

intensity and genius these respectable surroundings were claustrophobic, living in a "..... hideous little semi-detached house, with a prim little garden at the back and front" as his son recalled later.

The artists of the area were very much established figures in contrast to the risqué bohemian figures of Chelsea.

Richard Ansdell a well-known animal painter, lived at 39 Victoria Road from 1845. As his fortunes prospered, he was able to buy No.41 in 1850. By 1858, he had moved again to 3 St. Albans Grove which he named Lytham House, presumably a reference to his Lancashire origins. He built an impressive austere grey brick studio and the whole premises later became used for further education purposes.

John Bell sculptor of the 'America' group of the Albert Memorial lived in the first house completed in Douro Place. Bell evidently found Douro Place more conducive than Samuel Palmer as he worked and lived here until his death in 1895.

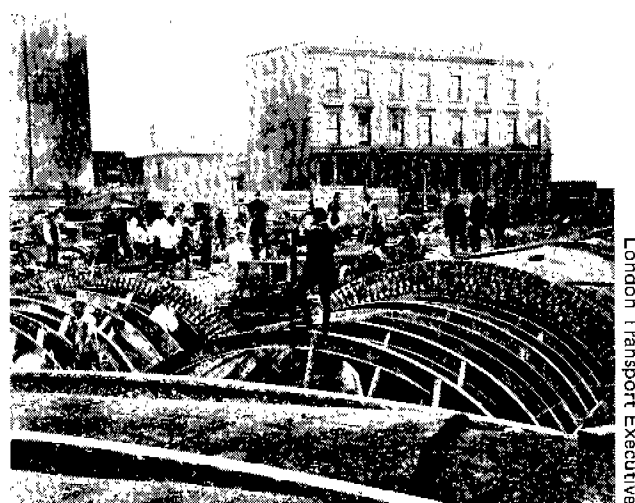
E.W. Cooke a painter of horses and dogs commissioned the design of 52 Victoria Road, known as Eldon Lodge. After his death in 1866, his relative Edward Henry Corbould built and enlarged the studio to the designs of T.H. Watson, architect. As the teacher of art to Queen Victoria's children, Edward, could perhaps afford a certain lavishness. The court Suburb Magazine of November 1868 remarked of the studio, "something between a baronial hall and a refectory in a rich monastery."

Happily, much of this elaborate decoration remains in its current use as a private chapel.

Late Developments

The general character of the Vallotton Estate was formed by the medium-sized villas with which it was developed. Pressure for change and ever bigger buildings came with the Great Exhibition of 1851 which sited the Crystal Palace in nearby Hyde Park and attracted millions of visitors. The increase in the scale of buildings was to affect the other estates more, but in this estate, existing houses became more valuable, and buildings extensions more elaborate.

The second great change was the effect of cutting the Metropolitan and District Railway in 1864-9. This underground railway was constructed by the "cut and cover" method causing great disruption west of Stanford Road involving the demolition of early 19th century terraces in Kelso Place. It is interesting to note that Nos.22-34 Stanford Road, dating from 1851, are attractive stock brick villas. By 1873, following the disruption of the railway, 36-54 Stanford Road were built as a terrace perhaps denoting the fall in quality



London Transport Executive

*Digging "Cut and Cover" railway
South East of Stanford Road*

the area may have been felt to have suffered.

In 1880's, Elizabeth Vallotton, heiress of the estate, began selling off freeholds thereby dismembering the family holding and unleashing a welter of alteration to the original buildings which continues to this day.

Some Later Personalities

Herbert Hampton a painter who lived in 25 Victoria Road from 1896. H.G. Ibberson designed his studio.

Walter Knight Shirley, II Earl Ferrers (1864-1937) a prominent Arts and Crafts architect, and active in the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and the Art Workers Guild. He represented the Architectural Association in the L.C.C. Conference which lead to the establishment of the Survey of London. Earl Ferrers built a large addition to 35 Victoria Road for his own studio in simple Arts and Crafts brickwork.

Sir Hugh Casson lived here from 1953-1980.

