



# THE CHELSEA SOCIETY

## Autumn Bulletin – 17<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Registered Charity 27626

TAKE NOTICE that:

### **THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

will be held on

**MONDAY 26th NOVEMBER 2018**

in the

**GREAT HALL, CHELSEA OLD TOWN HALL,  
KING'S ROAD, LONDON SW3**

(THIS IS A CHANGE OF DATE AND VENUE, AS CHELSEA OLD TOWN HALL  
HAS NOW BEEN RE-OPENED AFTER REFURBISHMENT)

**The President, John Simpson CBE, will take the chair at 6:30 P.M.**

## AGENDA

1. Approval of the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Monday, 20th November 2017
2. Elections to the Council of the Society.
3. Receiving the Accounts for the financial year ended 30 June 2018.
4. Chairman's Annual Report.
5. Resolutions (if any) of which notice has been received under Rule 8.12.1 of the Constitution
6. Any Other Business.

After the meeting, wine and soft drinks will be served.

## NOTES

1. Admission to the meeting is restricted to Members of The Chelsea Society, and official guests invited by the Chairman
2. Any Member may comment on any matter mentioned in the Report or Accounts, and may raise any matter not mentioned in the Report or Accounts if it is within the Objects of the Society.
3. Any Member wishing to propose a resolution shall give notice by sending a copy of the proposed resolution signed by him as Proposer and by another Member as Seconder, so as to reach the Chairman at 30 Paradise Walk, London SW3 4JL at least twenty eight days before the date of the General Meeting.
4. Each Member is entitled to a single vote, but
5. A Member is not entitled to vote if:
  - (a) his name (or in the case of a firm or company, the name of the person designated under Rule 3.2 of the Constitution) has not been on the Register of Members for a period of at least twenty one days before the General Meeting
  - (b) he has not paid his subscription for the current year.
  - (c) he has appointed a proxy under Rule 8.7
6. Any member wishing to stand for election to the Council of the Society shall give to the Chairman at least twenty eight days before the General Meeting:
  - (a) the name of the Member seeking election (with his consent to serve) and the names of his Proposer and Seconder (who must themselves be members), signed by the three persons concerned, and
  - (b) a written statement signed by the Member seeking election setting out his qualifications to be a member of the Council

## MINUTES OF THE 2017 AGM

**The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on Monday 20th November 2017 in the Great Hall, at Chelsea Old Town Hall.**

The Minutes are published on page 9-10 of the Society's Annual Report 2017 and are on the Society's website at <http://chelseasociety.org.uk/annual-general-meeting-2/>

The Chairman gave his Report for the year 2016-2017 which is printed in full on pages 11-20 of the Society's Annual Report for 2017, and is on the Society's website at <http://chelseasociety.org.uk/annual-general-meeting-2/>

The Report of the Chairman of the Planning Committee for the year 2016-17 is published on pages 21-25 of the Society's Annual Report 2017, and is on the Society's website at <http://chelseasociety.org.uk/report-planning-committee-2017/>

## COMMUNICATIONS

**For the latest news and information about the activities of the Society, members are recommended to look at the Society's website ([www.chelseasociety.org.uk](http://www.chelseasociety.org.uk)) at least once a week. Photographs about Chelsea are also published on the Society's Instagram account, and there are occasional postings on Twitter.**

In the year ended 15th November 2018 a Bulletin was sent to Members by e-mail on 14 occasions providing up to date details of Meetings, Events, and Planning matters. This e-mailing is sent to all Members who have given the Society an e-mail address, and reaches 603 households.

All Members are requested to ensure that they provide the Membership Secretary, Allan Kelly, with an e-mail address if they have not already done so, as this is the quickest and most cost effective way for the Society to communicate with its more than a thousand Members. His e-mail address is [membershipsecretary@chelseasociety.org.uk](mailto:membershipsecretary@chelseasociety.org.uk) Allan has also kindly agreed to be the point of telephone contact with the Society, and his telephone number is 020 7731 3303.

The Council is conscious that the Society still has Members who are unable to receive e-mails, and others who prefer to receive communications in printed form. Printing and postage is expensive, but in addition to being sent by e-mail at frequent intervals a Bulletin will now be sent in printed form at approximately six-month intervals. This is the first, and the next will be sent with the Annual Report in the Spring of 2019.

The Society's postal address is 30 Paradise Walk, London SW3 4JL.

## FUTURE EVENTS

**The Society is grateful to Gaye Murdoch and Johanna Thornycroft for organising its events**

### ANNUAL DINNER

Wednesday 5th December 2018 at 7pm for 7.30,

at The Caledonian Club, 19 Halkin St., Belgrave Square. Dress: Black Tie.

Members are recommended to book now, as places are limited.

The guest Speaker will be John Lewes, who will speak about the beginnings of the Special Air Service Regiment (SAS)



John Lewes has a particular interest in the subject as the nephew of Lt. JOCK LEWES who, together with David Stirling, created this famous unit in North Africa during the second World War. Jock Lewes, had recently been commissioned into the Welsh Guards and quickly proved, despite his lack of military experience, to be a radical tactical thinker, and a brilliant leader and trainer of men, and a very courageous front-line soldier - a rare combination.

