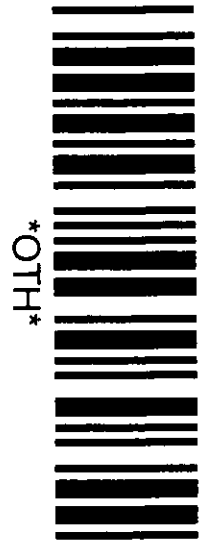


ROYAL BOROUGH  
OF  
KENSINGTON & CHELSEA

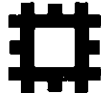
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(obj)

Mr Robert Wallace  
Debenham House  
8 Addison Road  
Holland Park  
LONDON  
W14 8DJ

Direct line: 020 7973 3471

Direct fax: 020 7973 3792

2 May 2002

Dear Mr Wallace

**DEBENHAM HOUSE – GRADE I LISTED**

Sir Neil Cossons asks me to thank you for your letter of 19 April and to reply on his behalf. Thank you for sending the very full documentation. You write specifically requesting opinion on the planning condition imposed by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea requiring public access to No. 8 Addison Road by prior written agreement. I am sure you will understand that I would not want to make a general comment on access conditions when buildings change their use; each case will depend on its own merits and must be considered against Government advice on appropriate conditions as set out in Circular 11/95. I note that you have sought Counsel's opinion on the issue and that the advice is unequivocal in its conclusion that the condition is inappropriate. I am reluctant to add an opinion to such clear legal advice and to what is essentially a planning matter between you and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

You will be aware that English Heritage is generally committed to widening public access and this is a condition of most grants that we offer. I am of course aware that you do welcome visitors (for example through the Victorian Society) to this wonderful Halsey Ricardo building.

Yours sincerely

NA

NICHOLAS ANTRAM  
Assistant Regional Director  
Kensington and South London Team, London Region

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**PLANNING AND CONSERVATION**

THE TOWN HALL HORNTON STREET LONDON W8 7NX

Executive Director M J FRENCH FRICS Dip TP MRTPI Cert TS

Mr. Robert Wallace,  
Debenham House,  
8 Addison Road,  
LONDON, W14 8DJ.

Switchboard: 020 7937 5464  
Extension: 2944  
Direct Line: 020 7361-2944  
Facsimile: 020 7361 3463  
Web: [www.rbkc.gov.uk](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk)

18 July 2002

CS.  
**THE ROYAL  
BOROUGH OF**



**KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA**

My reference: EDPC/MJF

Your reference:

Please ask for: Mr. French

Dear Mr. Wallace,

**Debenham House, 8 Addison Road, W.14.**

Thank you for your letter of 12 July to which you attached relevant correspondence. I am greatly heartened by your response to the De Morgan Centre, and I will ensure that their support for your current application to remove the access condition is reported to Committee before any decision is taken.

Yours sincerely,

M. J. French,  
Executive Director, Planning and Conservation.

Your Ref:  
My Ref: TM/M/RP/DH/CD14

Debenham House  
8 Addison Road  
London W14 8DJ  
Tel: 020 7371 6655  
Fax: 020 7371 2233  
Mobile: 07771 935653

GS

Copy to  
113

MJ French Esq FRICS Dip TP MRTP  
Executive Director  
Planning and Conservation  
The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea  
The Town Hall, Hornton Street  
LONDON W8 7NX

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22nd July 2002

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86  
Letter 13<sup>th</sup> Aug?

Dear Mr French

**Re: Debenham House, 8 Addison Road, London W14 8DJ**  
**Your Reference: PP/99/00231/CUSE/32/2136 – Permission granted 5<sup>th</sup> November 1999**

I am not sure why I need to write to you a third time to ask you to respond to a perfectly simple question. You may detect a certain note of irritation in this correspondence. I attach copies of the two previous letters relating to the determination date of our planning application for the removal of Clause 14. If we find you do not determine the application within the eight weeks, we will begin the appeal process on the morning following expiry of the eight week period and this correspondence will of course be placed before the appeals inspector.

On a more conciliatory note will you please be kind enough to respond to my letters and I hope your deliberations are going well.