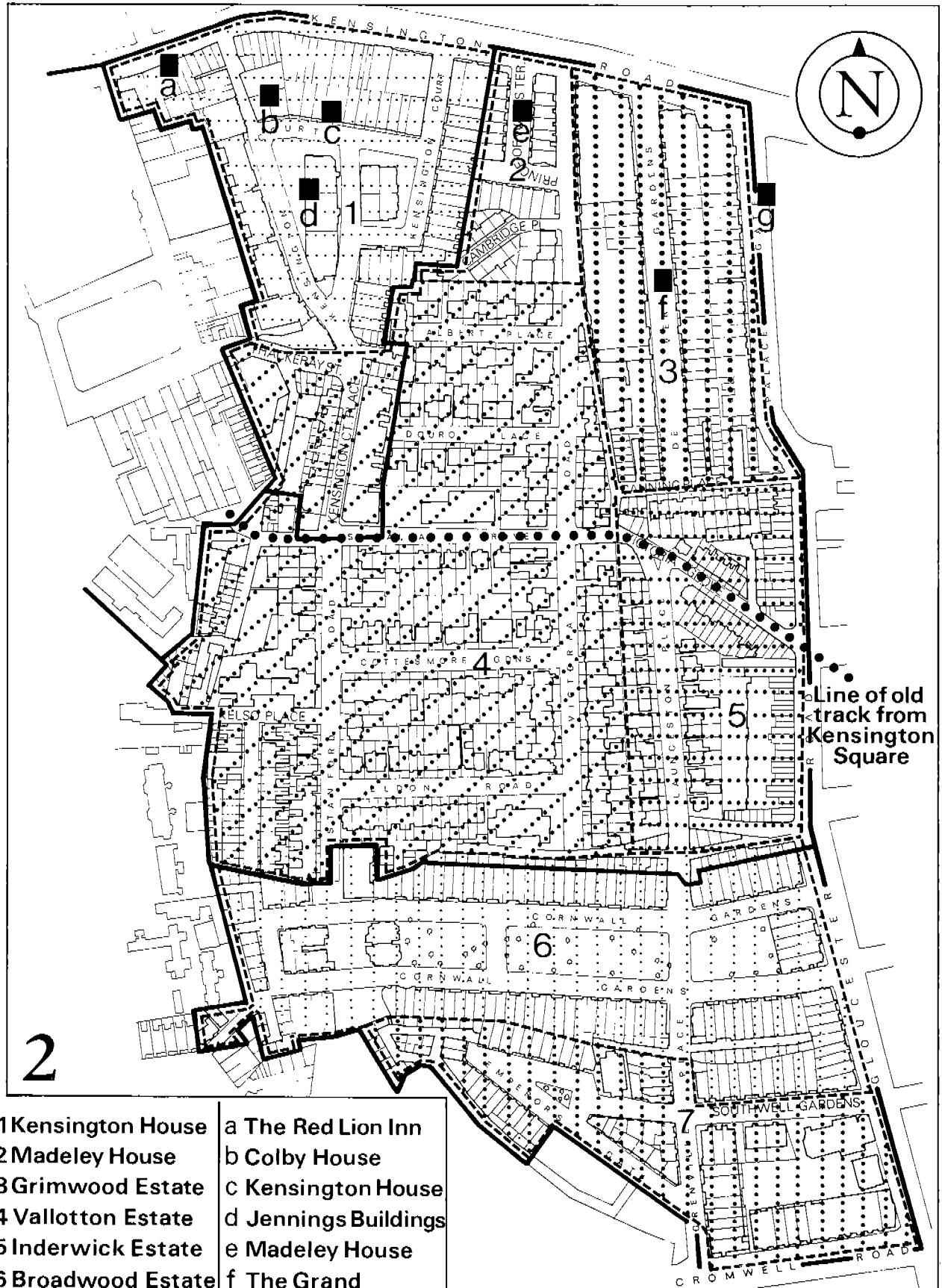
Chester Beatty he was an American collector of oriental manuscripts who had 19 Eldon Road remodelled between 1929 and 1931 for his collection which outgrew the house before completion of the conversion. The plastic sculptures on the front of the house came from D.H. Evans shop where they formed the Festival of Britain window display.