In 1941 Britain was very close to losing the war, with most of our shipping in the Mediterranean being sunk by enemy aircraft operating from airfields in north Africa. Jock Lewes realised immediately on arrival in north Africa that these aircraft and their airfields had to be put out of action, and that was the task he set himself with small groups of men, carefully trained and selected by him.

John's personal connection to these extraordinary events, and the in-depth research he has done, makes his attendance as speaker at the Chelsea Society's Christmas dinner a special treat for members and guests.

John has a history degree from the University of Liverpool, and studied at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and the University of London.

He was a Flying officer in the RAF (VRT) and is an Honorary Member of the Welsh Guards Association. He has been interviewed by Dan Snow and appeared on BBC2's SAS: Rogue Warriors presented by Ben Macintyre. John has written a novel "A Spy after All" based on the true story of the early days of the SAS and is also Jock Lewes's biographer.

Tickets £80 to include dinner and wines from the Box Office of the Cadogan Hall, 3 Sloane Terrace, London, SW1X 9DQ in person, or by post with cheque, or by phone 0207-730-4500 (booking not available online). A small charge is made for card payments. Members may bring guests.

Please send names of any guests, any requests to sit at particular tables, and any special dietary requests to [johanna@johannathornycroft.com](mailto:johanna@johannathornycroft.com)

## RECENT EVENTS



Thomas Coutts

### COUTTS BANK

The Chelsea Society was invited to make a private visit to Coutts Bank, 440 Strand, on 16th October 2018, to view its art collection. Coutts' archivist, Tracey Earl, accompanied the visit, and outlined the history of Coutts from its foundation by an Edinburgh goldsmith in 1692. She told the stories of Thomas Coutts and the other members of the family who had played an important role in its development.

She also described the building at 59 Strand which Coutts had occupied for 114 years, and the construction of the present building across the road designed by Frederick Gibberd

We heard the story of Angela Burdett-Coutts, one of the greatest philanthropists of the 19th century, and saw the original lending library given by her for the benefit of the clerks in the 1850s.

The visit concluded in the Directors' suite where we were joined by David Douglas-Home, 15th Earl of Home, a former Chairman of the Bank.

In the Boardroom we saw the detailed hand-painted Chinese wallpaper, a gift to Thomas Coutts in 1794 from Lord Macartney, Britain's first Ambassador to China.



### SPANISH EMBASSY

Members of the Chelsea Society enjoyed a Reception on 6th September at the official residence in Belgrave Square of the Ambassador of Spain to the Court of St. James, which contains many fine examples of European art.

We also heard a talk by the curator of the Spanish Gallery Auckland Project – one of the most important private collections in the UK of Spanish art from the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, which will open in Durham in 2019.

## ANNUAL MEETING WITH THE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS OF CHELSEA

On 26th September, the Planning Committee of the Chelsea Society met with the Residents' Associations of Chelsea to discuss matters of common interest, at Christchurch School Hall.

Damage to the quality of life of local people caused by building works, and especially basements, is of great concern to our Members, and one of our Members in Markham Street actually died from the stress caused by the building works next door. The meeting therefore opened with a discussion of this important issue, including Compliance with Planning Permission, Building Regulations, Codes of Practice, CTMPs, CIMPs and parking regulations.

One of our Members gave an account of the distress she had suffered and is still suffering after more than three years. A response was given by Carolyn Goddard, the RBKC officer responsible for enforcement.

This is a valuable case study of how the rules are or are not enforced in practice, and the Society is submitting a detailed paper to RBKC.

Other matters discussed included:

- Refusal of Planning permission if no satisfactory CTMP could be devised
- Thamesbrook care home and its replacement.
- St Wilfred's care home
- Chelsea Boats
- Motorcycle noise
- Sloane St
- Heathrow third runway

Cllr. Will Pascall, Lead Member at RBKC for Planning and Transport, responded to the issues raised at the end of the meeting.

## RECENT EVENTS continued



Alex Baring,  
by Sir Thomas Lawrence

### ING BANK'S ART COLLECTION

Members of The Chelsea Society enjoyed a private view of ING Bank's art collection on 11th September 2018. Most of the works came from Britain's oldest bank, Barings, which ING famously bought for £1 in 1995 after it was ruined by a rogue trader. Barings played a leading role in the development of the British and international financial world from the 1760s until the late 20th century.

The art collection reflects the character and history of Barings bank including 18th and 19th century portraits of the Baring family who sought out the leading artists of the day such as Sir Thomas Lawrence, Benjamin West and John Linnell. It also includes 20th century works by artists such as Stanley Spencer, John and Paul Nash, L.S. Lowry, John Minton and Keith Vaughan and fine watercolours by Samuel Palmer, Edward Lear, Francis Towne, and Peter de Wint.

### THE PAINT DETECTIVE

On 20th September a well-attended meeting of the Society at Christchurch School Hall heard a fascinating lecture by Patrick Baty.

Patrick is often called 'The Paint Detective' for a very good reason. A large part of his work is discovering and advising clients on the historic colours used in the decoration of all manner of buildings from ancient houses and palaces to wartime RAF stations, social housing projects, to Tower Bridge and the Tamar Bridge and Holborn Viaduct, churches, work at Stowe and much more. Often interiors are reinstated to match their original decoration discovered by Patrick, though this is not always appropriate.

