

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

photo: © Simon Fowler licensed to EMI Classics

Julian Lloyd Webber, our President, *writes*



As I write, it is just over a year since the start of the first lockdown and our streets have been eerily empty and quiet for much of that time. As we begin to see a glimmer of light at the end of this long, dark tunnel, we must give our thanks to all the essential workers who have kept us going and supported us throughout this exceptionally difficult time.

Covid-19 has changed the world as we knew it and there is a danger that it has preoccupied our thoughts to the extent that we could have missed out on some crucial proposed changes to this neighbourhood that certain 'interested parties' would love to push through unnoticed. South Kensington itself faces an unprecedented challenge to its historic and unique character. Not only are TfL and Native Land intent on destroying much of the old-world charm of Thurloe Street but also the iconic Bullnose too. They have plans to re-build the Bullnose with a 5-storey pastiche of the original and build a long row of faceless office blocks on Pelham Street as well as a new block on Thurloe Bridge.

It is not a case of the ONA – or any of our other neighbourhood association friends – being against any kind of development. I, for one, am sick and tired of looking at that ugly brick wall which has disfigured Pelham Street for decades, especially as I am old enough to remember the lovely row of useful little shops and restaurants that used to be there. It is disgraceful that this site has taken so long to redevelop. Ironically, had TfL and its various co-partners been less greedy with their many submissions of out-of-

scale plans and submitted a blueprint that gave South Kensington the respect it merits, they could have been reaping the financial rewards for years.

As if the station plans weren't bad enough on their own, the Wellcome Trust has applied to demolish the large, historic office block, 63-81 Pelham Street, near Brompton Cross and rebuild it at more than twice the size as well as renovating and enlarging the old garages at 40 Pelham Street.

The Association is in favour of proportionate developments which respect both the architecture and character of the area. These insulting schemes do neither and this historic, world-renowned, district of London

deserves considerably better. Please do support the Association in any way you can so that we can defeat these plans and safeguard the unique character of South Kensington for future generations.



I always end by thanking the Committee, Charles, Laura and Susanna, for their dedication and, while they are willing to continue working on your behalf, we do urgently need new blood. If you have any spare time and would like to get more involved, please email onslowna@gmail.com.

Editor's Note: to object to these schemes, go to the RBKC planning website – the **Around Station** application reference nos. are **PP/20/03216** and **LB/20/0317**; the **40 Pelham Street** application reference no. is **PP/21/00457**; the **63-81 Pelham Street** application reference no. is **PP/21/00471**

image courtesy of: www.saveoursouthkensington.com/copy-of-pelham-street

ONA AGM 2021

Following the delayed ONA Annual General Meeting last December, our 2021 AGM will take place, once again via Zoom, on Thursday 13 May at 6:30pm.

We will send out the Zoom link a week ahead of the meeting and it will also be posted on our website: ona.org.uk

Feel free to invite a neighbour!



In and around South Kensington Station

A brief history of a loved, low-scale landmark *by* Sophie Andreae

Historic image of South Kensington Station taken shortly before WWI. The low scale of the station was as evident then as it is today



Edwardian postcard celebrating the opening of the Piccadilly Line as a means of visiting some of the great monuments of Albertopolis – the former Imperial Institute (now the site of Imperial College, the Albert Hall and the Albert Memorial)

At time of publication, it looks as though the revised TfL/Native Land planning application to redevelop the area around South Kensington Station (SKS) will go to RBKC's Planning Committee on Monday 10 May. Minor amendments to the original Rogers Stirk Harbour scheme were submitted in January, but these represent mere tinkering with a development proposal which has generated massive local opposition.

What is so special about South Kensington Station that has caused over 2,000 individuals to log objections to the proposed redevelopment? The short answer is that the station itself is a much-loved local landmark. The low scale of the Station, Arcade and attached Bullnose and the open airy nature of the platforms with their attractive canopies make this particular station pleasant to use. It has a real sense of place. But the station is also of considerable architectural and historic importance.

Of course, the Station itself gets crowded and needs lifts to all three lines, but permission was granted in 2018 for TfL's capacity upgrade and it is perfectly obvious that lifts can be provided – as happened in Earls Court, for example – without the need to build massive new buildings all around the site and swamp the listed buildings.

Since the removal of the ugly and dangerous one-way traffic gyratory system around the station in 2012, the creation of the piazza south of the Arcade and the pedestrianisation of Thurloe Street to the north has created a highly attractive public realm which is human in scale and people-friendly. Whilst taller buildings surround and frame the Station complex, it is the low scale at the heart of the Conservation Area which gives South Kensington its village quality.

