

green walk, so Love Walk

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

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

NEWSLETTER No 4

March 1971

Annual General Meeting - May 27th 1971

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on May 27th in the Grove Chapel School. Formal notice and agenda will be sent to all members nearer the time but please note the date in your diaries now.

Philip Whitbourn, who is a member of the Historic Buildings Division of the Greater London Council and in charge of its work south of the river, has kindly agreed to talk to the Society at this meeting about historic buildings in Southwark, especially in Camberwell; he will have slides to show as well as many interesting things to say.

Conservation Areas

The Conservation Areas Advisory Committee on which this Society is represented, having met on November 2nd, met again for adjourned items on December 11th 1970. The discussion on the De Crespigny Park Development is reported separately; also considered were a draft leaflet on conservation areas and the Lettsom Development Area proposal, which the Society has already had an opportunity to comment on (see the last Newsletter). The Committee meets again on March 23rd.

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

Since the last Newsletter several things have happened. At a meeting of the Council's Conservation Areas Advisory Committee on December 11th the proposed development by the Council was discussed at great length after the presentation of an appraisal with slides by Stephen Marks, the Society's representative on the Committee. The criticisms outlined in the last Newsletter were put forward in detail; although it was made clear on behalf of the Council that they had to contend with serious housing problems and had to make housing gains where reasonably possible it was evident that the other representative members of the Committee were in general agreement with the Society's views and the Committee decided to ask the Council to prepare an alternative scheme paying regard to the objections which had been made.

The Society felt that the matter was of such importance that it wrote to the Secretary of State for the Environment with a copy of the appraisal asking him to call in the application for his own decision - normally the Council can give approval to its own proposals. In a reply recently received from the Department of Environment it is considered that the Secretary of State would not be justified in intervening as this case does not appear to them to involve more than local issues; the writer says that he is assured that "the London Borough of Southwark will give careful consideration to the representations you have made before reaching a decision on the proposed development".

The Council's Planning and Development Committee and Housing Committee met in January and the Society has been informed that it has been decided that "further consideration should be given to the design of the development proposals for this area. ... alternative proposals will be prepared and these will be made available for inspection and comment in due course".

The Society's appraisal was the subject of a lengthy news item in the

Architects' Journal in December, followed up by a letter from Mr Lacey, the Deputy Borough Planner, and then by letters from two members of the Society.

7 & 9 De Crespigny Park

The application which the Institute of Psychiatry submitted for the use of these two large houses as research laboratories and offices has been turned down by the Council on two grounds, first, that the use is contrary to the residential zoning for the area, and secondly because it would affect the residential character which is an established and essential element of the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area. We are grateful to the Council for resisting this encroachment by the hospital authorities and hope that the latter will not make further attempts to erode the proper residential use and character of the area to the north of De Crespigny Park.

Harrow Public House

Last year the Society asked Mr Lacey to look into the possibility of retaining the Harrow pub which stands within the Lettsom Development Area; unfortunately, after further detailed investigation, it has not been found possible to keep it.

ARCHIVE

Photographs, newspaper cuttings, prints, drawings, sketches of Camberwell - many of these are hidden away in boxes and drawers and can throw an interesting light on old Camberwell. The Society is anxious to build up a collection of records of the past and to save them from destruction and oblivion.

If you have any which you do not want or know anyone who is moving or turning their things out please get in touch with James Elliott, who will look after them for the Society, at 158 Camberwell Grove S E 5 (274 6991). Even if you do not wish to part with old photographs etc please let him know as it may be possible to make copies of them for the Society's archive.

Motorway through Peckham and Camberwell

Report of a meeting of The Camberwell Society and the Peckham and Camberwell Motorway Action Group at Grove Chapel on January 21st 1971

It was hoped that Mr Douglas Jay MP would be the main speaker. Unfortunately he was prevented from attending the meeting because an unexpected debate in the House of Commons had been fixed for the same time. Mr Nigel Spearing, MP for Acton, very kindly and at short notice agreed to be the speaker in place of Mr Jay. Mr Spearing is a co-opted member of the GLC's Environmental Planning Committee and Vice-Chairman of the River Thames Society. He has been involved for some time in the London Motorway Action Group.

After the Chairman had opened the meeting Stephen Marks described the local situation as affected by the motorway proposals and referred to a number of maps on display. The main local areas affected were King's College Hospital, Ruskin Park, the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area, and Rye Lane and the Holly Grove area near which there would be an intersection. It was almost inevitable also that the Salvation Army building would have to come down.

The GLC's figures appear to show that only 600 houses would be affected by Ringway 1 in Southwark whereas the Society calculate that if the feeders and other ancillary matters are included the figure should be nearer 3000. The estimated cost of the motorway through Camberwell and Peckham is £40 million plus the cost of the necessary feeder roads and other works.

After this introduction Mr Spearing was asked to address the meeting which was estimated to number about 200 people.

Whilst the immediate local effects of the motorway proposals were very important and could not be underrated it was essential for the wider issues and implications to be adequately discussed and ventilated in public if the case against the motorway proposals in their present form was likely to succeed. It was necessary to be constructive and to look at the general strategy. The overall problem was that of dealing with the ever-increasing use of the motor car.

London as we know it now had been superimposed upon a communications system basically designed for the time when London was a large number of villages and most people walked rather than used successively horses and carts, railways, buses and now cars. The essential point of communications in an urban area is choice. This range of choice in London has progressively increased but it was not until the mid fifties that the heavy reliance on public transport had been really challenged by the motor car.