He told us some interesting stories, including an account of a house with discreet Royal connections on Dartmoor where he was able to prove that a pair of doors had come from Carlton House, a building in London demolished long ago. He also described his quest for a hidden mural by James Abbott McNeill Whistler in the home in Cheyne Walk where the painter lived. Patrick is confident that he has identified the room in the house where Whistler painted the famous portrait of his mother.

Patrick and his wife run their business, "Papers and Paints" at 4 Park Walk, Chelsea SW10 a company set up by his father in 1960. Thames & Hudson recently published his book 'The Anatomy of Colour' a must-have reference book for decorators, designers and amateurs interested in decoration and colour in our built-environment. Paint analysis is a small and highly specialised field, and Patrick explained some of the scientific techniques involved. Patrick Baty is a former member of the Council of the Chelsea Society, and of its Planning Committee. He served in the 9/12th Royal Lancers and in the Artists Rifles (SAS). An article about Patrick appeared on Page 126 of Country Life for 10th October 2018.



### BRITISH EMBASSIES

A capacity audience of members of The Chelsea Society and their friends heard a fascinating talk by James Stourton on Monday 8th October.

James is the author of "British Embassies: their diplomatic and architectural history" and spoke about the structure and history of these magnificent buildings, which have served as residences for British Ambassadors around the world. The audience included former ambassadors and their wives and widows. What the audience most enjoyed was the skilful blend of deep architectural knowledge, historical context deftly summarized, and the human touch of the individual ambassadors and their impact on world events.

James Stourton is a former Chairman of Sotheby's UK, and author of many books including "The British as Art Collectors from the Tudors to the Present" and an acclaimed biography of Lord (Kenneth) Clark. The British Embassies were photographed by Luke White, and the book was launched at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

# PLANNING ISSUES

## PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Society's Planning Committee comprises:

Michael Stephen (Chairman)

Sir Paul Lever KCMG (Brompton Hans Ward)

Martyn Baker (Chelsea Riverside Ward)

Chris Lenon (Royal Hospital Ward)

Laura Carrara-Cagni (Stanley Ward)

## THE WILLIAM SUTTON ESTATE



**This is a large estate bounded by Cale St., Elystan St., Marlborough St. and Ixworth Place. It was built in the early 20th century to provide housing for people with very limited incomes. The owners of the estate applied for planning permission for redevelopment, which was refused by RBKC. The owners appealed, and the appeal was heard by a government-appointed Inspector at a Public Enquiry in Kensington Town Hall from 9th – 18th May 2018. In September 2018 the Inspector reported his findings to the Secretary of State, who is expected to decide the matter not later than 17th December 2018.**

The Inspector heard evidence not only about the original application, but also about variations proposed by the Appellants which would provide more social housing than in the original application.

The Chelsea Society was represented as a Rule 6 Party by Michael Stephen, Chairman of the Planning Committee and James Thompson, Chairman of the Society. The Society's Closing Submission to the Inspector by Michael Stephen on 18th May was as follows:

1. The Chelsea Society has been represented on every day of this Enquiry so that we could listen to all the evidence and hear it tested in cross-examination before arriving at a fully informed opinion as to how we think the Secretary of State should deal with this appeal.

2. We have been impressed with the great care taken by all the witnesses and advocates to present the facts and arguments to the Inspector in considerable detail so that the Secretary of State may have the best possible evidential base on which to make his decision. We have also been impressed by the courage and tenacity with which the "Save our Sutton" campaigners have conducted their campaign and have presented their case to this Enquiry.
3. As we have said in our opening statement, an important amenity of Chelsea has, for the past 100 years or more, been social housing for those who cannot afford market rents and who in recent years have qualified for housing by the local authority. Associated with this has been the provision of estates and buildings which have become part of the fabric of Chelsea.
4. The Society has met with campaigners and tenants and also with a Director of Affinity Sutton and its project manager. The Society's Planning Committee has met specifically to consider this important Application.
5. The role of the Chelsea Society is to draw upon our local knowledge, and to represent as best we can the interests of all the people of Chelsea, not limited to those who live on or near the Sutton Estate.
6. The Inspector has heard evidence on both the refused application and the revised scheme, and it will of course be for the Secretary of State to decide whether to consider the revised scheme or not. It would perhaps be unrealistic of him to ignore it, but if he takes it into account he must in our view be satisfied that local people and their elected representatives have had an adequate opportunity to consider it and make representations. If he is not so satisfied this could mean that the owners would have to submit a new application, which would be very costly and would lead to more years of uncertainty for the residents. We would prefer to see the money spent on providing better housing for the residents.
7. It is quite clear that the current situation on the estate is not satisfactory for anyone. Improvement is urgently necessary, but should it be done by refurbishment or redevelopment?
8. The buildings on the estate are good solid examples of Edwardian architecture, by a distinguished architect of the period, and although they are not listed buildings we heard evidence about their value as undesignated heritage assets. In recent years however, their character has been much diminished by the installation of plastic window frames.
9. We are pleased that blocks L and M fronting Chelsea Green and Elystan Street will remain in use as examples of this type of architecture, but there is no consensus of opinion within the Chelsea Society as to what should be done with the remaining buildings. Some think they should be preserved and others do not.
10. There is however the human dimension to consider as well. The Inspector has heard evidence from some of the residents of the estate, some of whom were elderly and had lived on the estate for a very long time. They were fond of their estate and had happy memories of life on the estate before redevelopment became a serious possibility about ten years ago. We have been impressed with the evidence from these

witnesses, and also from Cllr. Henderson who lives on the estate, from Lady Denman who lives nearby, and has known residents of the estate for many years, from Mr. Robertson of the Dovehouse Street Residents Association, and from Mr. Burgess who is Planning Secretary of the Kings Road Association of Chelsea Residents.