Sir Henry Newbolt the poet, lived at 14 Victoria Road between 1889-1898. This house was heavily rebuilt in a ponderous classical style in 1912 by J.G. Davidson for *G. Leigh Hunt*, essayist.

The Vallotton Estate Parish Church

Although not a parish church, Christ Church, Victoria Road performs that function at least visually. Built in 1850-51 to the designs of Benjamin Ferrey, Christ

DE VERE, KENSINGTON COURT AND CORNWALL HISTORY



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- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Kensington House | a The Red Lion Inn |
| 2 Madeley House | b Colby House |
| 3 Grimwood Estate | c Kensington House |
| 4 Vallotton Estate | d Jennings Buildings |
| 5 Inderwick Estate | e Madeley House |
| 6 Broadwood Estate | f The Grand |
| 7 Part of Edwardes Estate | Hippodrome |
| | g Noel House |

*Estates & Land Holdings:
The Lost Houses*

Church was a daughter church of St. Mary Abbot's. The building is faced in Kentish ragstone with Bath stone dressings and is designed in a "middle pointed" Gothic, considered so correct at the time. Ferrey was a conservative but scholarly architect who produced an excellent piece of street scenery as a foil to the classical domestic villas.

MODERN CHANGES

The selling of freeholds coincided with a general reaction in taste against Victorian classical urbanity in civic design, just as surely as the early Victorians reacted against Georgian terraced formality with the more homely stucco semi-detached villa. By the end of the 19th century, rising land prices and changing social habits made the mansion block of apartments popular, particularly under the influence of Kensington Court to the north of the estate.

Examples of such development are Kensington Court Gardens by Henry Peck, dating from 1887-8, and further south in Kensington Court Place, St. Albans Mansions by the prolific Paul Hoffmann, built in 1894. Hoffmann's large scale plans plus internal light wells were considered very continental at the time.



St. Albans Studios

Perhaps the ultimate revolt against Victorian urban architecture is St. Albans Studios in South End Row by R. Douglas Wells. Almost completely unassuming and plain on the street elevations, within is a neo-Tudor courtyard complete with half-timbering in the manner of a sixteenth century inn. R. Douglas Wells established his studio here, utilising the "Olde English" idiom with considerable charm and style.

Post war additions to this area have been small scale and not particularly inspired. They include 24-25 Eldon Road by J.J. de Segrays dating from 1955, yet still very much in the spirit of pre-war "moderne". Even in 1960-64, Owen Luder felt obliged to design 19-25c Kelso Place as neo-Georgian town houses.

THE DE VERE GARDENS AREA

Early Days

This area, sandwiched between present day Victoria Road and Palace Gate, was once part of the grounds of Noel House, an 18th century mansion located roughly where Palace Gate now is. In common with the rest of the locality the land was utilised for use as a nursery. Robert Furber established the Kensington Nursery here in 1710, and the enterprise continued till 1837. For the next ten years Richard Forrest ran a practice on the site as a landscape gardener and garden architect.

Change began to come to this area in 1848 when John Inderwick took a lease from ground landlord J.D. Grimwood to build a terrace of houses on the Kensington Road frontage east of Victoria Road. This speculation was successful due to the interest generated by the nearby Great Exhibition of 1851. It is a measure of the rate and quality of change in the area that the terrace was swept away for redevelopment within 30 years.

Grand National Hippodrome

The vacant nursery land on the site of De Vere Gardens provided a great opportunity for tapping money from passing trade to the Great Exhibition. The entrepreneur William Batty constructed a great oval timber and slate building open to the sky and able to seat 14,000 spectators. For a year the Hippodrome flourished with extravagant shows of Equestrian display with the added salacious interest of Parisian female charioteers.

After 1852, with the Great Exhibition crowds gone, the Hippodrome became disused, save for a minor use provided by a riding school.