It is easy to forget South Kensington Station is highly

significant historically. This is because TfL has, since the 1970s, seen the site as a development opportunity, with the result that this significance has been deliberately underplayed, even ignored. The creation of South Kensington Station needs to be seen in the context of Prince Albert's bold vision for the area, which began in 1851 with the Great Exhibition.

The construction of the Metropolitan Underground line in 1863, which linked the major Victorian railway termini from Paddington to Kings Cross, was the first underground railway in the world. In 1868, the line was extended from Paddington to South Kensington to serve what was to become known as 'Albertopolis'. The Great Exhibition of 1851, which the Prince Consort oversaw, had been a massive success, and the profits allowed the 1851 Commission, with his support, to acquire land, then largely market gardens, between Hyde Park and the Cromwell Road. Another huge exhibition, the International Exhibition, took place on the site of what was to become the Natural History Museum in 1862. Six million people attended.

The site was gradually developed with the world class museums and institutions we know today. Prince Albert died in 1861, but his astonishing vision was commemorated with the construction of the Albert Hall in 1867. The Albert Memorial was unveiled in 1872.

Originally conceived as a terminus to serve the emerging Albertopolis, what was to become the Circle Line was extended eastwards to Tower Hill and completed in 1884. The west elevation of the original Italianate 1868 Booking Hall at South Kensington survives, hidden by the present Edwardian Bullnose shops. In 1903, shortly before these were constructed, George Sherrin designed the first station-



Aerial view of the Bullnose; arrow indicates the original Italianate west wall of the 1868 Booking Hall, retained by George Sherrin in his design for the Arcade (below)



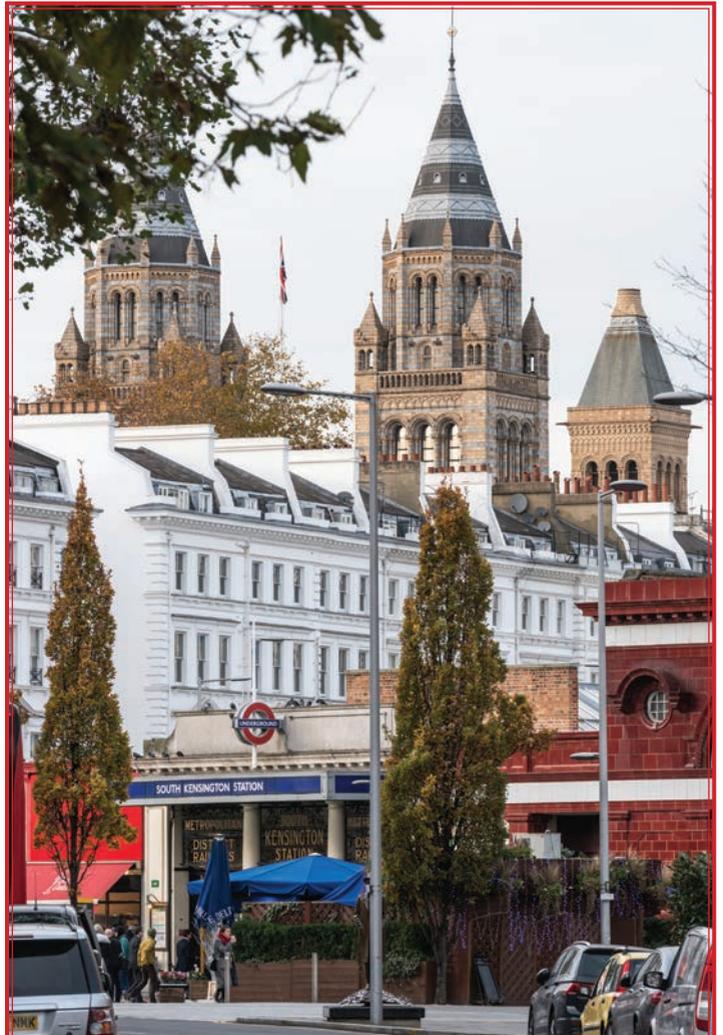
photos: Alex Ramsay

based shopping arcade in the world when he reconfigured the original station, relocating the Booking Hall to the lower level. In 1906, the station was again extended with the construction of the Piccadilly Line with its own classic oxblood-coloured glazed tiled building by the architect Leslie Green. This added further to the architectural quality of the overall ensemble of the Station complex.

Sadly, alterations to the Station buildings since the 1970s have been piecemeal, reactive and to the detriment of the Station's architectural quality. The original elegant, curved ticket office was removed and Leslie Green's iconic building became just storage and service spaces, the lift shafts disused. Original bronze detailed historic shop fronts in the arcade and around the Bullnose were replaced with poorly designed and discordant modern fascias, although sufficient original detail survives within the Arcade for these to be reinstated. Historic photographs of the Bullnose give clear evidence of how the Bullnose shop fronts should look.

