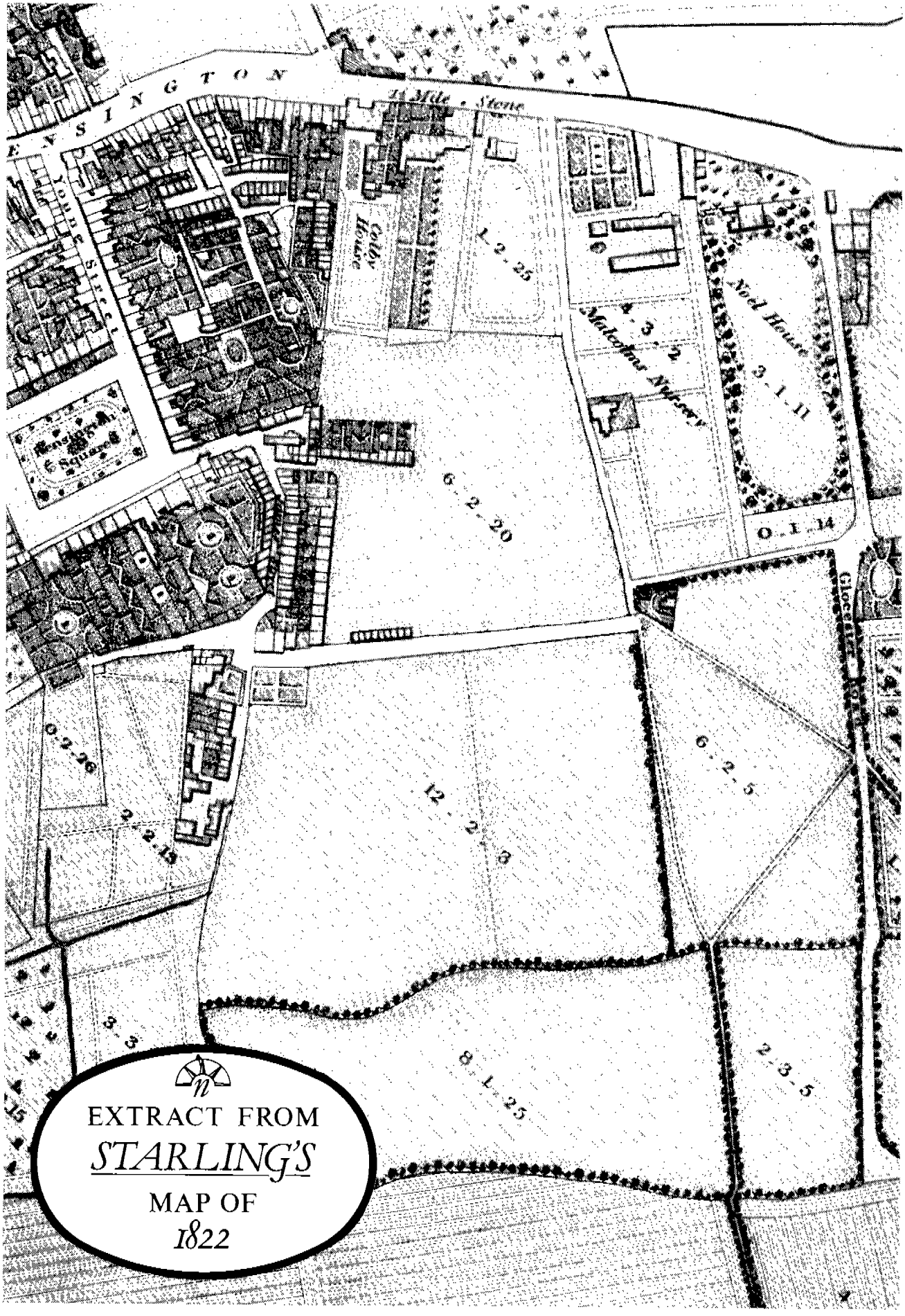


EXTRACT FROM
STARLING'S
MAP OF
1822

carried out for complete office and residential use without horses. De Vere Mews is now conserved and attractively renovated but it is sad that the early morning sounds of horses, hooves and jangling harness are now forever absent from this building.

THE INDERWICK ESTATE

John Inderwick's interest in building a terrace on Kensington Road in 1848 is all the more understandable when he is seen as a local owner and developer. Inderwick was a successful business man, an importer of meerschaum pipes, who acquired 6.5 acres south of what is now De Vere Gardens in 1836. He employed the now somewhat obscure architect Joel Bray (1787-1846) to lay out the development. The roads within the estate were Victoria Grove, Launceston Place and 2-72 (even) Gloucester Road. As the development dates from the same period as the Vallotton estate to the west, it is not surprising that a similar choice of design and layout was adopted; quietly classical stucco villas, differing from street to street, within a family likeness.