The motor car has since the mid fifties been used very much more and for many more purposes. The use of the car requires far more space than public transport to deal with smaller numbers of travellers. This is partly due to the limited flow possible on highways. The car is useful for short journeys and at low density but costs more to run and is limited in family use, for either more than one car is required to enable all the family to get about or there must remain some dependence on public transport.

In London the public transport system still exists but is rather tatty for want of adequate financial investment. The underground costs about £50 million a year to run. If more people use the underground the fares can be cheaper. There is a good deal of spare capacity. This is partly due to the level of fares but partly also to the inadequacy and unreliability of the service provided.

Either we must provide a reasonable public transport service or it will be progressively destroyed. If such a service is provided it would become easier to travel by car but the use of the car would be much less attractive.

What is required is an overall transport system which makes appropriate use of all means of transport.

The present motorway proposals give unwise and unnecessary predominance to the motor car. Recent history has shown that simply to meet highway congestion by enlarging capacity by building more roads is only a temporary palliative. More roads generate more traffic. Flow on highways is limited and so the provision of more roads is not a solution.

At the time that the greatly increased use of the motor car was first appreciated it was decided to follow the old pattern of building more roads. It was from this that the proposals for the three ringways developed. The most controversial of these ringways is Ringway 1 - the Motorway Box. This is controversial not only because of its gargantuan effect on the environment but also because it is not due to be completed for many years and planning blight over wide areas will be rife for just as long.

The motorway proposals do not provide an adequate overall plan to deal with the communications problem of London. There is too much emphasis on the car and far too little on an overall transportation policy providing for the appropriate use of all means of transport. The present GLC transport policy is out of balance and will not meet the needs it is allegedly designed to satisfy.

The London Motorway Action Group is putting forward a reasoned opposition to the motorway proposals at the public inquiry into the Greater London Development Plan.

Mr Spearing asked for support for the London Motorway Action Group and in particular for financial contributions. The basic points of the Group's case are

- (1) the total cost of £2000 million will be wasted because the proposals will not solve the traffic problems,

- (2) the return on expenditure will be very low,
- (3) the effect on the housing situation in central London is enormous and aggravates an already intolerable situation,
- (4) future population and car user estimates are too high,
- (5) the effect on the environment of London is unacceptable,
- (6) the balance between public transport and road development is wrong, and
- (7) an appropriate overall strategy is lacking.

During the period for questions the point was raised as to the attitude of the London Borough of Southwark to Ringway 1. The Secretary (who was acting Chairman) read out part of a letter received earlier in the day from the Deputy Borough Planner - it read

"You may be interested to know that we have very serious reservations about the Motorway in Southwark and are suggesting, in our forthcoming evidence at the GLDP inquiry, that in view of the late programming of the Motorway (1990's), the retention in the Plan of the South Cross Route can only cause considerable blight, and should not be retained."

The meeting then unanimously agreed a motion congratulating the London Borough of Southwark on its willingness to communicate its views to the meeting and on the stand which it was to take against the motorway proposal.

Considerable concern was expressed at the inadequate compensation particularly that payable to owners and occupiers of properties not actually required but affected by the motorway and also for owners wishing to sell in the intervening period before requisition.

About £125 was collected for the funds of the London Motorway Action Group at the meeting, as a result of the publicity for it, and by canvassing.

201 Grove Lane

Early last year an application was submitted to the Council for permission to develop the site of 201 Grove Lane by the erection of a four-storey building comprising ten flats, ten garages, and a doctor's surgery. The proposal involved the demolition of the house. As this building is a particularly attractive early nineteenth-century double-fronted house and as it groups well with nos 197-9 which are a semi-detached pair of the same period the Society felt that its demolition should be prevented and wrote accordingly to the Borough Council and to the Greater London Council. The building was then added to the statutory list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and subsequently an application for listed building consent to demolish was submitted to the Council in October.

We have just been notified that the Council has refused permission for its demolition on the grounds that it is "of considerable charm and architectural merit within an area of high amenity and is worthy of preservation"; its proximity to the Conservation Area is also noted in the Council's refusal.

The Camberwell Society is your local amenity society

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

Subscription: £0.50 a year to the Hon Treasurer
 Brian Allsworth, 165 Grove Lane, S E 5 (274 0367)

William Whitley, 30 Cove Walk

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NEWSLETTER NO 5 & NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

May 1971

Annual General Meeting - May 27th 1971

The Annual General Meeting of The Camberwell Society will be held on May 27th 1971 in the School Room of the Grove Chapel at 7.30.

Agenda

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Previous minutes | |
| 2 | Matters arising from the minutes | |
| 3 | Report of the Executive Committee | |
| 4 | Treasurer's report | |
| 5 | Constitution | |
| 6 | Election of officers and committee** | **Nominations will be required for Chairman, Hon Treasurer, and Hon Secretary, and for the committee. These should be received by the Hon Secretary before the meeting or can be made during the meeting; they must have propose s and seconders and the persons proposed must have indicated beforehand that they are willing to stand. |
| 7 | Any other business | |

Ronald Watts, Hon Secretary, 19 Addington Square, S E 5 (703 7026)

Historic Buildings in Camberwell - an illustrated talk

Immediately after the Annual General Meeting Philip Whitbourn who is a member of the Historic Buildings Division of the Greater London Council will give an illustrated talk about historic buildings in Southwark, especially in Camberwell.