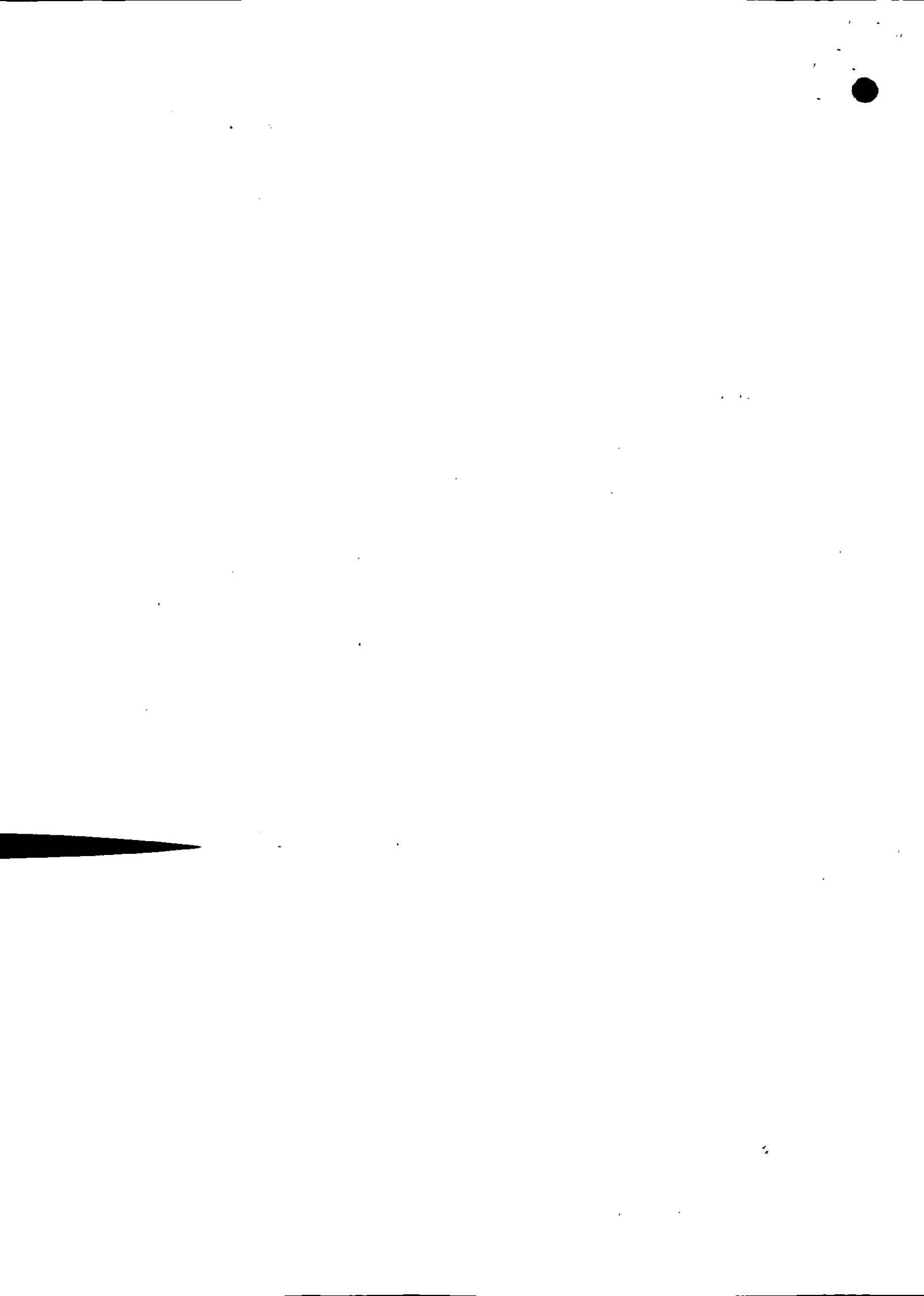
Yours sincerely

*Robert Wallace*

Robert Wallace

We are aiming for 13th.  
Gavin has spoken to Mr Wallace on the phone  
to confirm this.