Gloucester Road

Between Victoria Grove junction and south to what is now St. Georges Terrace, Inderwick built a refined greek classical stucco terrace with ground floor shops around 1840. The pleasing urbanity of this terrace can now only give a hint as to what the original St. George's Terrace looked like. Here, Inderwick had built a long terrace, articulated by end pavilions stepped forward giving most of the houses long front gardens. Had this handsome composition survived, it would have made Gloucester Road a major street of classical townscape. Unfortunately the terrace was swept away in 1907 for Paul Hoffman's jolly Edwardian block of mansion flats and shops, a poor exchange for the loss of such a grand classical feature. (See St. Georges Court p.40)

G.L.C.

Gloucester Road

Victoria Grove, Canning Place

In 1837, George Hinton, builder, developed the simple pleasing villas of Canning Place with Inderwick being responsible for the later (c.1850) and more richly decorated Nos.11-13.

Victoria Grove

The villas of Victoria Grove were built by Inderwick between 1837-1841 and are especially charming with swept canopies over the ground floor supported on lace-like ironwork pylons. At the south east end of the street there are short terraces of shops leading into Gloucester Road. The northern terrace with strongly-modelled Corinthian paired pilasters and modillioned cornice is particularly striking.

Launceston Place

This was the best street on the estate developed mostly as semi-detached villas fully occupied by 1846. In 1880, five shops were added (Nos.1a-4) with cast iron columns between the shopfronts.

The Development of the Estate

The Inderwick Estate was successful but less rich than others in the area. However, towards the end of the 19th century it was less favoured than surrounding areas and therefore invited less building alterations. The preservation of the area was also greatly helped by the control maintained by the Estate, even after John Inderwick's death in 1867.

Personalities

Launceston Place was the best address and had among its residents:

No.28 *Thomas Morton*, dramatist.

No.22 *Spiridione Gambardella*, eccentric painter and astronomer from Corfu.

No.7 *Rev. James Booth*, mathematician and inventor of "Boothian Co-ordinates".

No.11 *Thomas F. Marshall*, painter.

At 10 St. George's Terrace, *William Mitchell*, proprietor of "Shipping and Mercantile Gazette" and originator of the international code of maritime symbols.

Finally, at 7 Canning Place, *Alfred Stevens*, designer and sculptor. He worked on products for industrialists at the Great Exhibition, and designed the Duke of Wellington Memorial in St. Paul's Cathedral.

CORNWALL GARDENS

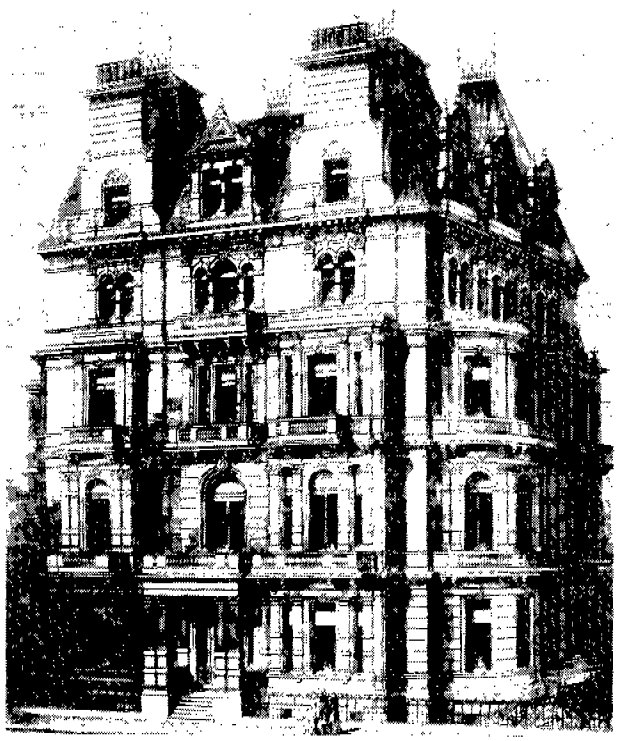
If any touchstone is needed to illustrate the difference between the scale of development before and after the Great Exhibition, a comparison between the Vallotton Estate villas and the stucco terraces of Cornwall Gardens will serve as an eloquent model. Cornwall Gardens with its mighty cliffs of stucco belong in spirit to developments east of Gloucester Road. By this time, greater returns were expected from building development than in the more relaxed days of thirty years earlier.

The site of Cornwall Gardens came into the ownership of the Broadwood family in 1803 as a market garden. Thomas and John Broadwood, no doubt prompted by the Vallotton Estate's success to the north, commissioned Thomas Cundy III to lay out a scheme for two great terraces looking into a central green, flanked by two access roads. The development was named in honour of the Prince of Wales' coming of age. The terraces were designed in the familiar richly Italianate stucco, and work started on the north side in 1871 with the last group facing Gloucester Road being complete by 1876.