Conservation areas

Addington Square and Glengall Road

The Council has now designated two more conservation areas. One of these comprises Addington Square and nearby terraces in Camberwell Road about which the Society was so concerned last year (see Newsletter no 2, October 1970); the square is now saved and the Society's activity and calls for protest have evidently helped to bring about its reprieve. The other new conservation area is made up of houses in Glengall Road (nos 1-35a & 40a) and Glengall Terrace (nos 1-9); unfortunately it omits houses on the west side of Glengall Road and in Trafalgar Avenue as these are within the proposed North Camberwell Open Space and the Greater London Council is unwilling to exclude them.

Conservation Areas Advisory Committee

The Committee met on March 23rd. The first part of the meeting was devoted to an extremely interesting illustrated talk on conservation in Paris by Ashley Barker, Surveyor of Historic Buildings to the GLC. Among the items which followed was the Lettsom Development Area; discussion turned on the design of the scheme primarily as it affected the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area, with representatives of the architects, Riches and Blythin, present. As the Society has been asked separately for its observations the scheme will be reported in the next Newsletter; meanwhile anyone interested in the proposal is invited to get in touch with Stephen Marks (703 2719).

Tree survey

The help of girls from Mary Datchelor School has been enlisted to carry out a tree survey after their examinations this summer.

Camberwell Grove Development Area - Compulsory Purchase Order

The Borough Council has decided to develop a site which includes nos 195-211 Camberwell Grove, the rows of garages behind them, and land between houses in Grove park, Pelham Close, and Grove hill Road. The houses in Camberwell Grove, which have already been converted into flats by the Council, will be kept. As it does not own the land on which the garages stand the Council has made a Compulsory Purchase Order in order to acquire it. The Order needs confirmation by the Secretary of State for the Environment and there may have to be a public inquiry.

It is acknowledged that there could be considerable improvement to this land and a suitable scheme of development might be welcomed; however, the Society has felt it necessary to object to the Order on three points:

- 1 that as well as a housing shortage there is also a shortage of public open space which would be aggravated by an increase in the number of houses unless appropriate compensating amounts of open space are made available nearby within a reasonable period;
- 2 that the proposed density is 100 persons per acre in an area zoned at 70 p p a in the Initial Development Plan, and the Society has no satisfactory assurance that it can be achieved in a development compatible with the Conservation Area;
- 3 that shopping, post office, and transport facilities are inadequate for the development and should be thoroughly investigated.

A group of residents whose homes are next to the site have also objected and after referring to the points made by the Society they write

There are in addition certain historical associations which would make the site unique as an open space.

A large portion of the proposed development area is occupied by the remains of the garden of Dr John Lettsom, the prominent 18th cent physician, the founder of the British Medical Society, and a friend of Boswell. The garden was even considered worthy of an engraving in Old & New London. Much of the original garden furniture (urns, statues, walls, sundial and summer house) still remain, as do many of the original borders and lawns.

This would be a unique opportunity to reconstruct an 18th cent. garden as a valuable adjunct to the normal recreation area, children's playground, and other facilities on the remainder of the site.

Camberwell Bibliography

Stephen Marks is compiling a bibliography of Camberwell and would like to know about books, pamphlets, and guidebooks, articles in journals, novels, reminiscences, and biographies which relate in any way to Camberwell's past and its notable residents, institutions, and events. The bibliography will be published eventually. Information please to 50 Grove Lane, S E 5 (703 2719). Meanwhile here are some important books:

Douglas Allport: Collections illustrative of the Geology, History, Antiquities, and Associations, of Camberwell, and the neighbourhood, 1841

W H Blanch: Ye Parish of Camberwell, a brief account ..., 1875

P M Johnston: Old Camberwell: its History and Antiquities, 1919

H J Dyos: Victorian Suburb, A study of the Growth of Camberwell, 1961

Subscriptions

Reminders were sent out with the last Newsletter to those whose subscriptions up to the end of May were overdue. If you still have not paid or would like to pay your subscription for the year beginning on June 1st 1971 (£0.50) you can do so at the Annual General Meeting or to the Hon Treasurer, Brian Allsworth, 165 Grove Lane, S E 5.

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NEWSLETTER No 6

September 1971

Camberwell Grove Development Area - Public Inquiry URGENT: WRITE NOW

In the last Newsletter the Society's objections to a Compulsory Purchase Order made by the Council were reported. There is to be a public inquiry which will start at 10.30 on October 5th in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall in Peckham Road. Please look at your Newsletter No 5 and write in support of the Society's objections to the Inspector holding the inquiry:

S J Parnell Esq, B Sc(Eng), C Eng, FICE, MRSH
(Inspector for CPO Inquiry)

Town Hall, Peckham Road, S E 5

The Society will be represented at the hearing.

Subscriptions

The subscription to the Society is 50 pence a year, due on June 1st. Reminder slips were sent out in March to those whose subscriptions up to the end of May were overdue, and a general reminder for this year's subscriptions appeared in the May Newsletter. Less than half the members on the books have paid up for the current year and quite a substantial number still owe for the year ending in May. Each year in which your subscription has not been paid is ringed in red; please let the Hon Treasurer have it promptly so that you don't rely on others to keep your Society going!