11. These witnesses told the Enquiry that they did not want the buildings to be demolished, and the Inspector has heard evidence as to how they might be refurbished, but as we understand the law the Secretary of State has no power to direct the owners to refurbish the estate – all he can do is to dismiss the appeal, or to allow it subject to such conditions as he sees fit. If he allows the appeal there will be no refurbishment (except for blocks L and M), but if he dismisses it there will be many more years of uncertainty for the residents which may or may not result in a decision by the owners to refurbish.
12. Whether the estate is refurbished or rebuilt there would inevitably be a huge amount of disruption to the lives of the residents, as building works on this scale cannot be done without creating noise, dust, and obstruction, and without placing heavy burdens of traffic on the already inadequate street system in Chelsea.
13. We note the Appellant's commitment that all the existing tenants would be able to remain on the estate, and we would expect to see that the tenants are properly housed and cared for throughout the process. If permission for works is ever granted we would expect to see a robust Construction Management Plan and Construction Traffic Management Plan which protects the interests of local people and is strictly enforced by the local authority.
14. Much of the evidence from residents of the Sutton Estate showed how badly the estate has deteriorated over the past ten years, and how the owner's performance as a landlord leaves much to be desired. It seems from this evidence, which was substantially unchallenged, that over the past ten years the owner has been neglecting the estate and proceeding effectively on the basis that permission to develop was a foregone conclusion. In our opinion this shows disrespect not only to their tenants but to the planning laws themselves. It has also resulted in lost revenue which could have been put to good use.
15. If this has been done so that the owners can argue in this Appeal that that some of the flats should not be counted as existing social rented housing we would not be surprised if their conduct were to count against them. Likewise, although the owners may have the legal right to let flats on the estate at open market rents, this would be contrary to the purposes for which William Sutton gave the land, and the Local Authority are right when they say that this distorts the assessment of benchmark land value.
16. Policy CH3 of the Consolidated Local Plan provides that "the Council will resist the loss of social rented floorspace throughout the Borough" and the Chelsea Society expects the Council to do so.
17. Policy CH4 provides that in the case of estate renewal "the Council will require the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing, with the minimum being no net loss of existing social rented provision." The Chelsea Society agrees with this, and with para. 3.14 of The London Plan 2016 to the same effect.
18. The Secretary of State must therefore consider whether the proposals put forward by the Appellant would provide the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing, and we note that the Local Authority in their opening statement have expressed the view that the revised scheme, which would benefit from a financial grant from the Mayor, would do so, provided that an appropriate review mechanism were in place for each phase of the development. The Local Authority have given this matter careful thought, and having listened to the evidence on viability we are not in a position to disagree with them.
19. There is one point in this connection which we would make, and that is that most of us who live in Chelsea have to live in much less spacious accommodation than could be had elsewhere for the same price or rent. This is what we have to accept if we want to live in Chelsea, and this should apply in considering what amount of floorspace is appropriate for new or refurbished dwellings on the Sutton Estate.
20. During the evidence on viability there was some discussion of what would be a reasonable profit for the Appellants to make.
21. However, this is not a normal property development in which the developer could reasonably expect to make a profit. In this case the owners have not paid a penny for the land. It was given to their predecessors in title for nothing on the basis that it would be used for housing those whose incomes would not otherwise allow them to live in Chelsea. The owners must of course cover their costs, but they are a charity and should not expect to make a profit out of this land.
22. Turning now to the new buildings which are proposed, if redevelopment is permitted we would expect the Secretary of State to require a much higher standard of architecture than is presently proposed, and we would be willing to assist the architect to understand Chelsea.
23. We have to say that the proposed buildings are disappointing in their external appearance, and the Local Authority has pointed to some specific design issues. The appreciation of architecture is of course a subjective matter but the Chelsea Society has for ninety years encouraged new buildings which respect the style, the character and the charm of Chelsea, and we are sorry to say that these buildings do not. We do not agree with the views of the Greater London Authority on this matter. These are in our opinion the kind of designs that have poured out of architects' offices all over the country since the 1980s and have no relation to the character of Chelsea. If buildings like this are allowed in Chelsea we will soon have nothing left.
24. In conclusion, The Chelsea Society believes that Chelsea should continue to be a place where people in all income groups can live, and is very conscious of the pressures on housing generated by the influx of foreign money and the consequent increases in the capital and rental values of properties of all kinds. This pressure is being felt not only by people whose incomes are very limited, but also by the middle-income groups whose parents and grandparents have lived in Chelsea but can no longer afford to live here themselves. The Society is concerned for the future of both of these groups, and believes that accommodation should be provided on the Sutton Estate not just for those with the lowest incomes, but for the middle-income groups as well.

## PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

The Milner Street Area Residents' Association (MISARA) has pointed out that Islington, Richmond and Camden have all removed PD rights in Conservation areas.