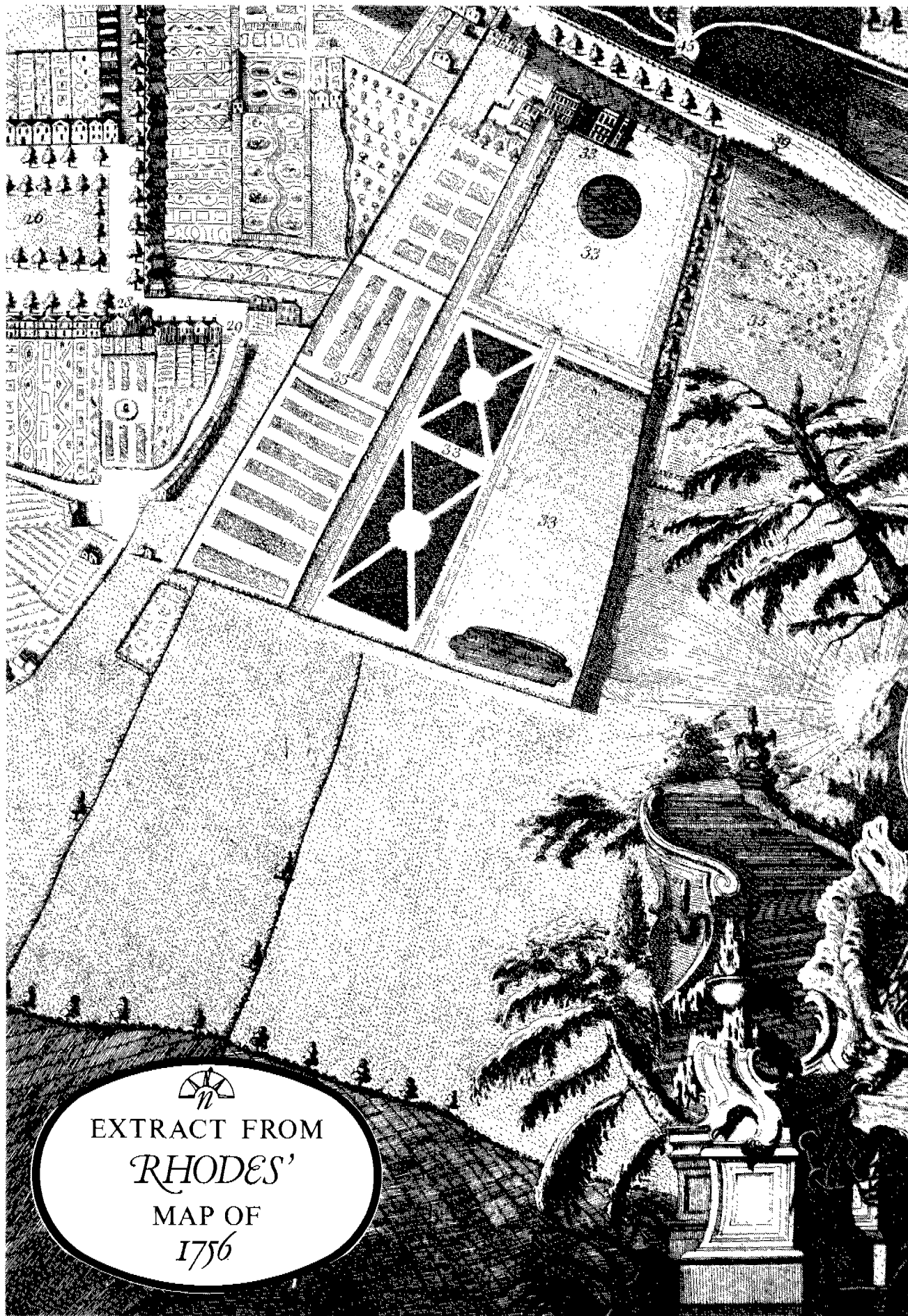
London's First Airport

A novel use for the Hippodrome was proposed in 1855. An air service was offered to take Government dispatches and ultimately passengers from London to Paris. The maiden flight was scheduled for August 1855. The aerial craft was called the Eagle and was 160 feet long with a crew of 17. The great inflated balloon was powered and steered by four flappers operated by the crew. Sadly this adventurous enterprise was abandoned before the maiden flight.