1970 (June 70 - May 71)

1971 (June 71 - May 72)

Members' offer: paid-up members get 20p off the cost of a splendid reproduction of the 1842 Map of Camberwell - see the last page of this Newsletter.

Annual General Meeting, May 27th 1971 - Report

The Annual General Meeting of The Camberwell Society was held on May 27th 1971 in the School Room of Grove Chapel and was attended by some sixty members of the Society and others. After the reports of the Executive Committee and the Treasurer had been presented the draft constitution which had been accepted at the Special General Meeting on July 9th 1970 was finally approved.

The retiring Chairman, Hon Treasurer and Hon Secretary were re-elected. Stan Tracey and Denys Short did not wish to stand again, but the rest of the retiring committee were re-elected with the addition of Joshua Brook, Nick Powell, Jim Tanner, and Bruin Wooster as new members. The following are now members of the Society's Executive Committee:

Reg Austin, 182 Camberwell Grove (274 7576)

Joshua Brook, 1 Champion Grove

James Elliott, 158 Camberwell Grove (274 6991)

Philip Hugh-Jones, 167 Camberwell Grove (274 9351)

Michael Ivan, 24 Grove Lane (703 4564)

Stephen Marks, 50 Grove Lane (703 2719)

Cliff Potter, 51 Grove Park (733 3792)

Nick Powell, 30 Camberwell Grove (703 6792)

Jim Tanner,

Shirley Tanner, 107 Camberwell Grove (703 8624)

Bruin Wooster, 83 Camberwell Grove (703 2454)

Historic Buildings in Southwark

After the business of the Annual General Meeting Mr Philip Whitbourn, a member of the Historic Buildings Division of the Greater London Council gave an illustrated talk about historic buildings in Southwark.

He explained that there were two relevant matters on which the GLC have a say: they have powers of direction over the boroughs' decisions about listed buildings and they are consulted by the boroughs on the designation of conservation areas. Recommendations go before a Historic Buildings Board composed of the politicians, that is, the elected representatives, and advisers such as Sir John Summerson and Sir John Betjeman; the Chairman of the Board is Mr B J Brown.

At present the Statutory List of historic buildings for Southwark is woefully inadequate, but a new list is imminent. The buildings on the list range from mediaeval to early modern, up to 1939, and there is great diversity in the character of Southwark's buildings and districts.

Near London Bridge, which till the middle of the eighteenth century was the only river crossing in London, Southwark had grown up as a suburb of the City of London on a mediaeval street pattern with such buildings as St Mary Overie (now Southwark Cathedral) and Winchester Palace (of which one wall still stands) and its hospitals, jails, and inns; the latter were especially numerous and are exemplified in the sole and partial survivor, the George Inn. The development and character of Dulwich Village are the consequence of overall estate management. Other areas were the result of ribbon development, such as Camberwell Road and Old Kent Road, or of the growth from village to suburb, such as Camberwell itself.

Several slides were shewn of repair work in hand or completed, such as in Lorrimore Square (GLC) and Grange Walk (private), and a pair of houses in Long Lane with fine fireplaces and staircases where the owner originally wished to demolish and is now making a fine job of restoration with help and advice from the GLC.

Mr Whitbourn gave much attention to cases which presented the characteristic problems associated with the preservation of old buildings. He shewed us Peckham Grove and Gloucester Grove, hemmed in by redevelopment, where the GLC now hope to rehabilitate a number of houses which seem almost beyond repair; Holly Grove, suffering from the blight of a motorway which won't be built for twenty-five years, if at all; Holy Trinity Church and St George's Wells Way, both by Francis Bedford, no longer required or used for services and in need of substantial repairs and maintenance, both important to their areas but difficult to find new uses for; the Clock Tower at the Elephant and Castle, erected in 1877 and needing £18000 spent on it; houses in and near Glengall Road where there is a direct conflict between preservation and open space needs. Many other buildings, of course, survive untroubled at present by these problems and threats, such as Durlstone Manor, Camberwell Grove, and Addington Square, the latter recently relieved of the long-standing and insidious blight of designation for the North Camberwell Open Space.

Mr Whitbourn's talk and slides made it clear how grateful we should all be for the interest and care which he and his colleagues take in the preservation of our heritage of historic buildings.

North Camberwell walk, July 11th

Prompted by concern for the future of the Surrey Canal (see separate item) and for groups of historic buildings in and near the proposed North Camberwell Open Space a few members of the Society went on a walk organised, unavoidably at short notice, by James Elliott.

After looking round Addington Square and seeing inside no 48 (Talbot Settlement) we walked to Wells Way along the line of the canal, now filled in as far as Wells Way. The Baths and Public Library (by Maurice Adams, 1902) to the north of Wells Way bridge and St George's Church to the south form a very picturesque group and provide a valuable foil to the level expanses of the North

Camberwell Open Space across which can also be seen the huge slabs of the new Aylesbury Estate.

The church was designed by Francis Bedford* and erected in 1822-24 at a cost of £16,700. The vicar, Mr Vonberg, opened and shewed us the interior: part of the roof is supported on scaffolding and the church is empty and kept locked while its future use and costly repair are being considered.

The canal, rapidly losing its water and filled with rubbish and scrap timber, is a very sad sight from Wells Way bridge.

We looked at pleasant and modest houses in Gloucester Grove and Peckham Grove which the GLC hope to rehabilitate and walked at deck level through the occupied northern part of Southwark Council's North Peckham Redevelopment which is well worth a special visit.