By this date, stucco design of this type was becoming rather old fashioned. Thomas Cundy's father was building Grosvenor Gardens near Victoria at the same time in a design showing the new French influence. Nevertheless, the development was successful, with all the houses being taken by suitably respectable people. Perhaps the slightly staid appearance of Cornwall Gardens was attractive to the mixture of lawyers, senior civil servants and Empire administrators who took up residence here. The final proof of success was when Thomas Cundy III took No.82 for his own home.

The Western End of Cornwall Gardens and the Coming of the Railway

Cundy's scheme had allowed for a church with more houses on three sides to complete the western end of the development. This part of the plan was frustrated by the building of the Metropolitan and District Railway between 1864-9, which used the "cut and cover" principle of construction to cut an arc through this end of Cornwall Gardens on a north west/south east axis. The railway works were completed and the land returned to the estate by 1875. It seems Cundy had lost interest in further development and the estate agreed with the builder, William Willett, that he should complete the building of Cornwall Gardens. To compensate for losing the ground under which the railway ran, Willett was allowed to build two enormous palaces on the central gardens. Showing a strong fashionable French influence these great edifices were built of elaborate white Burnham bricks and Portland stone dressings. The richness of the exterior was carried through to the interior and its cavernous reception rooms. The specification included oak dados and parquet floors, marble floors, pilasters and columns to the hall and stair, and Adam plasterwork throughout the main rooms. A full system of speaking tubes and electric bells was provided. The strict division between family and staff was maintained by the provision of a main stair, family stair and back stair. The architect for these huge houses was James Trant Smith.



Garden House — Cornwall Gardens

The remaining houses at this western end were also developed by Willett, but now with high canted bay windows showing the more informal and coarser decoration characteristic of this period.

Later Developments

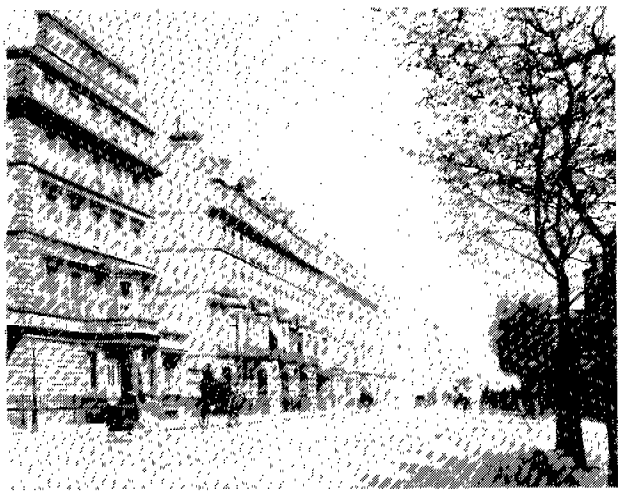
Inevitably, the large houses of Cornwall Gardens were gradually divided into flats. John Tranter Smith's great palaces were subject to a similar fate. In this new guise

however, the old houses found a new success. Between the wars, Ivy Compton-Burnett, the novelist, and Margaret Jourdain, the decorative arts writer, shared a large flat in Braemar Mansion.

The single modern building that intrudes on Cornwall Gardens is, sadly, deeply uninspired. Stanford Court on the corner with Stanford Road was built in 1932 to the designs of F.F. Doyle with rendered elevations and metal window frames.

SOUTHWELL GARDENS & CROMWELL ROAD

The massive and austere grey brick and stucco houses north of St. Stephens Church were developed from 1871 by John Wilkens. Wilkens assigned leases on 1-2 Southwell Gardens to Thomas Cundy III. Southwell Gardens was occupied, largely by legal people, by the 1880's.



Cromwell Road

South of St. Stephens, H.E. Harwood designed the large stucco terrace in 1872 that fronts Cromwell Road. This takes its place in a once complete boulevard of stucco development, which sadly now has become a traffic rat run.

ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH

Dating from circa 1860, St. Stephen's was designed by Joseph Peacock, using much rough-hewn stone and an attractive polychromatic brick interior. This church is a particularly successful picturesque composition with the small scale elements giving an Arts & Crafts Gothic character.

EMPEROR'S GATE & GRENVILLE PLACE

As the Metropolitan & District Railway proceeded south of Cornwall Gardens, it carved through Lord

G.L.C.