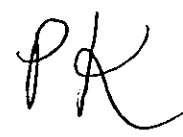
Paul,  
25/7



# PLANNING AND CONSERVATION

THE TOWN HALL HORNTON STREET LONDON W8 7NX

Executive Director M J FRENCH FRICS Dip TP MRTPI Cert TS



Mr. Robert Wallace,  
Debenham House,  
8 Addison Road,  
LONDON, W14 8DJ.

Switchboard: 020 7937 5464  
Extension: 2944  
Direct Line: 020 7361-2944  
Facsimile: 020 7361 3463  
Web: [www.rbkc.gov.uk](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk)

26 July 2002

My reference: EDPC/MJF/PP/ 99/0231      Your reference:

Please ask for: Mr. French

Dear Mr. Wallace,

**Debenham House, 8 Addison Road, W.14.**

Thank you for your letter of 22 July together with the attachments. I would confirm that your application will be considered by the Planning Services Committee on 13 August as it is not a matter which could be properly delegated. I will write further following the Committee's decision.

Yours sincerely,

M. J. French,  
Executive Director, Planning and Conservation.

Your Ref: EDPC/MJF/PP/99/0231  
My Ref: TM/M/RP/DH/CD14

Frank CS

Debenham House  
8 Addison Road  
London W14 8DJ  
Tel: 020 7371 6655  
Fax: 020 7371 2233  
Mobile: 07771 935653

30th July 2002

MJ French Esq FRICS Dip TP MRTPI Cert TS  
Executive Director  
Planning and Conservation  
The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea  
The Town Hall, Hornton Street  
**LONDON W8 7NX**

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Dear Mr French

**Re: Debenham House, 8 Addison Road, London W14 8DJ**  
**Your Reference: PP/99/00231/CUSE/32/2136 – Permission granted 5<sup>th</sup> November 1999.**

Thank you for your letter of the 26<sup>th</sup> July and I note that the planning application is to come to Committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> August. I entirely agree that full committee is the correct forum at which to hear this matter.

You will not be aware that I am disabled wearing two hearing aids. Could you under these circumstances reserve for me a chair near the Committee table so that I may hear. I never usually attend meetings when my business is being discussed, but will on this occasion as it affects my home.

I should like Timothy McDermott, my solicitor, to speak on my behalf. Accordingly, could we possibly be an early piece of business on that evening. I am not sure who, if anybody, will speak against me or, indeed, if I am allowed to be represented if there is no objector in person, but I hope I can be.

We would like to inspect the Council file on the 8<sup>th</sup> August at noon. Can you confirm that it will be available for inspection.

We would like to inspect the reporting Officer's write-up on the application at the same time. Can you in the meantime advise us of the Council Officer's recommendation.

Yours sincerely

**Robert Wallace**

# PLANNING AND CONSERVATION

THE TOWN HALL HORNTON STREET LONDON W8 7NX

Executive Director M J FRENCH FRICS Dip TP MRTPI Cert TS

THE ROYAL  
BOROUGH OF



KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

THE OCCUPIER  
86 WOODSFORD SQUARE  
KENSINGTON  
W14

020-7937-5464

Switchboard 02079/ 2080

Extension: 020-7361 - 2079/ 2080

Direct Line:

Facsimile 020-7361-3463

Date: 31 July 2002

My reference:

My Ref: DPS/DCC/PP/02/01352/GS

Your reference:

Please ask for:

Planning Information Office

Dear Sir/Madam,

## TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

**Proposed development at: Debenham House, 8 Addison Road, London, W14 8DJ**

Brief details of the proposed development are set out below. Members of the public may inspect copies of the application, the plans and any other documents submitted with it. The Council's Planning Services Committee, in considering the proposal, welcomes comments either for or against the scheme. Anyone who wishes to make representations about the application should write to the Council at the above address **within 21 days** of the date of this letter. Please telephone should you require further information.