At the eastern end of the proposed open space we visited Glengall Road and Terrace and Trafalgar Avenue, which had been proposed as a conservation area; the area which has recently been designated includes only Glengall Terrace and the east side of Glengall Road. The west side of the latter is much shortened and would shew its dreary backs to the park; its demolition would be no great loss and it must be agreed that the houses on the east would look very elegant facing the new park.

Other interesting buildings and groups which lie within the proposed open space are in Trafalgar Avenue, Pepler Road, and Cobourg Road; the latter has a particularly attractive terrace towards the northern end already facing a large expanse of grass, a number of curiously austere early nineteenth century houses a little to the south, and St Mark's Church by Norman Shaw which we were not able to enter.

We finished our walk returning along Albany Road from which we gained another distant view of St George's Church and the Baths and Public Library; these buildings are all appropriate in scale in relation to the proposed park whereas smaller houses in Albany Road, although attractive, would tend to look lost with the expanse of the park behind them and facing the Aylesbury Estate, making it difficult to press for their preservation.

*note: according to the list of subscribers in G F Prosser's A short historical and topographical account of St Giles, Camberwell, published in 1827, Francis Bedford lived in Camberwell Grove.

The Surrey Canal

Although the Society's area does not include any existing stretches of the Surrey Canal, we have with our neighbouring societies been much concerned about the general implications of the Council's attitude towards this aspect of the North Camberwell Open Space proposals. The Hon Secretary has received, in his capacity as a councillor, the following letter from the Chairman of the Council's Planning and Development Committee setting out the Council's attitude which has hitherto been quite unknown in spite of various attempts to elicit the information. We are very grateful to Councillor Halford for suggesting that we should reproduce his letter.

Dear Councillor Watts

8th September 1971

I understand that members of the Camberwell Society are not clear about the Council's policy vis a vis the Surrey Canal. I am therefore setting down a few notes which may help to explain both what has happened and what we shall be doing.

The first thing of importance to note is that responsibility for the Canal is shared among three Authorities. The GLC as acquiring authority for the North Camberwell Open Space is responsible for the stretch from Wells Way bridge to the junction with the Peckham Branch; Southwark for the Peckham Branch, the length between it and Ilderton Road, and a very small section at the Surrey Docks entrance; the remainder from Ilderton Road almost to the Surrey Docks is in Lewisham (almost half the total length).

Because of this shared responsibility a Joint Working Party of Officers was asked to consider the future of the Canal after it was no longer required by the PLA for operational purposes. Various alternatives were explored and our Officers on the Working Party made sure that one of the alternatives was keeping the Canal as water. However, it became clear that the GLC favoured providing in the North Camberwell Open Space water for recreational purposes equivalent in area to the length of the Canal, but of a different and more usable shape. Lewisham also emphasised how important one stretch of the Canal was to them as providing the only means of improving east west access in that part of the Borough.

Obviously the use of the Canal for water recreation depended on the whole of it being available and hence in the end the preferred option was as follows:

The part within the North Camberwell Open Space to be acquired by the GLC and incorporated into the park;

The Peckham Branch to be acquired by the London Borough of Southwark and laid out as a green link;

The stretch from the Peckham Branch to Ilderton Road to be sold by the PLA to adjoining owners, subject to the GLC reserving any land required at Old Kent Road for a future junction improvement;

The part within Lewisham to be in part road and in part sold to adjoining owners.

So far Southwark Council has agreed to acquire the Peckham Branch and negotiations are in progress, a Landscape Architect has been appointed to design a new park, and work on laying it out should begin in 1972.

Two other points worth noting are - firstly, when comparative costs were made of all the alternatives, retention of the Canal as water was the most expensive so that even without the strong preference of the GLC and Lewisham for other uses, it might have been difficult for the Local Authorities to have footed the bill involved.

Secondly, and more positively, the usefulness of the Canal for water recreation is strictly limited and there is widespread agreement, including the Regional Sports Council, that the Surrey Docks offers much greater potential. We have therefore in the preliminary studies of the Surrey Docks ensured that considerable emphasis has been laid on the retention of at least some of the Docks for water recreation.

I hope this explanation will be helpful to your fellow members of the Camberwell Society.

Yours sincerely,

Charles Halford
Chairman
Planning & Development Committee

Map of Camberwell 1842

A full-size reproduction of a large, fascinating and elegant map of the Parish of St Giles, Camberwell engraved in 1842 is now available. The area of the map includes Peckham and Dulwich and covers roughly the former Metropolitan Borough of Camberwell.

The price is £1.10 but members of The Camberwell Society can have it for £0.90. Once expenses and production costs have been recovered the Society will benefit from sales, so the more that are sold the more it will help the Society. A few copies will be available, mounted on hardboard and coloured, at £3.00; the Society will receive immediately £1 from the sale of each coloured copy.

Orders and enquiries to Stephen Marks, 50 Grove Lane, S E 5 (703 2719)

THE CAMBERWELL SOCIETY

Miss Gillian Wharthe 30 Nov 71

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NEWSLETTER No 7

November 1971

CHRISTMAS CARDS

This year we have printed a greetings card for members of the Society.

It is a reproduction of a view of Dr Lettsom's Fountain Cottage. This elegant little building in its romantic setting was well-known to the topographical publishers at the turn of the eighteenth century and during the early years of the nineteenth, and they produced remarkably varied versions of its appearance. The engraving chosen is one of the earliest and most attractive and is by J Malcolm, dated 1797.

