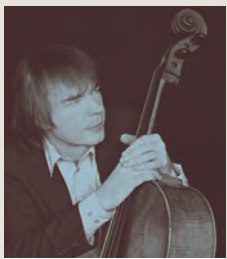




News

Please ensure we have your current email address. Email onslowna@gmail.com so we can keep you up to date on neighbourhood issues.

Julian Lloyd Webber, our President, *writes*



If you are reading this, then the chances are you are a local resident, a local trader or a regular visitor to our very special neighbourhood.

Over the last year, many residents have mentioned to me that they were surprised to see the sudden demolition of a very old building on the corner of Bute Street and Harrington Road. They had assumed it would be listed – but it wasn't. You would be amazed by how many other local buildings you had assumed were safe – and which make up the character of this very special part of London – have no protection whatsoever. And there are major planning battles ahead, including the ongoing shenanigans involving the Brompton and Royal Marsden

hospitals, not to mention South Kensington Station.

This is where the Onslow Neighbourhood Association can help. If you would like to get more involved locally and be the first to know 'what's cooking' on your doorstep, then it's in your interest to fill out the membership form in this newsletter RIGHT NOW! It costs very little to be a member, and you can help us achieve very much more together when we have strength in numbers.

I hope to see new and current members at the ONA's Annual General Meeting which will take place on Tuesday 24 March at Christie's South Kensington at 6 for 6:30pm. Please also note that our annual Garden Party will take place on Tuesday 23 June in Onslow Square.

Editor's Note: *The guest speaker at the AGM will be Graeme Craig, Commercial Development Director of Transport for London, who will update members and take questions about plans for South Kensington Station.*

photo: © Simon Fowler licensed to EMI Classics

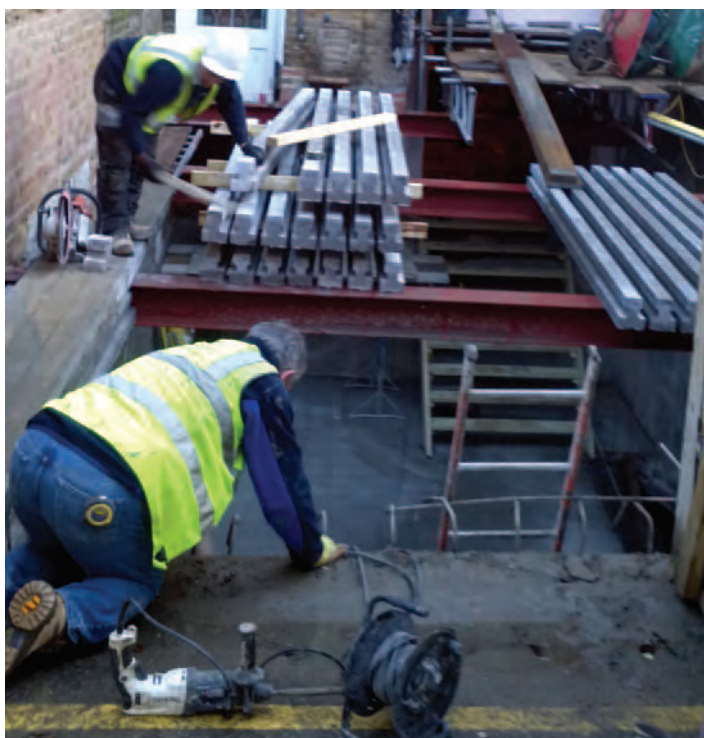


photo: Lucy Ward

Basement Blues *Some relief at last*

In a victory for residents of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, the Government's Planning Inspectorate issued a long-awaited report last December that agrees with the Council's efforts to rein in basement development.

In essence, the Council will now restrict an underground development to no more than 50 per cent of the garden space (down from 85 per cent) and to one storey (down from an unlimited number), and ban any such development under listed buildings.

Over the past two years, the planning department at the Council has carried out modifications to its Core Strategy, in response to widespread dissatisfaction about the disruption, traffic, noise, damage and party wall problems caused by basement developments.

Under the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework, the Council's draft policy had to be approved by a Planning Inspector, who at a public hearing last September listened over six days to arguments from the

Basement Blues *Some relief at last*

Council, the developers, local residents' associations (including the ONA) and certain individuals.