### Proposal for which permission is sought

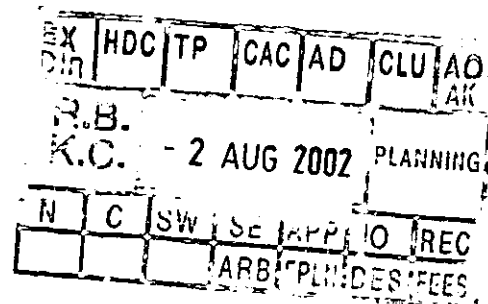
Application seeks the removal of Condition No. 14 attached to planning permission dated 05/11/1999 (Ref. PP/99/00231). Condition No. 14 states "Access to the premises shall be provided to bona fide students and others by prior written agreement with the owners of No. 8 Addison Road." Reason behind the imposition of the Condition is to ensure that the special historic and architectural quality of the Grade I Listed property can be properly appreciated by means of reasonable agreement with the property owners.

**Applicant Mannerton, Debenham House, 8 Addison Road, London W14 8DJ**

Yours faithfully

M. J. FRENCH

Executive Director, Planning and Conservation

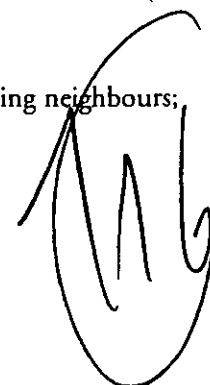




## WHAT MATTERS CAN BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

When dealing with a planning application the Council has to consider the policies of the Borough Plan, known as the Unitary Development Plan, and any other material considerations. The most common of these include (not necessarily in order of importance):

- The scale and appearance of the proposal and impact upon the surrounding area or adjoining neighbours;
- Effect upon the character or appearance of a Conservation Area;
- Effect upon the special historic interest of a Listed Building, or its setting;
- Effect upon traffic, access, and parking;
- Amenity issues such as loss of Sunlight or daylight, Overlooking and loss of privacy, Noise and disturbance resulting from a use, Hours of operation.



## WHAT MATTERS CANNOT BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

Often people may wish to object on grounds that, unfortunately, cannot be taken into account because they are not controlled by Planning Legislation. These include (again not in any order of importance):

- Loss of property value;
- Private issues between neighbours such as land covenants, party walls, land and boundary disputes, damage to property;
- Problems associated with construction such as noise, dust, or vehicles (If you experience these problems Environmental Services have some control and you should contact them direct);
- Smells (Also covered by Environmental Services);
- Competition between firms;
- Structural and fire precaution concerns; (These are Building Control matters).

## WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR LETTER

All letters of objection are taken into account when an application is considered. Revised drawings may be received during the consideration of the case and normally you will be informed and given 14 days for further response. Generally planning applications where 3 or more objections have been received are presented to the Planning Services Committee which is made up of elected Ward Councillors. Planning Officers write a report to the Committee with a recommendation as to whether the application should be granted or refused. Letters received are summarised in the report, and copies can be seen by Councillors and members of the public, including the applicant. The Councillors make the decisions and are not bound by the Planning Officer's recommendation. All meetings of the Committee are open to the public.

**If you would like further information, about the application itself or when it is likely to be decided, please contact the Planning Department on the telephone number overleaf.**

## WHERE TO SEE THE PLANS

Details of the application can be seen at the **Planning Information Office, 3rd floor, Town Hall, Hornton Street W.8.** It is open from 9am to 4.45pm Mondays to Thursdays (4pm Fridays). A Planning Officer will always be there to assist you.

In addition, copies of applications in the Chelsea Area (SW1, SW3, SW10) can be seen at **The Reference Library, Chelsea Old Town Hall, Kings Road SW3 (020 7361 4158)**, for the Central Area (W8, W14, SW5, SW7) can be viewed in the **Central Library, Town Hall, Hornton Street, W.8.** and applications for districts W10, W11 and W2 in the North of the Borough can be seen at **The Information Centre, North Kensington Library, 108 Ladbrooke Grove, London W11 (under the Westway near Ladbrooke Grove Station 020 7727-6583).** Please telephone to check the opening times of these offices.

If you are a registered disabled person, it may be possible for an Officer to come to your home with the plans. Please contact the Planning Department and ask to speak to the Case Officer for the application.