Native Land, TfL and Rogers Stirk Harbour regard the historic Station buildings as 'an anomaly' and consider that their scheme will 'enhance' the townscape by bringing buildings on the Station site – apart from the Station and Arcade – up to the height of surrounding buildings. This levelling up entirely misses the point: what is important about South Kensington Station is its historic and architectural integrity, and the vital contribution these make to the townscape and immediate public realm precisely because the Station complex is low in scale.

Sophie Andreae 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.



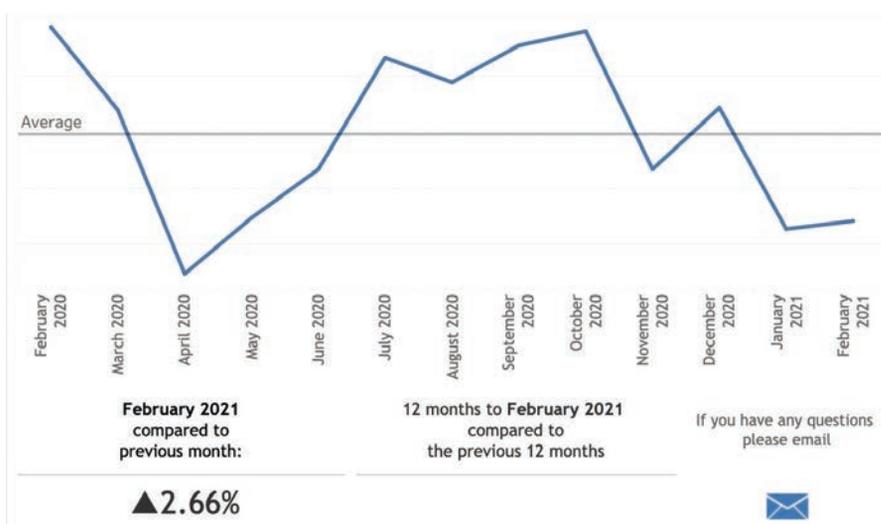
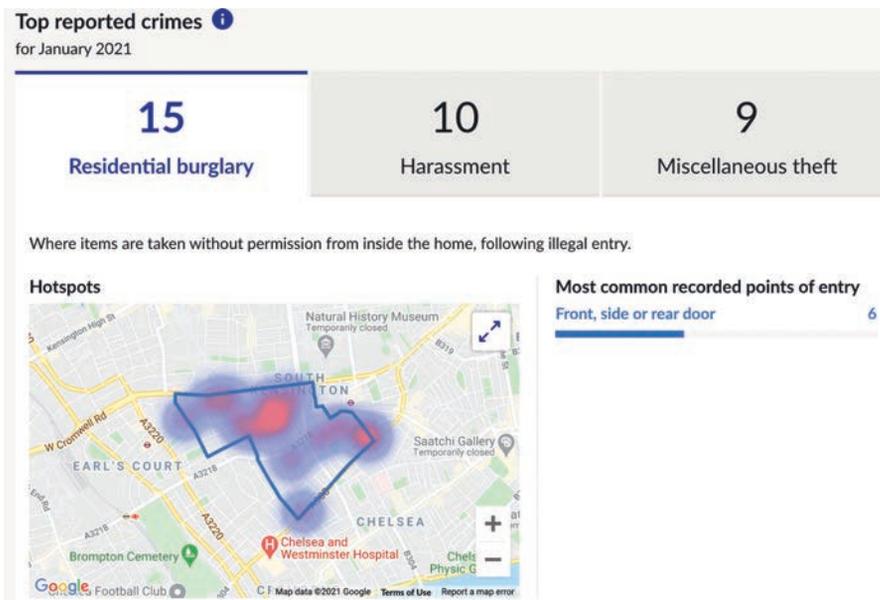
There is still time to get your objections to the planning application and Listed Building Consent application into the RBKC Council via their planning website. Please use the reference numbers PP/20/03216 and LB LB/20/0317.