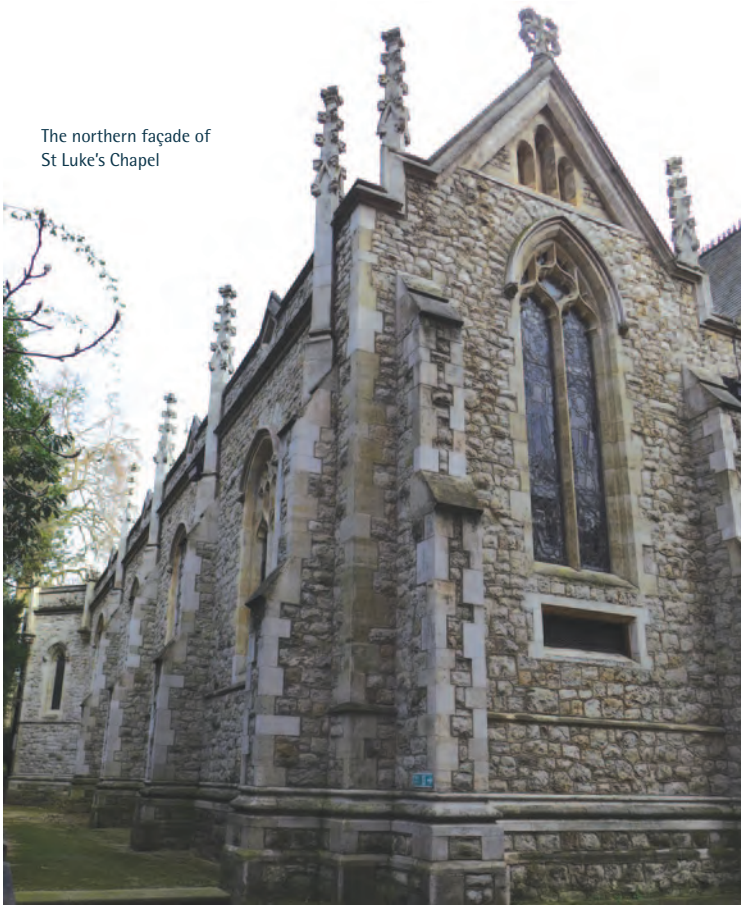
The Inspector asked the Council's planning department to make some modifications, but his report essentially supported the draft policy. Residents' associations, including the ONA, tried to argue that the restrictions did not go far enough in protecting residents – for example, from fire safety hazards posed by basement

developments in mews properties, which are generally not listed– but the Inspector preferred to listen to arguments made by the Council's planning department and basement developers.

The Inspector added that the policy will be monitored for the next five years to ensure it is effective and useful. For the next five years, however, borough residents will be relatively free of excessive underground development.

St. Luke's Chapel *An uncertain future*

The northern façade of
St Luke's Chapel



For residents not familiar with Onslow Square West Garden, St. Luke's Chapel is sited at the southern end of these gardens, behind Rose Square, and is the only Grade II* listed building in our neighbourhood. Although listed, the building is in effect a disused, unconsecrated chapel, with many internal fittings such as pews still in situ. The structure has been allowed to deteriorate over the past ten years.

Following concerns expressed by ONA members, a representative of English Heritage visited the Chapel in 2012, along with an officer from the Council, an historic buildings architect and the then-leaseholder, who promised but did not undertake urgent repairs. In due course, the freehold passed to Rose Square Management, which granted a long lease to a new leaseholder. This leaseholder has since repaired problems with water ingress. English Heritage says it has been working with the Council to convert the chapel to residential use to 'secure its long-term future.'

The current leaseholder has requested a 'change of use' to convert the chapel into a residence, to house the fittings in another Grade II* listed church and to build a kitchen extension on the northern façade, facing the Onslow Square West Garden.

The ONA, along with some residents, objected to this application. It went before a public hearing of a Council planning committee last September. At the hearing, Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB), which runs Alpha courses from St. Paul's in Onslow Square, stated that it was willing and able to take on St. Luke's Chapel and run it as a place of worship.

In light of this new offer, the planning committee decided not to make a decision, but left the matter in abeyance to see whether the HTB proposal would be acceptable to the freeholder and the long-lease holder, or whether the applicant could put up sufficient evidence to convince the committee to reject the HTB proposal.

The ONA is most concerned that whatever the outcome of the change of use, under no circumstances should an extension be stuck on to the northern façade, thus vandalising the whole north aspect of this Grade II* listed building. We await further information on the matter from the Council.



A Blast from the Past *Onslow Square in 1944*

For history buffs, the website Bombsight (www.bombsight.org) has troves of data about the impact of German bombing on London during World War II, along with photographs like these that show what our area looked like some seventy years ago.