The Development of De Vere Gardens

The Hippodrome site was to be largely neglected for twenty years as the owner, J.D. Grimwood, had married a South American wife and emigrated to Chile.

By 1875, however, Messrs. Barlow, Daw and Hart, builder, developer and architect respectively had managed to obtain building agreements on 5-11 De Vere Gardens, specifying "best suffolk gaults and Portland stone". It is interesting to note that it is difficult to dis-



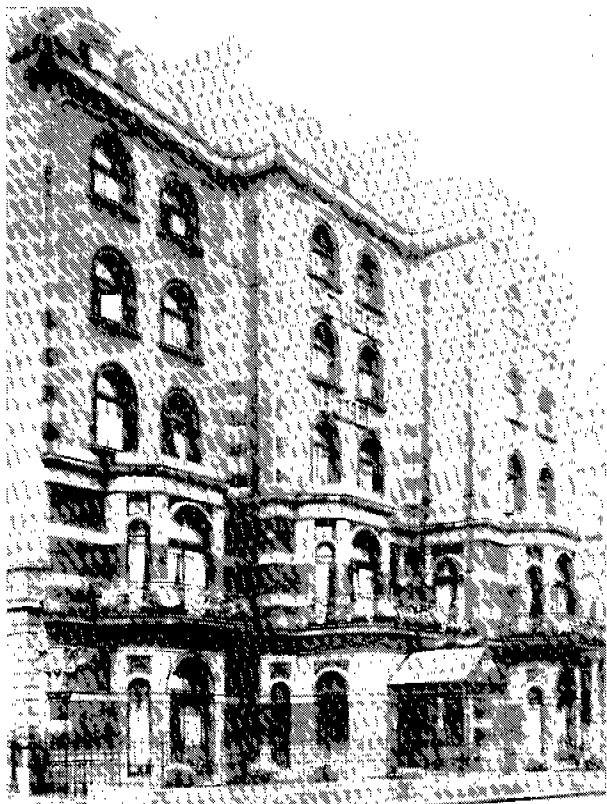
EXTRACT FROM
RHODES'
MAP OF
1756

entangle which man was responsible for the planning and design of the buildings. It seems that the strict professional distinctions that pertain today were not so strong in 1875. There were great hopes for De Vere Gardens as a grand street, and the much increased scale of terraced building with cliff-like elevations contrasts with the more humane domestic buildings of the earlier Vallotton Estate. Other builder/developers followed the initial lead to give the road its present varied character.



Malcolm's Nursery — now De Vere Gardens

In general, however, new houses in De Vere Gardens were slow to move, so that shortly after the houses were built conversion into respectable apartments and hotels was common.



De Vere Hotel

An interesting argument broke out between Barlow and Daw over the De Vere Hotel site, illustrating the unfulfilled ambitions for the street. Daw had always

wanted one grand house at the northern end at the junction with Kensington Road. He was angry with Barlow for, as he saw it, downgrading the street with 3 smaller houses.

These houses became the De Vere House Hotel, which was remodelled and extended in 1897-98 with Art Nouveau elevation decoration and corner winged lions in terra-cotta by sculpture Alfred Drury.

Personalities

Despite the street's problems, some success was had in attracting suitable residents, many of whom had an average of 8 or 9 servants.

Robert Browning the poet lived at No.29.



Robert Browning

Henry James lived for a time in a flat in De Vere Mews west.