***PLEASE QUOTE THE APPLICATION REFERENCE NUMBER ON YOUR REPLY***

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John Betjeman wrote,

*"No detail of the house is skimped. All the rooms are well proportioned and the plan around a domed and galleried central hall is clear and practical. The woodwork of the library, the De Morgan tiled fireplaces, the panelling, the electrical light switches, the tiled bathrooms and huge kitchens, mouldings and proportions everywhere make it one of the most distinguished and cheerful and thoughtfully coloured interiors in England."*



**Lustre Bathroom Tile**

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# PEACOCK HOUSE

This fine Edwardian house was built by the architect Halsey Ricardo for Sir Ernest Debenham of Debenham & Freebodys, proprietors of London's first department store. It contains many tiles by William De Morgan who was in partnership with Halsey Ricardo at the time, and features a mosaic dome designed by Gaetano Meo. While Halsey Ricardo built few houses, he was at the time at the forefront of a movement to brighten up London. Sir Ernest previously lived in another Halsey Ricardo house between Holland Park and Kensington High Street. The story goes that he commissioned Peacock House for his wife and wouldn't let her see it until it was completed. When she first saw it she was reputedly horrified.

Despite this the Debenham family lived at Peacock House until the start of the second World War. It was then taken over by the army but one of the grandsons retained a flat on the top floor for a short time. After the war, the Debenhams never returned to the house and it was taken over by a school for dance teachers. After the dance school moved out the house was empty for 3 years. The Richmond Fellowship became leaseholders in 1966. Unfortunately, over the previous 20 years the house had become a little dilapidated but a team of dedicated volunteers from the United Nations helped the Richmond Fellowship with their restoration programme.

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An article in the Architectural Review of March 1907 contained the following description of Halsey Ricardo's aims:

*"The House possesses a peculiar interest for the architect..... not merely as an example of modern domestic work by a well known artist..... not for the curiosity which the public press has manifested in its uncommon appearance, but for the two definite aims which its designer, Mr Halsey Ricardo, has attempted to fulfil in it..... Briefly, it represents firstly an effort to erect a house immune from the seriously destructive effects of a city atmosphere, and secondly the initiation of an architecture to be expressed in definite terms of colour."*

The article goes on to explain that glazed tiles were chosen because they allowed

*"attractive harmonies of colour" and "the finger of time leaves (them) obstinate and unaffected."*

Furthermore,

*"the city dirt has only a precarious lodgement on the glazed surfaces, so that both wind and rain help to keep the house clean, and the rain falls as swiftly off the building as it does off a garden."*

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## Exterior

The building is unified by a wealth of contrived proportions and the exuberance of its colouring. The basement podium is blue-grey in colour with glazed facing bricks. All the semi-vitrified glazing bricks used on the elevations are Staffordshire Bricks supplied by Burmantofts. The middle section is faced with blue-green semi-vitrified glazing bricks to reflect the surrounding foliage, enclosed by columns and arches of cream opaque glazed bricks made by Doulton and known as Carraraware due to their similarity to the marble from the Carrara district of Italy. The walls of the attic storey are faced with blue glazed bricks to reflect the sky.

## Entrance

The entrance at the side of the building is approached through a long covered way, open on one side and richly decorated on the other with De Morgan tiles. Many of the De Morgan tiles throughout the house depict peacocks and flowers, hence Number 8, originally known as Debenham House, is now generally known as Peacock House.