Members of the Women's Voluntary Service arriving to prepare breakfast for the men of the Blitz Repair Squad, a team of builders who came to London from around the country to help repair damage caused by V1 flying bombs. The mess and ablution huts were built along the road whilst the men were billeted in the houses of Onslow Square.



Above: Squad members in their billet get dressed and ready for work, whilst one is not quite ready to get up. Six men shared this room in a house on the Square.

Below: Blitz Repair Squad builders queued to collect their breakfast – 'bubble and squeak', with bread, margarine, marmalade and minute portions of bacon – from volunteer chefs in the mess hut on Onslow Square.



Now that Exhibition Road's redevelopment is complete, what about the damp and dull pedestrian tunnel that runs beneath it? The Exhibition Road Culture Group, a partnership of the 19 cultural and educational institutions in South Kensington, held a competition for postgraduate students to 'reimagine'

the tunnel. Goals included improving problems with 'way-finding and orientation' and accommodating people with mobility issues.

Two winners were announced on December 15, and the exhibits they and other entrants created were on display at the Royal College of Art for two weeks. *The Underground Guide to Albertopolis* (right) was one of the winners. Another entry (left) envisaged planting trees in the tunnel that would go up to street level.

How soon are any renovations likely to be realised? That's a good question for Graeme Craig, Commercial Development Director of TfL at the ONA AGM on Tuesday 24 March.



Traffic News

All blocked up

Relief may *eventually* be on the way for both motorists and pedestrians on the road that runs from the South Kensington Station to the Fulham Road. According to Robert Romei, an RBKC engineer, the Council is considering two improvements:

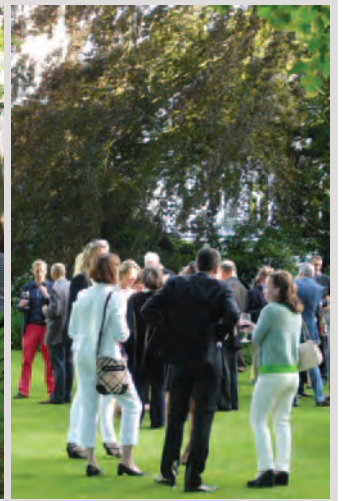
1. Installing a signal at the junction of Pelham Street and Old Brompton Road and linking it to the existing traffic-signaled junction just west of Pelham Street. This signal will make it easier for motorists to emerge from Pelham Street and for pedestrians to know when it's safe to cross.

2. Improving the operation of the Sydney Place / Fulham Road junction. At present, the left turn from Sydney Place to Fulham Road backs up in busy periods (*below*).



The Council is investigating changing the operation of the junction to provide straight-across pedestrian signals at the junction across Fulham Road, to replace the existing set-back pedestrian signals further along Fulham Road, and also to provide pedestrian signals across Sydney Place, whilst at the same time trying to reduce queuing on Sydney Place.

Both the above need further investigation with TfL before changes are made.



ONA Garden Party

The annual ONA Garden Party will take place on **Tuesday 23 June**. Ticket announcements will be sent out in advance.

A TAXING PROPOSITION

The proposed annual 'mansion tax' on UK homes worth £2 million or more has inspired heated debate and criticism across the political spectrum, and there's no question it would have the greatest impact on London, where some 90 per cent of these properties are. RBKC Councillor Nicholas Paget-Brown spelled out why this tax would hit our borough hard in an open letter last October to Shadow Chancellor Ed Balls, a proponent of the measure.

His central point is that 'mansion tax' payers in the borough would be 'in the main older people living in homes they may well have bought many years ago out of taxed income. Many will simply not be able to pay the tax and will be forced to move, making way no doubt for [the] real billionaires' who are often cited as targets of this tax.

The full text of his letter can be found online: www.rbkc.gov.uk/pressrelease/pressreleasePage.aspx?id=6513ed

The Center for Policy Studies reports that almost one third of properties worth over £2 million have been in the same ownership for over ten years.

Ten per cent of properties in London worth £2 million or more are one- and two-bedroom flats, and many more above that price are hardly 'mansions.'

Critics of this tax point out that there are less extreme ways to raise revenue from high value properties with disproportionately low taxes, such as adding new council tax bands or limiting the tax to non-resident owners who pay no taxes at all to the UK government.

Residents who would like to express how this tax would affect them, or propose alternatives, can write to Ed Balls directly: ed@edballs.com.

