

*Please ensure we have your current email so we can keep you up to date on neighbourhood issues. Contact us: onslowna@gmail.com
For information about our popular June Garden Party, please see back page.*

Julian Lloyd Webber, our President, *writes*



ONA has had an extremely busy year. We spearheaded the campaign to preserve the South Kensington Post Office, engaging the support of our MP Emma Dent Coad and our Ward Councillors as well as hundreds of our members, other neighbourhood residents and business owners. It was a great effort that included a public

meeting and 'walk of shame' to the Gloucester Road sub-postmaster branch. Unfortunately, our efforts were to no avail, but we continue to fight for a local post office.

Last spring, ONA organised the distribution of Smart Water among our members to reduce the rising risk of burglary and we have participated in many meetings in Town Hall to outline our position on many developments in the area. Most importantly we have also joined with other Resident Associations to oppose TfL's appalling proposals for the redevelopment of the South Kensington Station. These fly in the face of everything that was previously promised and, if passed, would result in yet another bland, commercial development which would destroy South Kensington's unique character forever.

This is a key reason to join ONA! We need to join together

to save this beautiful part of London right now!

A little further afield we continue to oppose the redevelopment of the Holiday Inn site on Cromwell Road. In late March, the High Court quashed Mayor Khan's decision to grant planning consent for the project. Making the decision again will mean another hearing and, if the Secretary of State calls in the case, a public inquiry. The Holiday Inn should never have been allowed in the first place as it is completely out of scale with its surroundings and the latest proposals guarantee that it would become even more of an eyesore. Our fight continues! ONA also will continue to support the Council in obtaining a reduction in the new housing targets being imposed on the Royal Borough by central government. The effect of failing to meet wholly unrealistic targets (448 new homes, 'every year for ten years') would be to rob the Council of its planning powers to prevent unreasonable developments.

None of ONA's work can be done without the dedication of the Committee members and helpers. We are very appreciative that several members have stepped up this year to help with some of our events, but we still remain short-handed. Please email onslowna@gmail.com if you'd like to be more involved with the decisions that affect YOUR neighbourhood.



photo: Laura Mosedale

NOTE: AGM DATE CHANGE

In light of the coronavirus pandemic, the ONA AGM, scheduled to take place on Wednesday 22 April, will be moved to the autumn.

Please check your email and ona.org.uk for updates.

We will email and post fliers to members when we have a date.

ONA has set up a community group to support our members and local friends. Help could be a phone call, some shopping, a magazine drop or advice. All ideas are welcome that fit within the social distancing we must all observe. If you would like to volunteer, would like some support, or have an idea, contact us by replying to onslowna@gmail.com.

The campaign to save our South Kensington Post Office

by Susanna Trostdorf

In February 2019, an ONA member happened to notice an inconspicuous announcement inside the South Kensington Post Office regarding a six-week period of local public consultation about 'access to Post Office Services in the area following the closure' of the South Kensington Crown Post Office branch.

ONA immediately recognised the contemplated closure of this very busy branch as a threat to our community and contacted our members, other residents and local businesses, urging them to fill out the consultation survey. Seven other resident associations and the Wellcome Trust joined in. We also gained the support of local MP Emma Dent-Coad, RBKC's Cllr. Catherine Faulks, Courtfield Cllrs. Greg Hammond and Janet Evans, as well as CWU representative Peter Meech.

ONA met Ken Penton, Post Office Ltd's External Affairs manager, who told us that the lease had come to an end on the property. He would not confirm that the branch was losing money or whether any attempt to negotiate a new lease had been made, but we learnt that Post Office Ltd had been looking for a subpostmaster franchisee since 2016, an implicit acknowledgement for the need of postal services to remain local.

We were later told that the final decision would depend on the consultation's outcome. Although 573 respondents overwhelmingly argued against the branch's closure, highlighting problems with the alternative branches, Post Office Ltd never told us how these responses had been reflected in its decision to proceed with the closure on 31 July 2019.

Post Office Ltd also avoided any direct interaction with the public. No representative attended the public hearing on 27 June or the 'Walk of Shame' (*see below*) on 2 July from the South Kensington Post Office to the Gloucester Road sub postmaster branch. Nor did it respond to our petition that collected 760 signatures in 9 days.