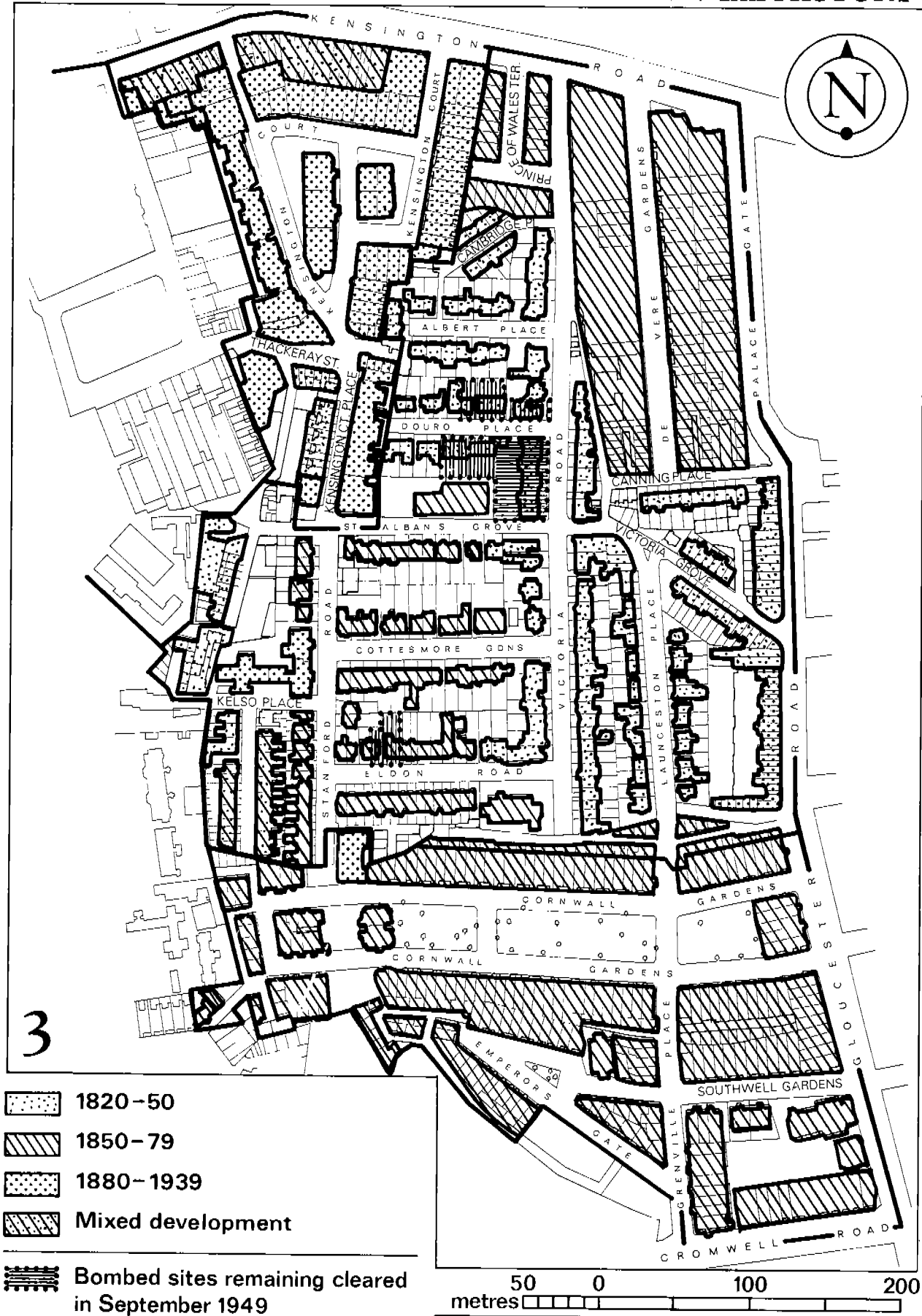
Marquess Carmarthen Junior Minister at the Colonial Office lived at No.20.

Sir Daniel Cooper former member of the Council of New South Wales lived at No.6.

DE VERE MEWS AND DE VERE COTTAGES

With the site of De Vere Gardens being long and narrow, the mews had to have long blank walls to the gardens.

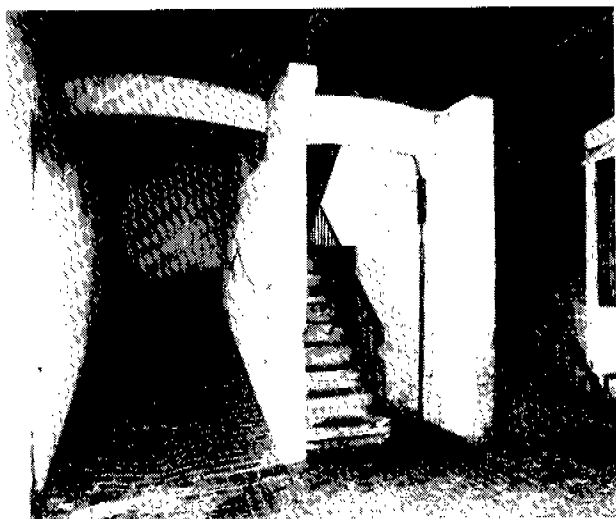
DE VERE, KENSINGTON COURT AND CORNWALL HISTORY



General scheme of original development

The mews were built in 1877, the western building by builders Taylor and Cumming, the eastern by C.A. Daw.