Fountain Cottage with its pool and fountain stood where the railway now emerges in cutting east of Camberwell Grove.

The cards will be available (to members only) after December 6th from:

James Elliott, 158 Camberwell Grove (274 6991)
Michael Ivan, 24 Grove Lane (703 4564)
Judi Bratt, 3 Queen's Court, 6/7 Grove Park (733 3537)
Brian Allsworth, 165 Grove Lane (274 0367)

Price, including envelope: 3p each, by post 5p extra per 10

Camberwell Green - what is happening?

Once again, on September 16th, Mr Ian Lacey, Deputy Borough Planner, was kind enough to come with his colleagues to a meeting of the Society's Executive Committee; this time we heard what was happening (or not happening) at Camberwell Green, about which we are so concerned. With him were Mr Vickery and Mr Stafford from his department, Mr Pines from the Property Division, Mr Ruddy from the Borough Engineer's Department, and Mr Clayton, Public Relations Officer.

Mr Lacey introduced the subject by saying that Camberwell Green posed the typical problems of the conflict between a major traffic crossing and a lively shopping centre serving the locality. There had been a proposal to improve the intersection for many years, and in 1964, when he himself was new on the scene, the then London County Council were proposing a fly-over to carry the north-south traffic. The intersection is a major trunk crossing involving works which are the responsibility of the Greater London Council; they give overall priority to their aspect which creates difficulties and problems for Southwark Council who recognise the local needs.

Mr Stafford then shewed a series of plans and explained in detail the current thinking on the problems and solutions. The Greater London Council give a high priority to traffic improvement at the Green and have included some works in their "preparation list" (that is beyond the next five years); it appears that the GLC are working on this without Southwark being certain what is involved. Planning ideas have changed considerably in the last few years: instead of ambitious long-term ideas which involve widespread blight and have little chance financially the aim now is to work for short-term improvements which are acceptable in the long term.

The problems of the area were shewn clearly on a map and stem from two principle factors: the conflict between traffic demands and local convenience, and the restricted nature of Camberwell as a shopping centre by comparison with

Brixton and Rye Lane. Two plans were then shown of the extreme solutions, one, a pure and simple traffic solution which would suit the GLC, just satisfying the traffic needs including the north-south fly-over and completely ruining the shopping, the Green and Grove Lane; the other plan, an ideal environmental solution with all roads underground, and equally absurd. It is therefore necessary to find something between them: the basic objectives are safe and pleasant shopping, improved traffic flows, improvements in character and living conditions, adequate and convenient parking, and the survival of the Green as a local centre, pleasanter and accessible to shoppers.

On the next plan the options for the first phase of improvement were shown: all of them cater for the north-south movement as the greater traffic need. These are: a) basic widening with a simple intersection which would involve greater severance, high property cost and increased congestion; b) the north and south movement taken out west which would remove traffic from Denmark Hill and provide an improvement both of the environment and of the traffic system, but would involve high property and disturbance costs; c) north-south taken in a loop to the east of the Green, integrated with housing developments in the D'Eynsford and Selborne areas, but keeping northbound traffic in Denmark Hill, giving improved conditions in the centre, improved traffic flows, and reduced congestion. The first of these is not acceptable to the GLC and the second involves a third authority, Lambeth; the third scheme with the so-called D-ring road turning east off Camberwell Road before it reaches Camberwell Green, running behind the Peabody Buildings on the east side, and swinging back towards Denmark Hill on the line of Daneville Road, is the most favoured solution.

Subsequent steps would be the widening of the east-west route, the diversion of east-bound traffic on a northern line along Medlar Road which would remove two of the four movements from Camberwell Green, and finally making the D-ring two way, thus further relieving the Green. It is clear that there is no chance of any complete by-pass or underpass solution.

The proposals will incorporate the comprehensive redevelopment of the area south of the Green which is to go ahead as soon as possible to reduce the effect of blight; they include a tube station, offices, shops, housing, library, car parking, and major pedestrian routes in new developments with safe crossings.

The following points were made in discussion.

Although the GLC recognise the priority their works are not in the next five-year programme but are under serious consideration for the next round in the "preparation list". The development of the D'Eynsford and Selborne areas will not be held up waiting for the road works; the planning of the D'Eynsford area is well advanced and may start in mid-72 and there has been sufficient planning of the D-ring to lay down a brief.

The Society feels that Church Street is a classic case of blight and is very concerned that this may increase while plans are being made; with the reducing population and demand there seems to be too much shopping floor space; some shops subsist on family help and low rents. We were told that comprehensive redevelopment will give increased efficiency in floor space which will result in reduced areas, that it will be necessary to allow some offices to help the rest, that the tube will be an incentive, that blight is inevitable. Mr Stafford agreed that some existing shopping should remain in order to provide smaller units at lower rentals; the developers are being pressed to provide for the displaced local shopping, but the Council, with limited involvement, has limited powers to require this.

Southwark Council and its predecessor in planning, the London County Council, have been negotiating for twelve years with the developers EPIC on the comprehensive redevelopment of the area south of the Green without any visible results; the Council is now seeking a declaration of intention from EPIC

so that areas in which it is not interested can be freed. The Society considers that opportunities should have been offered to other developers and that there should be much more freedom for piecemeal development within an overall framework devised by the Council.