ONA's attempts to get answers about commercial explanations for the closure and any local assessments were repeatedly stonewalled. We learnt in August through a Freedom of Information request that Post Office Ltd must have taken its decision before the 'consultation' had even started. We also learned that the 'extensive desktop' and 'on the ground analysis' Post Office Ltd claimed to have carried out were 'no longer held' and 'not available'.

We are left with the distinct impression that Post Office Ltd, whose stated remit according to Ken Penton is 'to provide a good service and to make a profit,' is more concerned about closing down directly-managed branches and replacing them with a network of subpostmaster branches with low-paid retail workers, than it is with providing said 'good service' with a stable and reliable network.

ONA continues to work to bring the local postal services we had for over 70 years back to our neighbourhood. We are happy to report that our new local MP Felicity Buchan has taken up our cause in the House of Commons within the context of 'Postal Service provision in inner cities'.

A longer version of this article is on ona.org.uk

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Left to right: Susanna Trostdorf, ONA, Kensington MP Emma Dent-Coad, Peter Meech of the Communication Workers Union, and Caryl Harris of the South Kensington & Queen's Gate Residents Association at the Chelsea Town Hall meeting on 27 June 2019.



Participants at the Post Office Walk of Shame on 2 July 2019



SOUTH KENSINGTON STATION:

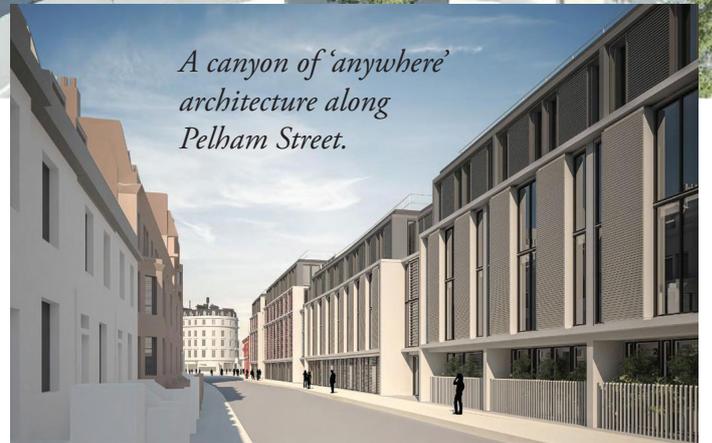
Setbacks in the 'Around Station Development'

by Sophie Andreae,
Chair of the Brompton Association

Local groups are shortly expecting a planning application from Native Land and TfL for what is called the 'Around Station Development' at South Kensington Station. If this application is approved by RBKC, South Kensington will become another Fulham Broadway with massive new development all around it. The low scale and open aspect of South Kensington tube station will be obliterated.

HOW HAS THIS HAPPENED?

After TfL's failure to bulldoze through the Stanhope/Terry Farrell scheme with a 12-storey tower on the Bullnose in the early 2000s, and a second failed attempt to advance a similarly inappropriate large scale development by architects



McAslan and Partners in around 2006, TfL finally sought to work with local amenity and residents' groups.

A Consultative Working Group (CWG) was established by TfL. For two years lengthy meetings took place at which TfL listened and their architects and other professional advisors drew up a scheme in keeping with the character of the Conservation Area. A detailed Development Brief was published in December 2016. Supported by local groups and by RBKC, the Brief formed the basis of TfL's search for a development partner. In 2018, TfL announced its development partner would be developers Native Land, working with architects Rogers Stirk Harbour.

It is crucial to understand that during these two years of consultation, TfL made it clear that improvements to the working of the tube station and expanding its capacity was a separate scheme devised by architects working directly for TfL. Permission was sought and granted by RBKC for these improvements, which include enlargement of the Booking Hall, provision for step-free access and the opening up of the northern platform. It was made abundantly clear then, and it remains the case now, that the improvements to the functionality of the tube station are not dependent financially on the Around Station Development. The former is to be funded directly by TfL. The Around Station Development is

purely a speculative commercial development.

After Native Land's appointment out went the principles of the Development Brief. This Brief had proposed a conservation-led approach that would have seen historic shop fronts restored and reinstated, the terrace in Thurloe Street refurbished, small shop units retained in the arcade and around the bullnose, and the low scale and open aspect of the centre of South Kensington protected. Modest new development was proposed for Pelham Street.

Instead, the scheme now coming forward proposes a four-storey assertive modern tower on the Bullnose, a chasm of development along Pelham Street and a large block across Thurloe Bridge with a blank wall facing onto Grade II* Pelham Place. The architecture around the whole site is in the same 'developers' modern' style. The design is wholly out of keeping with the varied late Georgian and Victorian character of the neighbourhood. It is 'anywhere' architecture.