An especially interesting feature still to be seen in De Vere Mews is the gently spiralling brick paved ramp which led to first floor accommodation for horses. This left the ground floor free for use as carriage houses. Staff slept in accommodation on the second floor reached by a separate stair from the ground floor.



Stables — De Vere Mews showing horse ramp

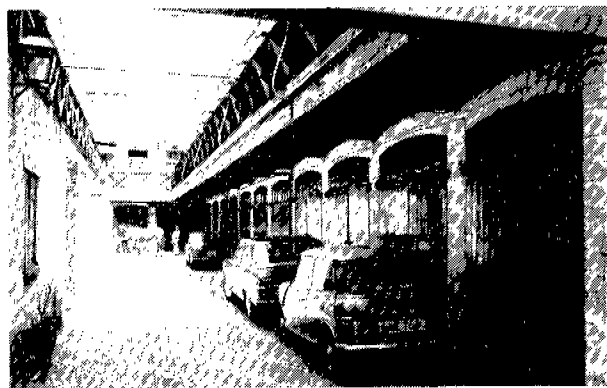
The lavishness and scale of the two blocks of mews accommodation indicate the ambition of the developers. It was clearly hoped that exceptionally well-equipped carriage folk would flock to De Vere Gardens and the Mews. From the beginning, however, both Mews were well in excess of the stabling required.



De Vere Cottages

Laconia Mews Becomes De Vere Cottages

Between 1918-1925, London Reconstruction Ltd. and their architects Stanley Barrett & Driver, prominent mews converters of the day, transformed Laconia Mews into bijoux cottages. The use of informal vernacular features reminiscent of rural cottages shows how far the revolt against Victorian classical formality had now become fashionable.

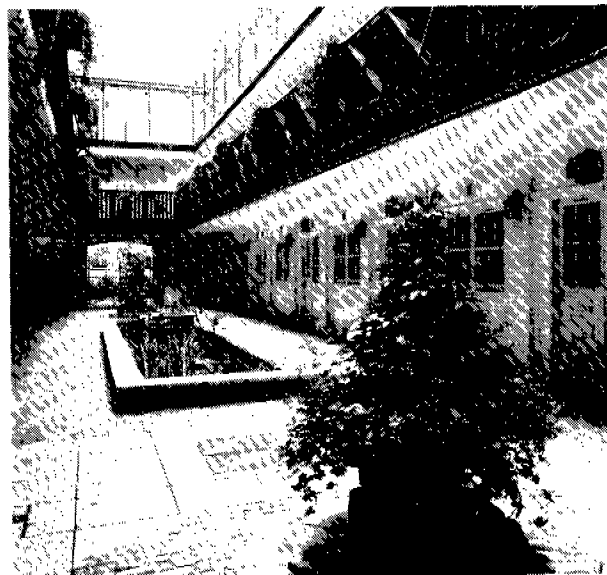


De Vere Mews, 1973

De Vere Mews

This mews on the eastern side of De Vere Gardens fared little better than its western neighbour. By 1915 it was used as a garage and then in 1923 it was occupied by a riding master.

Times took a turn for the better in 1947 when the Civil Service Riding Club obtained a 25 year lease on the mews, so that again horses dominated the life of the building. The C.S.R.C. finally relocated to the Royal Mews in 1974, leaving the building free for conversion. Since 1972, various schemes had been proposed involving keeping the distinctive first floor horse stabling. Sadly, none of these came to fruition. In 1978-80 a conversion by Roger Carpenter and Associates was



De Vere Mews, 1980