A working party with London Transport is considering the alignment of the tube extension from the Elephant to Camberwell Green and Rye Lane which is programmed for the 1980's after the completion of the Brixton extension, the approved part of the Fleet Line, and the London Airport line.

Members of the Society suggested that the enlargement of the Green on the north and east sides should be considered when the roads are superseded.

Mr Lacey could not say when the exhibition about Camberwell Green would be mounted as staff and resources had been diverted to work on the London Bridge area and Rye Lane.

While it is obvious to all that the situation at Camberwell Green is extremely unsatisfactory we are most grateful to Mr Lacey and his colleagues for helping us to understand the problems and what they are trying to do about them particularly in the face of the traffic difficulties and the authority responsible for major highways.

Camberwell Grove Development Area - Public Inquiry

A public inquiry was held on October 5th to consider the objections to the Council's compulsory purchase order on the site of the garages near Grove Park and other small pieces of land. The Society was represented by Stephen Marks who had prepared an account of the historical development of the area and a detailed statement of the Society's grounds of objection.

One of the more interesting conclusions which he reached concerned the long-term benefit: if the Council carries out the proposed development on this site and also creates within the next fifteen years, as it intends, a new open space in the Ivanhoe Road area involving the demolition of about the same number of dwellings as will be provided on top of the hill, then there will be no net gain in housing accommodation with an enormous outlay of some three-quarters of a million pounds together with heavy loan charges.

Unfortunately the inspector concerned himself almost exclusively with the present case for acquisition, pointing out that the Council were proposing to use the land for the purpose for which it is zoned, i.e. residential; he did accept that the proposed excess density was a relevant point but otherwise was not prepared to consider the planning issues which formed the basis of the Society's objections. He was clearly more interested in the arguments about the acquisition of the small pieces of Cut-Through or Cut-Throat Alley which had been absorbed into the gardens of houses in Grove Hill Road; the objectors there were ably and vigorously represented by Mr J E Crawley who lives at no 43 Grove Hill Road.

As it transpired at the inquiry, the confirmation of the compulsory purchase order on the garage site appears to be unnecessary as the proprietor of the garages was unable to produce any evidence that he was entitled to more than a monthly tenancy from the Council who are the owners of the freehold. The Council have accordingly served notice on him to quit.

It remains now for the Society to consider what further action to take about a development which it considers to be ill-conceived and wasteful of resources.

Listed buildings in Camberwell and Peckham

The original Statutory Lists of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest were compiled for areas in London so long ago that they are woefully out of date by current thinking, and the Society has been very worried by their inadequacy and by the inability of the authorities to protect more than a handful of the buildings which ought to be kept.

It is, however, an open secret that a new list is being prepared for Southwark, so we have taken the opportunity to compile our own list of buildings which we thought should be added to those which are already on the Statutory List or which we believed were shortly to be put on it as a result of recent surveys. There are over four hundred buildings on our list, mainly in Camberwell and Peckham; many of them are actually outside the Society's own boundaries, but we thought that we ought to cover adjoining areas which are no one else's concern for this purpose.

The buildings in our list are almost entirely of the early or middle nineteenth century, when Peckham and Camberwell were beginning to expand as a fashionable suburb and before the overwhelming tide of development by the speculators of the later Victorian period engulfed large areas with dreary poor quality houses of little amenity.

Many of the houses on our list are in the Georgian tradition, some of them indeed late Georgian. South London, in spite of grievous losses, is still rich in examples of the ingenuity with which brick, a simple material, could be handled to provide a restrained variety, with flat-, segmental-, elliptical-, and round-arched openings and recesses in the plane of the brickwork, and with slight enrichments such as impost, cill bands, and string courses; several of the possible variations can be seen in Peckham Hill Street which was mostly developed between 1810 and 1850 alongside the Peckham branch of the Surrey Canal.

In a number of other cases the buildings follow the Regency with its stucco-work made universally popular by Nash, while yet others came under the less discriminating influence of the mid-Victorian taste for enrichment which nevertheless, taken as a whole, gives such distinctive character to large areas of development as in Grosvenor Park and the Lorrimer Road area.

Two much larger buildings of about 1900 are also suggested, both designed in Edwardian Baroque, the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts by Maurice Adams (the architect of the Baths and Library on Wells Way, already proposed for listing) and no 29 Peckham Road, the Council offices which stand in front of St Giles Hospital.

A descriptive schedule was prepared by James Elliott and Stephen Marks and this has been sent with nearly a hundred photographs to the Department of the Environment, where it is now being studied together with suggestions from the Greater London Council and from Southwark Council.

Havill Street

Four attractive pairs of houses in Havill Street, belonging to Southwark Council, may no longer be standing when you get this Newsletter. They are (were) nos 59-73 and were built before 1830, Regency semi-detached villas standing on the edge of a site which the Council proposes to redevelop. They are good enough for the Department of the Environment already to have on their proposed Statutory List, but in spite of several urgent messages and pleas from the Society the Department is unwilling to protect them by spot-listing in advance of the issue of the new List and the GLC won't take the necessary steps to protect them either. They are just the kind and size of house which so many people are seeking and would pay handsomely for if only the Council would have the sense not to spurn solutions outside their own use: we are very disappointed that when it comes to their own property the Council are often unwilling to face the implications of preserving the ever-dwindling heritage of valuable buildings.