A small exhibition was held at the end of February over a couple of days at Imperial College so that Native Land and TfL could showcase revised plans prior to the submission

of a full planning application. Glossy images showing an artist's impression of the development combined with all kinds of assertions about the supposed public benefit of this commercial development were designed to persuade visitors this scheme is appropriate. It is not.

After the station was listed in 2005, RBKC indicated it would like to see a conservation-led development respecting the listed buildings and the station's setting in the Conservation Area which comprises many listed buildings. The 2016 Brief outlined the principles such a scheme should follow.

RBKC has sound policies aimed at protecting both Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas in the Borough. What RBKC needs to do when the planning application comes in is to apply its own conservation policies.

Sophie Andrae is Chair of the Brompton Association. She works in the field of historic buildings conservation and, amongst other appointments, has served as a Council Member of the National Trust and a Trustee of Historic Royal Palaces.

A longer version of this article is on ona.org.uk

Estate Management Scheme (EMS)

Some of us will be all too familiar with the EMS because it applies to all properties which were once part of the Wellcome Trust South Kensington Estate but are now enfranchised under the Leasehold Reform Act. The Scheme aims to preserve the character, appearance and upkeep of the buildings concerned so that there is a homogeneous look to the area as if it were still under single ownership. While this is a laudable intent, the delivery is complicated and expensive, including the services of lawyers, surveyors and managing agents.

The charges raised by the EMS fall into two categories: the Management Charge and the Garden Charge. Under the rules, the former is levied on all lessees while the latter is levied on the block freeholding companies which then charge individual lessees in their block.

ONA is a member of the EMS Consultative Committee as the designated Amenity Group. While the Scheme makes clear that our role is to 'act as a consultative unpaid voluntary part of the Area Consultative Committee only', we have now secured for the first time since the EMS was established in 1998, attendance at meetings of Wellcome's executive responsible for the Estate. We have also applied pressure on Wellcome to pursue overdue payments.

This has resulted in Wellcome writing-off a substantial sum. In the future and in order to reduce bad debts, consideration is being given to providing an information pack to all those liable to pay the charge and to prioritise the debts which are the longest standing.

We will continue our efforts to minimise 'free-riders' who only increase the cost for others and to look for other ways in which the costs of the Scheme can be reduced. If anyone has any query or suggestion regarding the EMS, contact us on onslowna@gmail.com.

ONA Planning Update

by Trish Walker Allmond

ONA continues to work closely with our local Resident Associations (RAs) partners who have a planning brief, together with South Kensington Estates and Wellcome Trust, to enable outcomes that enhance our area.

INLINK/TELEPHONE STRUCTURES:

The plethora of applications for InLink/telephone structures and LED advertising panels were mostly defeated, including one outside the South Kensington Station. Without our joint vigilance and objections, the area would be inundated with this unnecessary street clutter.

PARKING:

ONA at your behest led the RBKC parking consultations, championed by our councillors. RBKC is supporting increased resident permit parking controls on Saturday afternoons and all day Sunday, providing residents with improved parking access near their homes. ONA is trying to ensure that these changes will not include the loss of many resident parking bays. View the decision section in this link: www.rbkc.gov.uk/howwe govern/keydecisions/decision.aspx? DecisionID=5565

ST PAUL'S ONSLOW SQUARE:

Last summer, it became clear from the presence of skips and construction machinery that there were ongoing substantial works at St Paul's Onslow Square. Concerned members contacted ONA to find out what was going on. After multiple enquiries to Holy Trinity Brompton (which operates St Paul's) the Church of England and RBKC, we learnt that these works were to excavate and build fourteen new toilets in the crypt.

Many will recollect that before 2015, St Paul's plans were in the RBKC public planning domain. Plans to excavate under the footprint of the church were heavily objected to by residents, ONA, and other RAs and rejected by RBKC.

However, since 2016, St Paul's has undertaken their works via an Ecclesiastical Exemption with a Faculty granted by the CoE. There is no public CoE domain to view these applications and St Paul's and HTB ceased to communicate after 2015 with any of the local RAs that have a planning remit.

ONA led a request, supported by our partner RAs and



Just what we don't need: more giant ad panels flogging e-cigarettes

councillors, to open up the transparency of the EE process. We organised a meeting with HTB and local stakeholders in January. A public meeting with an EE expert is now in the process of being organised by the RBKC and councillors. We will keep you updated at the AGM and through the ONA website.