PD rights have undesirable consequences for attractive street settings in our Conservation Areas. For example, with the exception of listed buildings, you can without planning permission remove an attractive (even original or historic) window facing the street and replace it with a new ugly window provided only that the new window is made of similar materials - there is no requirement for similar style or design.

We agree with MISARA that RBKC should issue an Article 4 Direction to remove PD rights in all our Conservation Areas, making such developments subject to planning permission and enabling the Council to refuse applications which fail "to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area." We have written to the Lead Member of RBKC for Planning accordingly.

## EMPTY FLATS AND HOUSES

RBKC Deputy Leader Cllr. Kim Taylor Smith, a Chelsea resident, has written to the Government about getting the Borough's 621 empty flats and houses into use. He wants powers to enable the Council to take over empty properties, pay rent to the owners, and let the homes to Council tenants.

He suggests that the Council would manage the lettings and charge the owner a fee. He says that an existing power (the Empty Dwelling Management Order), which requires a Council to show that a dwelling has been empty for two years or vandalised, has proved unworkable. He says: "We want to collaborate with, not clobber, the property investor."

However, this is a very controversial measure and is being carefully considered by The Chelsea Society. Members are encouraged to send their views to [planning@chelseasociety.org.uk](mailto:planning@chelseasociety.org.uk)

## THE LISTENING COUNCIL



RBKC wishes to be seen to be listening to people who live and work in the Borough, so they have established a series of "Listening Forums" to which all are invited.

In Chelsea there will be a Forum on Tuesday 30th October 2018 at 6.30 in the Theatre of The Chelsea Academy in Lots Road. It will be attended by the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, together with other Councillors.

The Chelsea Society encourages its members to attend. For the Society's views on the governance of the Council see <http://chelseasociety.org.uk/governance-of-rbkc/> and for the Society's views on changes needed to planning law see <http://chelseasociety.org.uk/planning-law-review/>

## LONDON BUS SERVICE



Transport for London are consulting on their proposed changes to bus routes.

See <https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/buses/central-london/#Proposing>

The Chelsea Society will be responding, so please send your views before 30th October to [planning@chelseasociety.org.uk](mailto:planning@chelseasociety.org.uk)

## THE OLD POLICE STATION, LUCAN PLACE



Old Police Station, Lucan Place

Planning Application PP/18/03491 has been refused. See: <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/planning/searches/details.aspx?address=&streetname=&postcode=&ward=&consarea=&caseyear=&casenumber=&proposal=&decisionyear=&decisionmonth=&appealref=&batch=20&id=PP/18/03491&type=decision&tab=tabs-planning-1#tabs-planning-2>

If the Council do not change their position, this building is likely to remain derelict for some considerable time, with no community use at all.

We have met with the developers of this site, and one of the issues discussed was the use of the 2,000 sq ft on the ground floor and another 2,000 sq ft on the basement floor which they would be making available for community use. We were informed that a day-nursery is one of the ideas being considered.

We would have no objection to that for part of the available space, but we would like to see the following community uses included:

- A small Post Office, with entrance directly from the street. There is currently no Post Office in Chelsea east of World's End, and the Post Office are now looking to open more post offices.
- Rooms for doctors, dentists, osteopaths and other healthcare providers (NHS or private).
- A meeting room for up to 20 people with entrance directly from the street. This would be very useful for residents' associations and other community groups who currently have no suitable place to meet. A small police post with entrance directly from the street.

## TOWER BLOCKS ON THE CROMWELL ROAD

On 27th September RBKC refused this application to build massive tower-blocks on the site of the existing Holiday Inn on the Cromwell Road. The Chelsea Society had supported the Kensington Society in objecting to this application as follows:

"The Chelsea Society objects to this planning application for the following reasons, and wishes its name to be made public as an objector:

Chelsea and South Kensington have always been areas of low to medium height buildings, and derive their character and charm from this. The existing 29-storey building at 92m/302 feet tall has been an intrusion on our skyline since 1973. Planning permission should not have been granted at the time and it should not be used as a precedent to justify a much bigger scheme which would further blight both our communities and our skyline and streetscape.

The existing building is a "material consideration" but not a precedent, and cannot in any event justify granting permission for an even taller building.

The first application, for a 30-storey hotel at 102m/335 feet tall, would make it the tallest building in RBKC – 5 times the average height of surrounding buildings; The second, a 22-storey serviced apartments building, would be 77m/253 feet, the 4th tallest (10m/33 feet taller than Grenfell Tower); and

The third an 8-storey/35m/115 foot housing block

containing 46 flats (26 for the open market; 20 for social/affordable housing).

The two tall buildings would be taller than Newcombe House in Notting Hill Gate – the tallest would be 30m/98 feet taller and the second 5m/16.5 feet taller – which has been repeatedly refused by the planning committee. The same reasons for refusing Newcombe House should be applied in this case.

Following the grant of permission for the existing building, the Council of RBKC strengthened its planning policies against tall buildings with the result that the Council has not permitted a single tall building in the borough in the last 45 years. We want this to continue.