We are pleased, however, to learn that the Council has recently served Building Preservation Notices on houses in Queen's Road (nos 142-148), on Peckham Rye (nos 143-145), and in Borough High Street (nos 101 & 218-220) which were threatened with alteration or demolition; these have been confirmed by the Department of the Environment.

Lettsom Development Area

Newsletter no 3 (December 1970) reported a discussion with officers of the Council about proposals for the redevelopment of the area between Vestry Road and Camberwell Grove, just to the north of the railway; this area is now nearly cleared. Since the discussion the Society's Committee and also the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee have seen drawings of the scheme prepared by Riches and Blythin, Architects, for the Council, and have been given an opportunity to make observations. The following description and comments are based on the Council's information and drawings which may be seen by arrangement with Stephen Marks (703 2719).

There will be 433 new flats, maisonettes and houses, including 32 for old people; together with the twenty existing flats in three blocks which are being kept, there will be 453 dwellings instead of the previous 375 on a site of nearly 11 acres. They will accommodate 1520 people at about the zone density of 136 persons per acre which is applicable north of the railway.

The buildings are arranged in a tight disposition of terraces and blocks most of which are four storeys high with a small number of three-storey houses. All the existing streets are to be closed and Lyndhurst Grove will be extended alongside the railway to Camberwell Grove. The Society has asked for the layout of the junction with Camberwell Grove to be reconsidered in detail in order to avoid cutting down one of the trees in the Grove; this is being investigated by the Council and involves negotiations with British Rail over a little triangular piece of waste land near the railway bridge.

There will be two east-west pedestrian routes; the more important will form the central artery of the development and should be very attractive with its new trees, intimate approach under one of the blocks and variety in width and treatment. There will also be a northward link with Grace's Mews as part of a minor north-south route. The estate will itself be free of through traffic. Some of the blocks lie parallel with the main pedestrian way and with the Lyndhurst Grove extension, others at right angles to them, and they are of varying length.

The spaces between blocks are interestingly varied in proportion and enclosure but the intensity of use and the closeness of the blocks confirms the Society's view, already expressed to the Council, that the density is excessive. It seems that the Council should now agree with us in view of their most recent ideas on housing (see next page - Housing Densities).

Adjoining Camberwell Grove there will be a long terrace block on the same line as the previous terrace of houses so that it will conform with the relationship of the older houses to the street. Its design using traditional materials and construction should be successful in the intention to fit in with the general character of Camberwell Grove. It is similar in height and it achieves a simple vertical rhythm in its plain surface which should accord well with the terrace house form typical of the street. It will be built of "Cotswold" facing bricks which the Council considers will blend with the old stock brickwork, and it will have timber windows and doors and a pitched roof with dark grey interlocking tiles. The bricks and tiles are the same as those used at Giles Coppice, Dulwich Wood Park.

The external treatment of this terrace which is the only part of the development to impinge directly on Camberwell Grove has been used as a pattern for the rest of the estate.

There will also be play areas for various age groups, six shops and a community hall facing Vestry Road, and a site is being reserved for a children's home.

It is expected that building work will begin in August 1972 and will take about three years to complete.

Lettsom Development Area (continued)

Road closures

The Council needs to close all the existing roads in the development area. In response to an enquiry from the Society we have been assured that Lettsom Street and Linnell Road will be kept open until the proposed extension of Lyndhurst Grove to Camberwell Grove has been constructed; this arrangement allows through traffic to be maintained at all times and still allows for much of the new housing to be built south of Lettsom Street.

Historical note

The new buildings will be the third to stand on the east side of Camberwell Grove at this point. The first building was the Camberwell Collegiate School, erected in 1834 on a part of Dr Lettsom's estate called Lower Springfield. It was opened in 1835 and for some time was moderately successful, but, according to Blanch who wrote in 1875, "the proximity of Dulwich College and other educational establishments seriously hindered its progress, and in 1867 it was closed, and the land sold for building purposes". In the sale particulars it was described as "the beautiful Gothic structure erected at considerable expense, constructed of white brick with stone dressings, having a frontage of 291 feet ..." It was enclosed from the road by a dwarf wall and iron railings, and approached by a carriage drive, and double folding gates. Blanch adds that "the architecture was strictly collegiate and somewhat in the Tudor style, the principle feature being the fine cloister which faced the entrance." This building is shewn on Dewhurst's Map of Camberwell, 1842.

After the school's demolition the site and land eastwards were quickly built up with the terrace houses which have just recently themselves been demolished; they are shewn in course of erection on the first edition of the large-scale Ordnance Survey maps for which the surveys were done about 1868-1870. The road which was then formed along the north edge of the site was called College Street, later changed to Lettsom Street.

Housing Densities

If reports are to be believed, the Council now shares the Society's view that 136 persons to the acre is too many for residential development. According to the South London Press the Council has rejected the suggestion that certain tenement blocks in the northern part of the borough, where people have been living at 400 to the acre, should be redeveloped at 136 to the acre. They now consider 100 to the acre acceptable and have decided that housing densities should be as low as practicable, and the "make every yard count" policy is being thrown overboard. (South London Press 26/11/71)

Borough Development Department

The Council's Department of Architecture and Planning has been renamed Borough Development Department which is to be headed by a Borough Development Officer. As before it will comprise the three professional divisions of planning, architecture, and valuation. Mr Ian Lacey, who continues in charge of the planning division, now has the designation of Borough Planner.