AIRBNB:

Short lets (as through Airbnb) are increasing in the ONA area. Many leases disallow this. Savills and Wellcome Trust are proactively working on this issue. Short lets cause serious problems related to drugs, prostitution, burglaries and noise and rubbish pollution. If you see any of this – report it to ONA.

HMO CONVERSIONS:

Two separate major applications for HMO (Houses in Multiple Occupancy) conversions in Foulis Terrace have brought the ONA community together to ensure developments are discussed and commented on when appropriate.

WELLCOME TRUST:

The Wellcome Trust is discussing with the RAs potential new schemes for the eastern end of Pelham Street.

AIR CONDITIONING UNITS:

We have requested RBKC to consider developing planning guidelines for these units which are on the increase and can be noisy and unsightly.

CCTV:

Savills are currently undertaking surveys regarding installing more CCTV cameras in the general area. Our area gardens are frequently 'abused' and there are escalating problems with intruders, drugs and rubbish, as well as tree and plant destruction.

Vigilance is essential to ensure our historic neighbourhood is appropriately protected from developers, events and opportunist organisations. Working together has proven to be extremely effective – we thank our fellow RAs, councillors, Wellcome Trust and SKE for their enduring partnership. Email onslowna@gmail.com if you'd like to join our team.

Trish Walker Allmond has five decades' experience in the cultural creative industries, as a senior partner, research writer, and speaker.

Dogs of the ONA

*If you see these dogs on our streets, feel free to say hello to their humans!
Ask them about the Onslow Neighbourhood Association.*

*Name: Tiny
Age: 2 & a half
Breed: Long haired
Chihuahua
Likes: Snuggling
Dislikes: Wet feet*



*Name: Mouse
Age: 9
Breed: Welsh terrier
Likes: Banana
Dislikes: Skateboards*



*Name: Gromit
Age: 2
Breed: Goodness Knows
Likes:
Net Curtain Twitching
Dislikes: Crowds*



*Name: Scout
Age: 15
Breed: Havanese
Likes: Napping
Dislikes: The rain*



HOT TIP: *Our local police officers tell us that dogs are one of the most effective burglar deterrents.*

Crime and non-punishment

A look at the recent crime statistics in RBKC on the Met Police website does not make for cheerful reading. The number of residential burglaries in RBKC declined slightly from fiscal year 17/18 to 18/19, from 1,397 to 1,280, but the sanction detection rate – the percentage of recorded offences that result in some form of sanction against a suspect – declined even further, from 3.51 percent to 3 percent.

In all categories of crime in the RBKC, the sanction detection rate fell from 15 percent to 9.5 percent.

It was unsettling to note that one category of crime on the rise in RBKC is robbery (muggings with use of or threat of violence) – up from 673 to 721 reported. There too, the sanction detection rate declined from 5.2 percent to 3.3 percent.

The new Conservative government has promised to hire 20,000 new officers, but this will barely bring police levels up to 2010 pre-austerity levels. Nor will it happen overnight – this target is spread over three years. The candidates for Mayor for London have different approaches to crime and we should consider them carefully when making our choice in 2021.

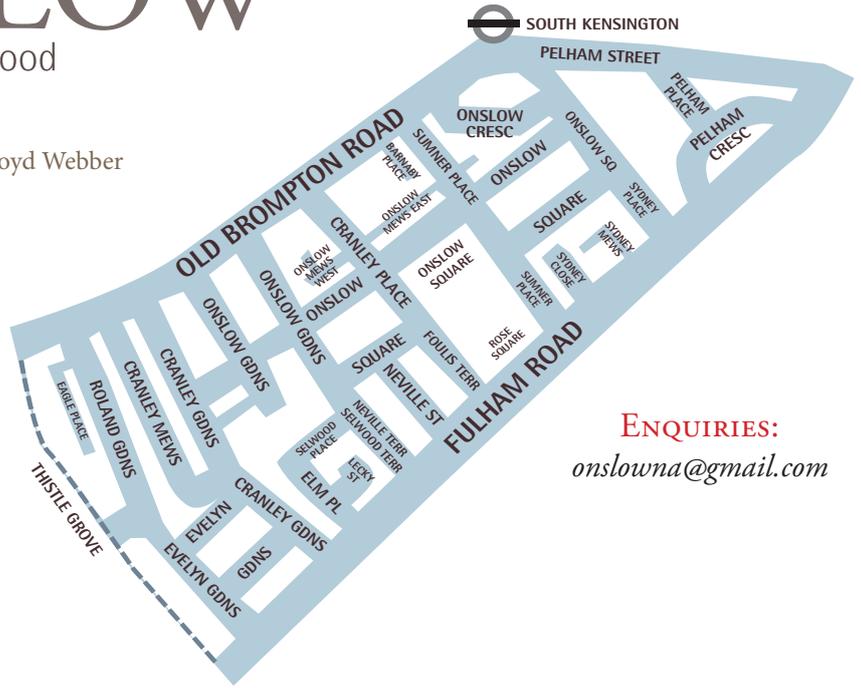
ONA continues to meet with Courtfield Ward officers. One suggestion they have is to sign up for Next Door South Kensington online: <https://nextdoor.co.uk/agency-city/england/kensington-chelsea/> Officers regularly post tips on keeping yourself and your property safe, as well as opportunities to sign up for Smart Water. Locals post information about various scams to watch out for. You can also find out when suspects are apprehended.