The relevant policies, as consolidated in the July 2015 RBKC Local Plan are:

- to respect the existing context, character and appearance (Policy CL1). This does not mean the character and appearance of the existing building, but of the area as a whole

## TOWER BLOCKS ON THE CROMWELL ROAD continued

- to preserve and take opportunities to enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area (Policy CL3). The demolition of the existing building would present such an opportunity
- to ensure good living conditions for local people, especially daylight and sunlight, sense of enclosure and avoid increases in traffic, parking, noise, vibration and local microclimatic effects (Policy CL5)
- to protect and enhance views, vistas and the skyline that contribute to the character and quality of the area (Policy CL11)
- to respect the setting of the borough's valued townscapes and landscapes, through appropriate building heights (Policy CL12)

The proposal is also contrary to the London Plan, in particular, policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.7.

The proposed buildings would have a significantly harmful impact on the adjoining conservation areas, further dominating and overwhelming the immediate locality on both sides of Cromwell Road.

The development would be 50% larger/denser than the present building, with densities only found in places like the City of London and Vauxhall, and at least 4 times that of the surrounding area.

The buildings would have a significant impact on living conditions in the immediate area.

The buildings would increase the adverse impact on the long views – taller, wider, bulkier profile – and will further intrude on the skyline as seen from Kensington Gardens and Battersea Bridge, as well as from Cromwell Road.

The proposed buildings would include a conference facility for 1,500 people, which could result in that number of people entering/exiting in a short space of time. The nearby Gloucester Road Underground station is already congested at busy times.

The garden would be re-established, but this is required to be retained by law. It is not a gift, but a fundamental planning requirement.

The public benefits would be insufficient to outweigh those harmful effects.

We understand that the developer is using the profitability of the existing hotel as the baseline for its value to justify a large increase in density. We disagree. An outdated building which cannot be brought up to modern standards should have less value and should not be used as a viability reason to allow such an enormous increase in the size of the development.

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS – OBJECTORS

**The Chelsea Society was concerned that when implementing the recent change in data-protection law, RBKC were making it difficult for the names of individual objectors to appear on the published record. The Society made representation and the matter has now been resolved as follows:**

"GDPR Briefing Note – Comments on planning applications.

The Council must comply with new General Data Protection Requirements. We also have a policy objective of maintaining as transparent a decision making system as possible for planning applications.

For public comments this means ensuring that all comments are published on the Council's website.

To achieve this policy objective, the Council does not ask an individual for consent to publish their comment online. This would create a situation where most comments would be withheld from public view.

To manage the risk of not obtaining explicit consent from an individual to publish their comment, the Council by default has adopted the below procedure:

Comments are published anonymously (name and address of the person commenting are redacted).

Comments are removed once a planning decision has been made.

Comments are republished if an application is subject to an appeal and then removed once an appeal decision is made.

Comments are retained for ten years, and then deleted.

Decision makers (officers or councillors) are able to see the full details of the person commenting on an application (name and address of that person) as part of their deliberations when deciding an application.

However, in response to community representations the Council is amending the public comment online form to include the options for an individual to:

give consent for the Council to display their name and address, or give consent for the Council not to delete their comment.

Organisations are not subject to GDPR. As such, comments made by organisations are published online in full.

The new comment form will enable organisations to notify the Council if they wish their comment to remain published after a decision has been issued."

The system is not however working as intended, as some objectors who wanted their names published have found them redacted. Also, letters of objection are being deleted from the website when applications are decided or withdrawn. Further work is required, which The Chelsea Society will discuss with RBKC.

## NOISE FROM MOTORCYCLES (AND SOME CARS)



**One in five Europeans is regularly exposed to noise levels that could "significantly" damage their health, the World Health Organization says, and it updated guidelines on those levels in Europe on 9th October 2018.**

Environmental noise is among the "top environmental risks to health," according to the WHO report. More than 100 million Europeans are affected by road traffic noise alone each year. "Noise continues to be a concern," noted Dr. Dorota Jaroska, program manager for living and working environments at the WHO regional office for Europe.

The new guidelines are "an important update," given the evidence and links to health problems, said Stephen Stansfeld, professor at Barts and Queen Mary University of London and chair of the Guideline Development Group, an independent organization that advised WHO on the guidelines. Excessive noise can affect blood pressure and heart function, which can lead to heart attacks and mortality from cardiovascular disease. Children's cognition and health are also affected.

## MOTORCYCLES

**Motorcyclists have of course as much right as anyone else to use the roads, but the noise made by many of their machines is excessive, and constitutes a real and persistent nuisance to people living nearby or using the streets. This is becoming worse as the roads become more congested and more and more people are using motorcycles to get through the traffic. The vehicle need not be travelling at excessive speed to cause a noise nuisance, and fierce acceleration in low gear is the main problem.**

Motorcycles are small vehicles with small engines, and yet they make so much more noise than much larger and more powerful vehicles – and some of the smallest emit the worst noise. The reason for this is that their silencers are completely inadequate. The same applies to certain types of car – in particular Ferrari, Maserati, Lamborghini, and Porsche.

We think that our MP, and our GLA Member and the Borough Council should propose to the Government that they amend the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1078/1986 to require that motorcycles and cars manufactured here or imported be equipped with silencers which are much more effective, even if this reduces speed and/or acceleration.

It would appear from the noise we have to endure every day that even the existing law is not being complied with:

Reg 54(2) of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1078 of 1986 provides that "Every exhaust system and silencer shall be maintained in good and efficient working order and shall not be altered so as to increase the noise made by the escape of exhaust gases."