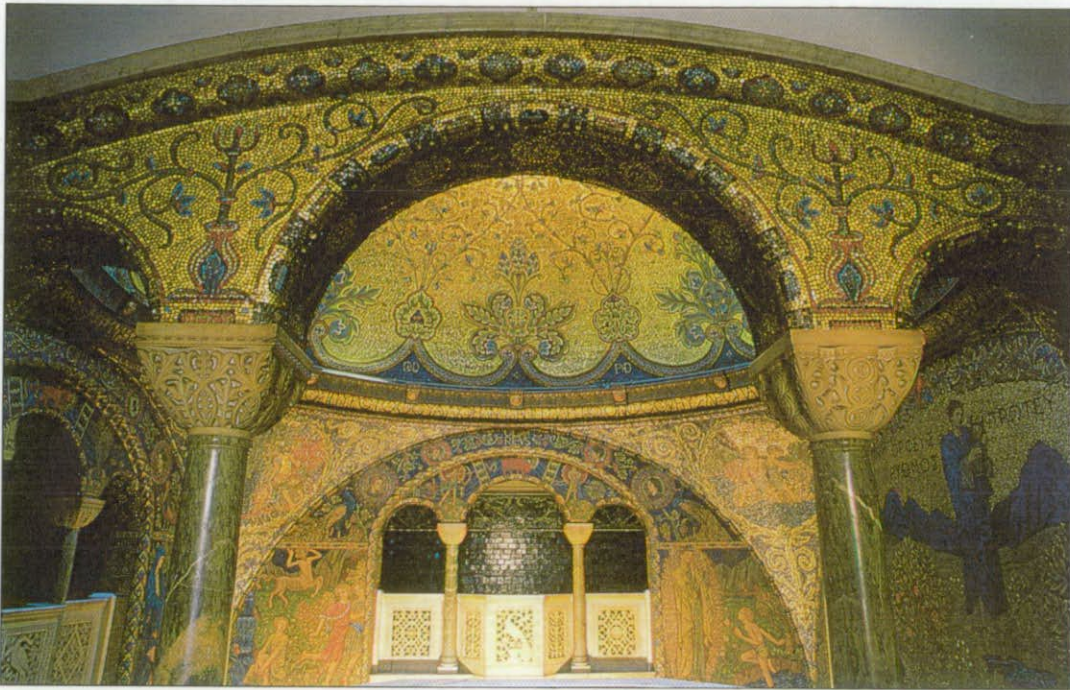


William De Morgan Peacock Tile Panel

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## Hall

On entering the Hall the first thing you notice is the large cupola originally designed to be in plain white but is now richly mosaiced. The tiles by William De Morgan are all hand made and are, therefore, all unique.



### Tessellae in Hall

The mosaic was created by Gaetano Meo who in 1864 walked to England from Italy to make his fortune in the art world. Originally an artists' model, his face is to be found in many pre-Raphaelite pictures. He then started painting and subsequently went on to mosaics. Two of the chapels in Westminster Cathedral contain his work and he contributed to the mosaic in Saint Paul's Cathedral. The gold glitters because it is not solid gold. The effect is achieved by adding a random mixture of other colours. The tessellae were applied individually in the Italian fashion unlike the English method of erecting them in panels.

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The mosaic features the Debenham family and Sir Ernest Debenham's face can be seen high up in a roundel with his wife on the other side. There were eight children in the family, the two featured on the left above the door were twins.

The mosaic mainly depicts scenes from Greek myths. Amongst them are Orpheus entrancing the wild creatures with his lute; the Argonauts braving the monster Scylla and the Sirens; Jason and the crew of warriors sprung from teeth; Jason retrieving the Golden Fleece as Medea stands by; the crocodile-like dragon in its magic sleep; and the signs of the Zodiac. The poor Greek lettering is a quotation from Homer's *Odyssey* referring to the Wandering Rocks and the Argos.

*“For such sailors as bring their ship to the spot there is no escape whatsoever. They end as flotsam on the sea, timbers and corpses tossed in confusion by the waves or licked up by tempestuous and destroying flames. Of all ships that go down to the sea one only has made the passage, and that was the celebrated Argos, homeward bound from Aetes' coast. And she would soon have been dashed upon those mighty crags, if Here, for love of Jason, had not helped her past”.*

The stair walls and passages leading from the hall are also decorated with De Morgan tiles. The stairs rise to a first floor gallery overlooking the central hall with a richly carved marble balustrade designed by George Jack.



Marble Balustrade Design

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The marble throughout the house is predominantly shades of blue and grey supplied and worked to Halsey Ricardos' designs, by Walton, Goody and Cripps.