ONSLOW

Neighbourhood Association

President Julian Lloyd Webber



The ONA 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 (see map). We keep in touch with this annual newsletter and regular email updates. We host the only garden party permitted in Onslow Square – a unique opportunity to meet your neighbours, councillors and representatives of other local associations. Household membership is only £15 a year.

ENQUIRIES:
onslowna@gmail.com

The objectives of the ONA are:

- To encourage high standards of architecture and town planning
- To stimulate 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 steps to protect and advance the interests of persons living within the neighbourhood

Join us!

1 Make your online payment of £15 to our bank account:
 Account name: Onslow Neighbourhood Association
 Account number: 61011723
 Sort code: 40-05-14
 Reference = your name

2 Set up a Standing Order for the payment of your annual membership fee on or before 5th January every year

3 Fill in and sign the form below and post to Susanna Trostdorf, ONA Hon Treasurer



I would like to join the ONA and I have paid my subscription fee of £15 into the ONA bank account

Your name

Home address

Email

Phone number (home/mobile)

By signing this form, you are confirming that you are consenting to ONA holding and processing your personal data in order to keep you informed about news, events and activities and to manage your membership and your annual subscription. ONA will never share your information with a third party.

I consent to ONA contacting me by post email telephone

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate. Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer. In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick this box:

Yes, I want the Onslow Neighbourhood Association to claim Gift Aid on my donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

giftaid it

Please notify the charity if you:

want to cancel this declaration; change your name or home address; no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

PLEASE COMPLETE & SIGN THIS FORM & SEND TO:

Signature date ____ / ____ / ____

Susanna Trostdorf, Hon Treasurer, ONA, 10 Roland Gardens, London SW7 3PH

ONA is a Registered Charity. Charity Number: 264 296





ONA HELD ITS FIRST CHRISTMAS DRINKS PARTY on Wednesday 4 December, hosted generously by Cadogan Contemporary Gallery on the Old Brompton Road – a chance for members, neighbours and some of our representatives to meet up in the winter months.



The ONA Garden Party



Once again the weather gods cooperated to make ONA's Garden Party a success last June 26, and ONA members and friends turned out in force to enjoy food from Comptoir Libanais and music from a talented quartet from the Royal Academy of Music Junior Program. Door prizes were handed out by Councillor Quentin Marshall. ONA thanks the members who put the event together.

It is unlikely at press time that the 2020 Garden Party, scheduled for Thursday 25 June, will take place. However, if the situation changes, all members will receive printed invitations, and anyone can check for updates on ona.org.uk or by email: ona.gardenparty@gmail.com.



A quartet from the Royal Academy of Music Junior Program: Paloma Bharucha, violin, Hugo Khuu, violin, Jaren Ziegler, viola, Harry Scott-Burt, cello.



useful contacts

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

STREETLINE 020 7361 3001

www.rbkc.gov.uk/global/report-it/waste-and-street-environment

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

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH 020 7361 3002

www.rbkc.gov.uk/global/report-it/noise-or-nuisance

email: environmentalhealth@rbkc.gov.uk

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

MET POLICE 101 or

www.met.police.uk and click on **REPORT**

Call 999 to report an emergency

Would you like to contribute to this newsletter or the ONA website?

Please email the editor Laura Mosedale
lpmosedale@me.com

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