Also, Reg. 97 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1078 of 1986 provides that "No motor vehicle shall be used on a road in such manner as to cause any excessive noise which could have been avoided by the exercise of reasonable care on the part of the driver."

In addition, a Public Space Protection Order under s. 59 of the ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2014 has been made by the Royal Borough of

Kensington & Chelsea, which applies in the east of Chelsea and prohibits:

- (a) Revving of engine(s) (as to cause a nuisance);
- (b) Repeated sudden and rapid acceleration (as to cause a nuisance);
- (c) Racing;
- (d) Performing stunts (as to cause a nuisance);

We do not expect a noise monitor on every street corner, and we are aware that the police have limited resources, but we do expect the police whilst on patrol to stop a vehicle which appears to them to be making excessive noise, and to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or require it to be taken to a testing station.

We also expect the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency to make checks and to visit the dealerships where these cars and motorcycles are sold and imported

There are engineers who will alter exhaust systems so as to increase the noise, but there will usually be a warning stamped on the exhaust; 'Not for road use', 'track use only' or similar, and the police should be looking for these. It is also not unknown for the owners of certain motor cycles and cars to fit a silencer which meets the MoT standard for the purposes of the test, only to replace it with a noisy one afterwards. The police should also be aware of this.

The drivers are a changing group of people so we cannot expect action taken on one or two occasions to solve the problem. The police need to be vigilant at all times when they are on patrol.

We all now know the nature of the problem and the combination of measures which can be taken. We now expect the Police, the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency, the Borough Council, the GLA, and the MP to take the necessary action.

We are drawing this article to the attention of Sir Hugo Swire MP, a Chelsea resident, who has raised this issue in Parliament.

## THE KING'S ROAD



King's Road is one of the most congested and worst polluted streets in London. At times there is complete gridlock, particularly in the section between Sloane Square and Sydney Street.

A principal cause of the congestion is the large number of vans and lorries which use King's Road and which, in many cases, stop there to deliver goods. The road is narrow. A single parked lorry can cause problems for busses (there are five bus routes along King's Road). When two are parked opposite each other there is chaos.

The current regulations for parking and loading are not fit for purpose and are not properly enforced. Specifically:

- Although most of the King's Road has double yellow lines, there are many sections where at certain times of day loading is allowed on both sides of the street. This is the case, between 10.00 and 16.00, for most of the area between Sydney Street and Blacklands Terrace.
- The boundary between different regulatory zones is not marked. Between Jubilee Place and Markham Street, for example, there is one sign saying "Monday to Saturday No loading between 07.00 and 10.00 and 16.00 and 19.00" and a second sign saying "No loading". It is unclear which of the two applies where. Between Tryon Street and Bywater Street there is no signage at all.
- Enforcement of the parking/loading rules is virtually non-existent. A traffic warden on the King's Road is a rare sight. On the few occasions when they patrol there their answer, when challenged as to why they are not ticketing an illegally parked vehicle, is that they cannot wait to see whether the 20 minute loading time has been exceeded. Also, many of them have a poor command of English so it is difficult to communicate.

A secondary cause of congestion is the number of Pedestrian crossings which are not controlled

- Pedestrian crossings are often heavily used, to the point where traffic has to stop for several minutes before there is a clear space. Only two such crossing (near the junction with Flood Street and near Sloane Square) are timed. The crossings at Cadogan Gardens, between Cheltenham Terrace and Walpole Street, at Royal Avenue, at Smith Street and at Waterstones are not. With five uncontrolled crossings in half a mile it is not surprising that the road is congested.

In addition there are uncontrolled pedestrian crossings in side streets where they adjoin the Kings Road, making it difficult for vehicles to exit the Kings Road and obstructing the traffic behind them. The crossing in Anderson Street causes particular problems as it obstructs traffic turning into Anderson Street from the Kings Road, and also traffic crossing the Kings Road from Walpole Street. This pedestrian crossing should be removed

- The turning from King's Road into Cadogan Gardens is another bottleneck. Cadogan Gardens is too narrow for two-way traffic and it is sometimes impossible for vehicles to enter and leave at the same time, particularly if a bus is involved. This is exacerbated by the uncontrolled crossings west of the turning and across the turning.
- There is no restriction on the size of lorries allowed to use the King's Road, and huge articulated vehicles are often present. This is less of a problem in the case of Marks and Spencer and Waitrose as they deliver off road, but in other cases they block whole sections of the street.

## Suggested Remedies

A new regime is needed which reduces traffic congestion. This should drastically limit the ability of vans and lorries to load and unload on double yellow lines, and should mitigate the situation at other bottlenecks.

This means:

- loading and unloading for cars and light vans for a maximum of 10 minutes should take place between 10.00 and 16.00 in certain designated sections of the road only; and where this is allowed there should be no loading or unloading on the other side of the road. Signage should indicate clearly where the loading restrictions apply.
- Longer loading/unloading operations should be prohibited anywhere on King's Road between Sloane Square and World's End from 07.00 to 19.00 on Monday to Saturday. All businesses on this section of the Kings Road should receive a letter from the Council advising them of the intention to impose these restrictions and asking them to inform their suppliers when they place orders for goods.
- All pedestrian crossings on the Kings Road between Sloane Square and World's End should be timed, but they should not emit loud peeping noises which would annoy local residents and businesses.
- Traffic wardens should be instructed to patrol the King's Road regularly and to enforce the loading restrictions, if necessary by waiting next to a parked vehicle to check the length of its stay. They should not be employed without an adequate understanding of English.
- We think the RBKC's lack of active traffic management is steadily undermining the future of the King's Road as a competitive high street and an attractive destination for all sorts of diverse local activities which define Chelsea's appeal.