Please don't delay

Editor's Note: If you have questions about the Around Station Development or Station Capacity Upgrade, please email Susanna Trostdorf at onslowna@gmail.com

POLICE REPORT 2020/21

A silver lining of the Covid epidemic was a significant drop in crime across London. In Courtfield Ward, for example, incidents of anti-social behaviour, burglary, violence and sexual assault and vehicle crime dipped from 172 in February 2020 to 103 in May, and 99 in August. In January 2021, there were 133 incidents. In meetings with local resident associations, Courtfield Ward Police Constable Braam Nortje noted that declines in crime were a direct result of fewer people on the streets and more people at home 24/7. As lockdowns ease and crime rates creep up again, he advises residents to consult www.met.police.uk for information on crime in our area and preventative measures. His perennial advice:



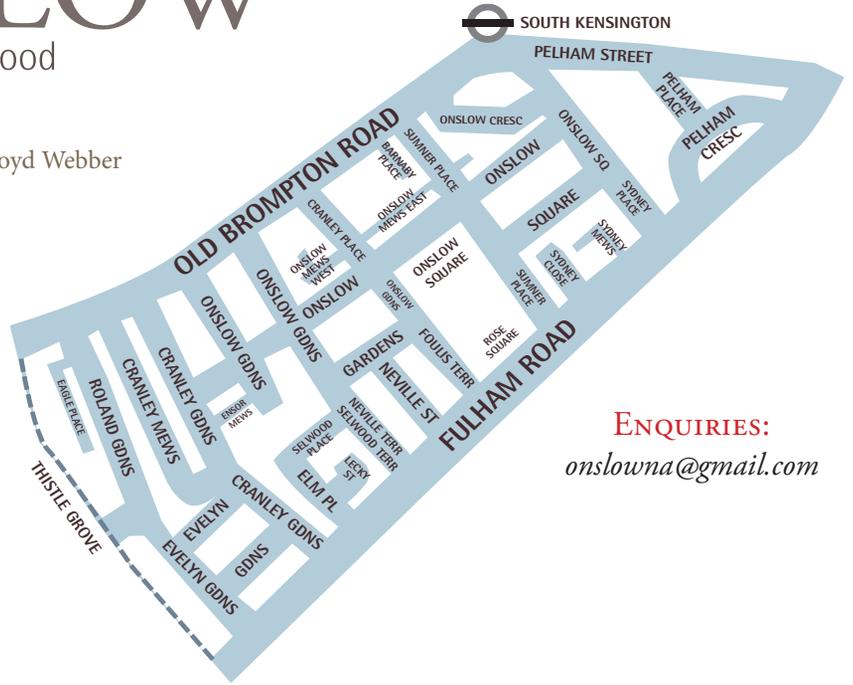
“Never keep any valuables in your car, even for a few minutes; always make sure front, side and rear doors are double-locked in your homes, as these remain the most common points of entry for burglars, and never open to the door to people you don't know or expect.”



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.

Signature date ____ / ____ / ____

PLEASE COMPLETE & SIGN THIS FORM & SEND TO:



Susanna Trostdorf, Hon Treasurer, ONA, c/o 59 Onslow Square, London SW7 3LR

ONA is a Registered Charity. Charity Number: 264 296

ONA Garden Party / Summer Concert 2021

Given continued uncertainty around Covid levels and potential risks to our members, ONA will not hold its traditional ticketed garden party this year. Instead, we are in the process of arranging an open-air musical evening, the same as last year, where it is possible to socially distance. The event is scheduled for Friday 2 July and further details will be provided by email and on our website: ona.org.uk. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible there.



Musical Evening in Onslow Square on 9 July 2020



photo: Lucy Ward



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](mailto:Laura.Mosedale@me.com)
lpmosedale@me.com

ONA President

Julian Lloyd Webber

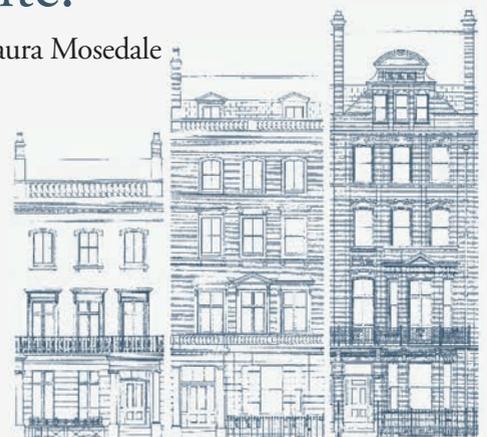
ONA Trustees Charles

Lawton, Laura Mosedale

Susanna Trostdorf

Subscription: £15 per year

ONA is a Registered Charity
No: 264 296



Puppy Appeal

ONA mascot dog Tiny Ohan helped raise close to £30,000 last October for the Poppy Appeal, despite the fact that the shutdown cut short the usual two-week fundraising period. If you would like to participate in future Poppy Appeals, please email Isabella Ohan – isabellaohan@yahoo.ca. *Volunteers are always needed!*