windows; these are undivided pivot windows which are most inappropriate for a Georgian house. There are also unsuitable double entrance doors: before work started one of the original panelled doors was in place, with crude brick and window in the place of the other; now there are flush doors in place of the original as well as of the brickwork. The fluted wooden columns of the portico continue to deteriorate. We have asked the GLC and Southwark to pursue the matter diligently.

25 De Crespigny Park

There has been a gap for several years since a house was thought to be dangerous and was pulled down. There have been several schemes to build and now there is a new planning application by a housing association to erect six maisonettes, three, with their own garages, for five persons and three for three persons, in a five-storey building.

In overall height and width it is not dissimilar from its neighbours, but in scale it is very different because it has five floors in place of three and a basement (as at nos 23 and 27), and because there is not an emphasis at the traditional ground floor level to reduce the impact of its height. The building has been designed as a free-standing house, as

its predecessor was and neighbours are, but the staircase to the upper maisonettes, involving a walk up to third floor, is placed between no 25 and no 23, blocking the gap and preventing the glimpsed view through to the back garden which is an important feature and ought to be recreated in any development of the site.

As with a previous application the proposal is the result of trying to squeeze too much onto the site.

196-198 Camberwell New Road

These are two of a large number of houses which were put on the statutory list in 1974 as the result of the Society's submission to the Department of the Environment (see Newsletter 19 page 6 and 21 page 2). The GLC now want to demolish nos 196 and 198 for road works at the junction of Lothian Road and Camberwell New Road.

Although the two houses now threatened are not the best in the street and do not form part of a formal architectural composition they are important to the continuity of the late Georgian terraces in this part of the road. We have not seen any justification for their demolition and therefore the Society has expressed its opposition and asked for a public inquiry so that the issue can be properly examined.

13-16 Addington Square

This range of four small houses has been empty for several years since the firm of Peter Cox moved out. A proposal has now been submitted for planning permission to restore them and rebuild at the rear without significant enlargement. This excellent scheme includes the reinstatement of many of the features which are missing on the front and will be a substantial improvement to the square, especially to be welcomed next to the Council's repair and conversion of nos 11 and 12 which won a certificate of commendation this summer in the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and The Times conservation awards scheme.

200-218 Camberwell Grove

In 1973 Watts and Pelling, a firm of surveyors acting for the Council who own the houses, sent to the Society for comment a plan of their scheme for providing a private roadway between the houses and the street. There was to be a token narrow strip of grass next to the houses, but otherwise the whole area was to be covered with hard surfaces, tarmac, kerbs, paving.

We replied to the surveyors drawing their attention to the importance in Camberwell Grove generally of the buffer of natural ground between the street and houses, which may take the form of separate gardens or of collective greenery and trees; at nos 200-218 this exists in the form of admittedly worn grass and some trees, but the important thing is that paved surfaces do not bring the road towards the houses. Such private roadways have been formed in several places on the east side, but they are usually loose gravelly surfaces without the strong demarcation of the paved surfaces by kerbstones and there are bands of trees in grass between public road and private roadway.

We heard no more until recently the scheme appeared in the list of Town Planning applications, virtually unchanged, so we have written to Southwark to put the same points and have asked that the matter be brought to the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee; we also feel that the Historic Buildings Division of the GLC should be involved since the scheme very much affects the setting of a group of listed buildings.

ST GILES CENTRE APPEAL

ST GILES CENTRE is non-sectarian, non-political, and non-profit-making, and exists to offer support to those in need. It depends almost entirely on voluntary contributions. But apart from money the Centre urgently needs female volunteers to help run its emergency night shelter for girls. This would involve spending perhaps one night a month at the Centre (which is staffed 24 hours so that you would not be on your own) and offering friendship to the girls. Volunteers are also needed to help run the day centre for the single homeless, the hostel for girls, and the switchboard at the centre, to visit the elderly and housebound, and to help with the community club for the disadvantaged on Friday evenings. Also badly needed are clothes for men (including shoes), towels, single sheets, furnishings and any household ware (especially cups and mugs) for the hostel, records, pictures, prints, books, magazines, games etc for the day centre, and a lawn-mower! Do you have but no longer want any of these? Can you offer any volunteer help?