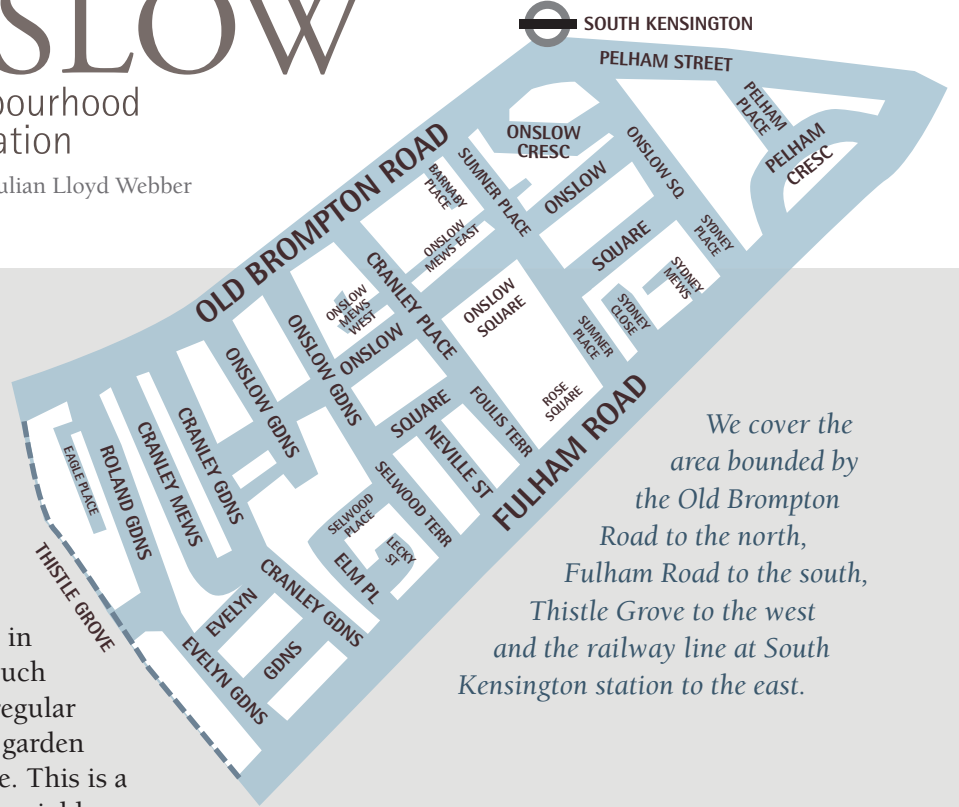




ONSLOW

Neighbourhood Association

President Julian Lloyd Webber



We cover the area bounded by the Old Brompton Road to the north, Fulham Road to the south, Thistle Grove to the west and the railway line at South Kensington station to the east.

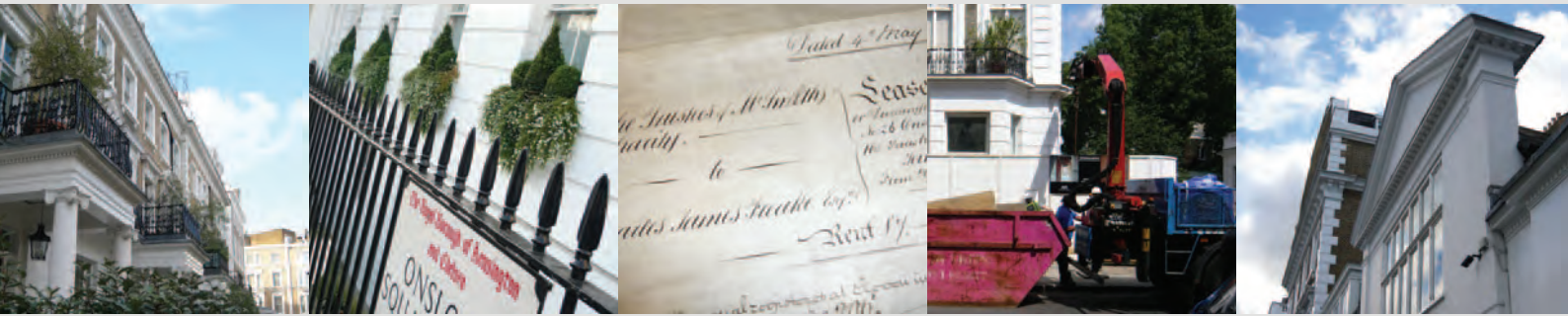
Join us!

The Onslow Neighborhood Association was formed in 1973 to protect and enhance the residential and environmental quality of much of the western part of the Wellcome Trust estate in South Kensington. We keep in touch with this annual newsletter and regular email updates, and host the only garden party permitted in Onslow Square. This is a unique opportunity to meet your neighbours, councillors and representatives of other local associations.