Sir Ernest was a great believer in the modern art movement. By the time the house was built William De Morgan had stopped making tiles and all the tiles used came out of stock. This was probably because by then he had become a best selling novelist, renowned much more as a novelist than a tile maker. Now, the opposite applies. It's believed that the hall was furnished rather austere with a few small tables and Chinese object d'art and Sir Ernest may have occasionally sold Turkish carpets from here.

### Drawing Room

A magnificent mantelpiece with William De Morgan tiles depicting fishes is the main feature of the Drawing Room. It is believed that underneath the darker marble there are more William De Morgan tiles but it is too risky to remove the marble. It's believed that there was originally a painted ceiling in the drawing room.



Detail of William De Morgan Fish Tile Panel from Mantlepiece



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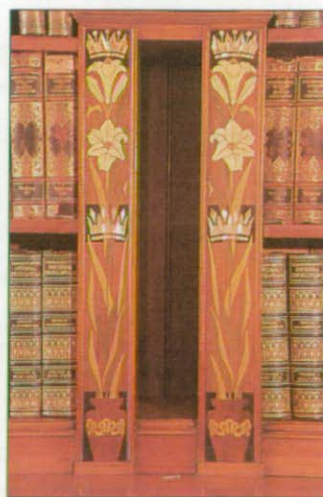
Door Handle Detail

## Dining Room

Panelled throughout in walnut, there was previously an electric hotplate in the dining room and you can see where the original electric lift was housed. The current central heating system was installed when the house was built. The door handles, scratchplates and light switches are all inlaid with enamel. The dining room and library ceilings were both by Ernest Gimson and executed by Messrs Priestly. As mouldings were not available at the time of the commission, every feature was hand crafted, the grapes, oak leaves, and Halsey Ricardo's trademark, the Tudor roses.

## Library

The influence of the arts and crafts movement of the early 1900's is especially evident in the library, Sir Ernest Debenham's study. One of the most magnificent rooms in the house, the mahogany bookcases feature beautiful inlay work of ivory and mother of pearl. The inlay work is symbolic. There are pansies, a pun on the French "penser" to think; butterflies for flights of fancy; angel wings and lilies for purity; and winged hour glasses for the passing of time.



Detail of Inlay Work

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The fireplace, again by William De Morgan, features various musical instruments a lute, violin and a trumpet.

Other examples of the fine craftsmanship are to be found in the metal work. Each brass knob, handle and light fitting has the surface cut and embossed with enamel in the shape of butterflies and leaves.

An interesting story about the Library is that, at the time the house was built, the Debenham's children were restricted as was customary from certain rooms, including the Library. One of the daughters who lived at Peacock House throughout her childhood had never seen the study and could not understand all the fuss made of this room until she saw the inside of the Library for the first time when she was in her eighties.

---

### **Acknowledgements**

Written by Kim Spark.

Photography by Christopher Newberry.

Design by Sue Ryan.

A special thank you to Louise Gotch for all her help in compiling this brochure.

Printed by Colourworks

106



**Exterior of Peacock House**

Peacock House has been the headquarters of the **Richmond Fellowship** for the past 30 years. A registered charity, Richmond Fellowship helps people with mental health problems and other difficulties lead more fulfilling lives in the community. Throughout England & Wales our staff work day & night to house and care for people in desperate need and to assist them to find work.

David would like to tell you about what the Richmond Fellowship has done for him:

*"For 30 years I was a patient at a top security hospital, classed as a danger to myself and to society. Now, thanks to the hard work, dedication and determination of Richmond Fellowship staff, I am living independently and working to support myself. Richmond Fellowship has supported me 100%."*

*David Garforth*

Richmond Fellowship's highly trained and specialised staff offer quality care. We rely on our supporters to help us continue our work with people like David Garforth. If you are interested in supporting us in any way please contact Sue Ryan on 0171 603 6373. If you can make a donation please make cheques payable to 'Richmond Fellowship' and send your donation to Richmond Fellowship, 8 Addison Road London W14 8DL.

All proceeds from the sale of this brochure will support the work of the Richmond Fellowship.

Registered Charity No. 200453