For information please ring 703 5841/2 (day or evening) or call at 81 Camberwell Church Street.

THE PARISH OF CAMBERWELL

The yellow leaflet with this newsletter announces a facsimile reprint of the standard history of Peckham, Camberwell, and Dulwich by W H Blanch, published for the Society by Stephen Marks.

William Harnett Blanch was Assistant Overseer of the Camberwell Vestry with access to all kinds of documents and numerous contacts. He intended to write a brief shilling history, but it grew to some 700 pages by the time it was published for subscribers in May or June 1875. To help those for whom the subscription of a guinea was too much the book was reissued in eighteen monthly parts beginning in January 1876. Early advertisements for the issue in parts refer to several new chapters and numerous additional illustrations, but in the event the only differences from the original edition were the omission of ten plates, three new illustrations, and a much shorter preface. A second edition was issued in 1877 with the same contents as the issue in parts.

Blanch was a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, a regular contributor to the *South London Press*, and had at one time been the editor and proprietor of a short-lived Conservative journal, *The South London Courier*. He was the author of *Dulwich College and Edward Alley*, *School Life in Christ's Hospital* (his own school), *The Volunteer's Book of Facts*, and various booklets and pamphlets on rating assessment on which subject he became an independent adviser after he left the Vestry. He died in 1900 at the age of 64.

Copies of the original editions of the book are to be found in libraries and private collections but are becoming increasingly difficult and expensive to obtain (nearly £40 is the latest price heard of). There are bound sets of the issue in parts in the Minet Library, Knatchbull Road, and the Newington District Library, Walworth Road; the Minet Library also possesses a copy which was extended by W F Noble into sixteen fat folio volumes with an enormous collection of cuttings, documents, and illustrations.

This reprint, produced by The Scolar Press, is taken from a copy of the 1875 edition. Eleven plates have been added: three are the extra plates of the 1877 edition and eight, matching in style those in Blanch and perhaps some of the

THE VICAR OF ST GILES

Canon Douglas Rhymes, who has been Vicar of St Giles, Camberwell, since 1968, took his last services in St Giles on October 17th and has now left to become priest-in-charge of the Parish of Woldingham in Surrey. He wrote about his reasons for leaving this parish in the July issue of *Camberwell Candles*. His successor has not yet been appointed.

SOUTHWARK BETWEEN THE WARS from old photographs

Exhibition from September 20th 1976 to March 26th 1977

Some residents will remember Southwark in the two decades following the Great War; others will have heard about it from their parents and grandparents. This exhibition invites you to revisit, through photographs and objects of the time, an era of depression and progress, sadness and gaiety, as lived by the ordinary people of our borough.

Livesey Museum 682 Old Kent Road (between Peckham Park Road and Commercial Way)

Monday to Saturday 10 - 5 admission free

W H BLANCH 1875

'numerous additional illustrations' which were promised in the advertisement for the issue in parts, come from an expanded copy of an earlier book on Camberwell, Allport's *Collections for the History of Camberwell* (1841).

The funds for the reprint have been raised in a novel way. Thirty-four individual members of The Camberwell Society have agreed to lend the necessary cash to pay the printer and will be paid off as sales proceed. Their help is acknowledged in the book in the manner of the subscribers' lists of previous generations.

Paid-up members of The Camberwell Society are offered the special price of £8.50 including postage or delivery on copies purchased before November 30th. This special price applies only on orders with payment sent to

Stephen Marks 50 Grove Lane, SE5

COME TO THESE MEETINGS

November 18th **THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN TIMES OF FINANCIAL HARDSHIP**
a talk by **ASHLEY BARKER** with slides

November 25th
TOM PHILLIPS AT THE CORACLE PRESS GALLERY

SEE FRONT PAGE FOR DETAILS