The objects of Onslow Neighbourhood Association are:

- To encourage high standards of architecture and town planning
- To stimulate public interest in and care for the beauty, history and character of the neighbourhood
- To encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity or historic interest
- To take all other steps to protect and advance the interests of persons living within the neighbourhood



PAYMENT BY CHEQUE I enclose a cheque for £15



please print your name address
..... email

PAYMENT BY STANDING ORDER To: The Manager, (name of your bank)

address of your bank postcode

On receipt of this request and on each subsequent 1st January until further notice, please pay to the HSBC Bank Ltd, 40-05-14, Onslow Square Branch, 1 Sydney Place, London SW7 3NW the sum of £15 for the credit account of the Onslow Neighbourhood Association (Account No. 6101 1723)

from my account No. sort code

signature please print your name

PLEASE SEND TO: Richard Skinner, Honorary Treasurer, ONA, 8 Neville Street, London SW7 3AR ENQUIRIES: onslowna@gmail.com

Delayed development

We hold our breath

Many residents already know that the Royal Brompton Hospital (RBH) has informed the Council's planning department that it wants to sell some of its property, including the Fulham Road wing, and use the proceeds to develop

and enlarge the existing site in Sydney Street. This proposal has produced considerable unease within the local community, which is concerned that such an action will mean the loss of hospital space for yet more expensive residential development. The Royal Marsden Hospital (RMH) would like to be able to expand westward into the Fulham Road wing, but can only offer the price of social/hospital use, which is much less than the amount RBH would like to fund its own expansion. The Royal Brompton Hospital has applied to the Council for change of use to allow residential development.

The Council has, for now, delayed making a decision in the hope that the two hospitals can resolve the issues themselves and put forward a plan that will satisfy both parties.

The ONA has objected to the proposed change of use for the Fulham Road site, and awaits the Council's decision on this matter in a forthcoming Supplementary Planning Document.

useful Numbers

To report building material or rubbish blocking the road or pavement:

STREETLINE 020 7361 3001

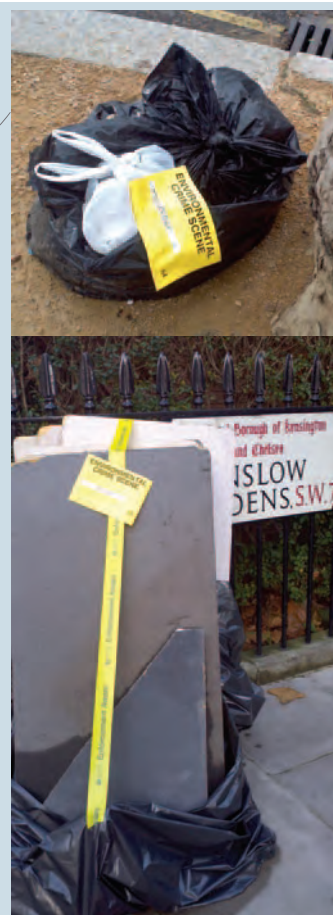
To report noise and nuisance – late loud parties, out-of-hours construction work, etc.:

**ENVIRONMENT HEALTH
020 7361 3002**

To report anti-social behaviour – aggressive begging, disorderly or disruptive conduct:

**MET POLICE 101 and/or
SAFER NEIGHBORHOOD TEAM
020 7161 8982 or
07768 178 122**

CALL 999 for a fast response to a dangerous situation



The first Exhibition Road Community Christmas Street Party, organised by South Kensington Estates, took place on 8 December. Along with mulled wine, mince pies and other festive treats, and carols performed by the Exhibition Road Choir, there was expertly-poured mint tea courtesy of servers from *Comptoir Libanais*.



A drinking water fountain or two along the busiest stretches of Exhibition Road would be a boon to visitors and residents alike (and to the environment as well, by reducing plastic water bottle use). The idea of installing fountains was proposed over two years ago by ONA, and various parties who have weighed in – the Natural History Museum and different departments of the Council – are all in favour. Before the project comes to fruition, of course, installation and maintenance costs must be determined and the money must be found. RBKC engineer Peter Weeden promises to keep ONA up to date as this good idea wends its way through the apparatus of government.

Would you like to contribute to this newsletter?

Please email the editor, Laura Mosedale, lpmosedale@me.com

ONA President Julian Lloyd Webber Honorary Secretary Eva Skinner

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