To crack the congestion/pollution problems will require a clearly identifiable team of dedicated Kings Road wardens to get the message across that commercial vehicles as well as limos/black cabs/hire cars and others will be dealt with promptly if they continue to obstruct the highway.

## CHELSEA HISTORY



Argyll House



John, fourth Duke of Argyll

Argyll House, which owes its name to John, fourth Duke of Argyll who lived there during the last two years of his life (1769–70) is an early 18th century house at the corner of King's Road and Oakley Street, designed by Leoni. It is as fine an example of domestic architecture as any in Chelsea, and John Summerson, speaking to the Chelsea Society in 1949, called it, 'Chelsea's most Palladian building.'

It was built in 1723 shortly after Londoners had successfully petitioned the King to allow them to use his previously private road. The architectural and historical importance of Argyl House is that it is English in plan and Palladian in its elevations.

## ARGYLL HOUSE continued



**Giacomo Leoni, a Venetian architect came to England under the patronage of Lord Burlington in 1713 and, between 1716 and 1720, was responsible for the translation and publication of Palladio's Quatro Libri. This was an inspiration to Burlington (and no doubt led to Chiswick**

**House), changed the fortunes of Leoni, and led to his receiving aristocratic commissions.**

**It also led to a commission in 1723, from John Pierene or Perrin, a successful Huguenot merchant, to design for him a villa in Chelsea.**

Perrin's name appears in the rate-books for the house from 1724 to 1740, and his initials, together with those of his wife Anne, can be seen, intertwined, on the front gate and (more plainly), on two rainwater hoppers on the south or garden side of the house together with the date, thus:— [JAP 1723]. Drawings of the building were published by Leoni in 1729.

Lord Burlington's interest in the architecture of Palladio, and the Quatro Libri, is well known. Compared to the baroque preferred by Wren and Hawksmoor, Palladio's plain sobriety was well suited to the taste of established aristocracy. How Pierene got caught up in this fashionable taste is unknown but, by the time Leoni was publishing Alberti's works in 1726, Pierene's name was in a list of subscribers that included twenty dukes, two duchesses, two marquises, twenty-four earls and the Prince and Princess of Wales.

However, while Palladianism in England, and indeed the architecture of Palladio himself in the Veneto, are associated with large country houses designed for grand occasions and receptions, as in the case of Chiswick House, Argyll House is dressed in Palladian clothes but is laid out like countless Georgian rectories or other substantial village houses.

The way in which it thus combines conventions of English domestic architecture in its floor plans with those of Italian, or more precisely, palatial Venetian display in its facades, is its main historical importance. So rare are these qualities that they justify the house being listed Grade I.

Other than that, as Benjamin Riley concludes in a scholarly article for The Georgian Group, John Pierene's 'stylish and beguiling suburban villa is a fortunate survival in a busy part of London, testifying to his taste, the ambitions of London's Huguenot community, and to the talent of his architect'.

The land on which Argyll House was built was rented by Pierene from another Huguenot, John Narbonne, who

had, in 1719, obtained a lease for a larger parcel of land from Sir Hans Sloane. Narbonne's deed gave him the right to build on a plot roughly 130 x 50 feet, so long as he and his descendants maintained the buildings at their own cost, and also the 'Liberty of nailing and fixing any fruit trees or any other trees' against his neighbours' existing walls. He was granted too, the right to 'farm' the rest of the land – all for 99 years at an annual rent of £4.

Leoni practised in England until his death in 1746, and is known chiefly for his designs for Moor Park, Hertfordshire (1720); the Duke of Queensberry's house in Burlington Gardens (since destroyed); and for the Great House at Carshalton, which was never completed. He published, in 1726, a large folio volume on the architecture of Alberti, and with it an appendix illustrating some of his own designs "both publick and private."

On page 5 under title of "A little, country house," is the following description of Argyll House:—

"Upon the King's Road between Chelsea and London this little House of my Invention was built for Mr. John Pierene. The Kitchen, Buttery and other offices are within the Basement. The Apartments are of a size, suitable to a private Family.

The Door in Front is Doric, with two columns and two half Pilasters. The ornaments of the Windows are all of Stone, as is also the great Cornice; the rest is gray Brick, which in my opinion sorting extremely well with white Stone, makes a beautiful Harmony of Colours. At the further End of the Garden behind the House, into which you descend from a small Terrass, are the Stables and Coach-houses, with Lodgings for Servants. The Front towards the Road has a Courtyard, enclosed with an Iron Palisade."



For further information about Argyll House and its occupiers (who included Sybil Colefax)

see <http://chelseasociety.org.uk/6217-2/> There is a description of the house in the 1913 Survey of London: Volume 4, Chelsea, Pt II, originally published by London County Council.







**THE CHELSEA SOCIETY**