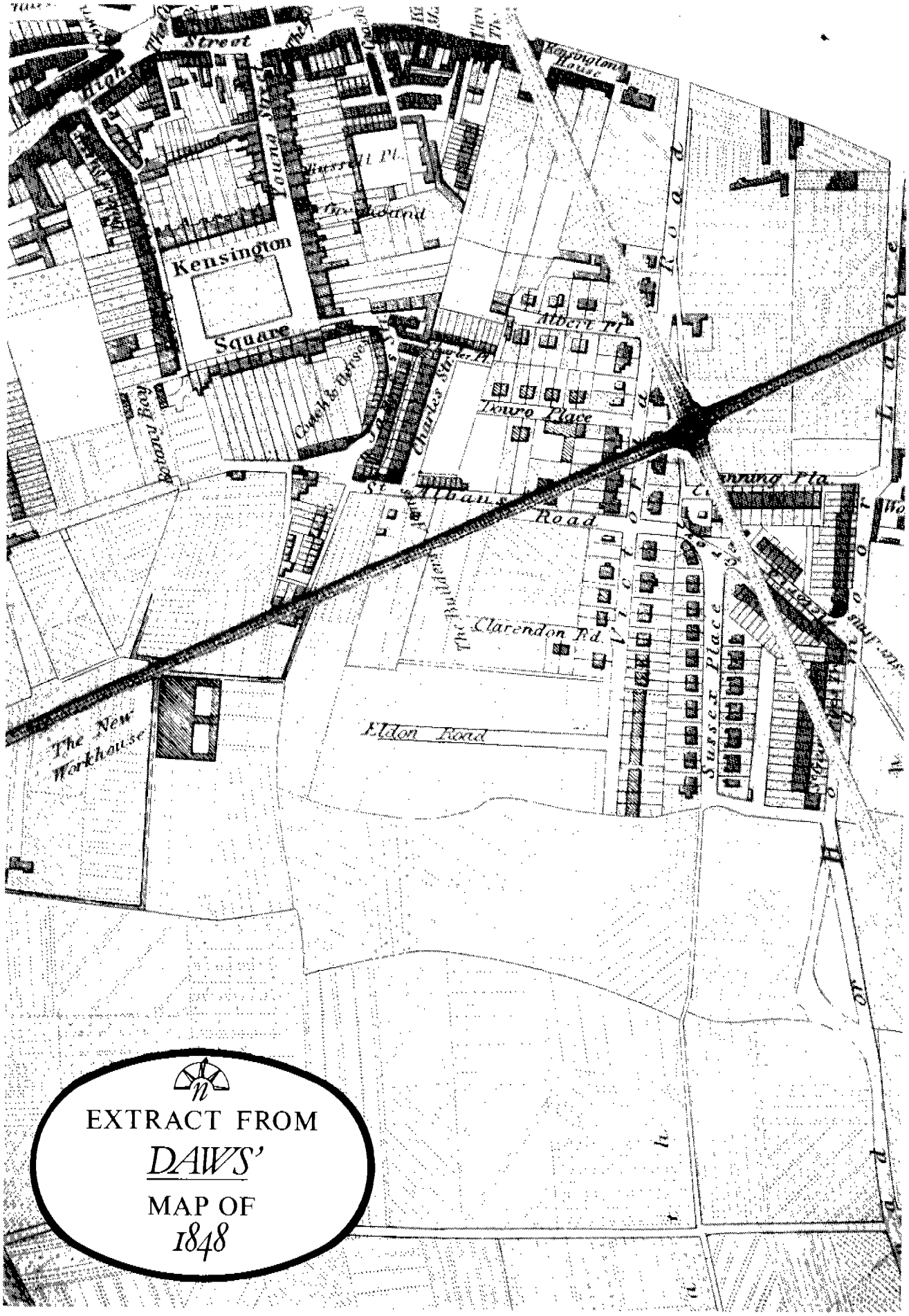
Emperor's Gate from Osten Mews, 1980

Kensington's Edwardes Estate. The railway never made its shareholders millionaires, with a dividend of 5%, partly because it was too busy arguing with its opponents and potential competitors. In fact, much of the profit there was came from selling surplus land for development. Having bought the land from the Edwardes Estate for this section of the railway, the Company sold off the triangle of land unaffected by the works. This unpromising site was bought by Joseph Clark in 1869 for residential development. The name Emperor's Gate commemorates the compact of 1873 between Austria-Hungary, Germany and Russia.

Work started in 1872 on Nos.1 and 4-10 Emperor's Gate, an amazing crude but powerful design with high French pavilion roofs, a fashionable feature lacking in Cornwall Gardens. From 1875, 11-25 was built in simple brick and stucco and now demolished. Nos.37-47 have five storeys and were probably designed by George Edwardes. In the same period, 1876-8, Nos.26-36 were built perhaps to the designs of Edward Habershon & Brock. This group with its witty and inventive use of gothic forms applied to a classical terrace is successful and convincing.

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

This straightforward Gothic chapel was built in 1868-9 as the South Kensington Baptist Chapel to the designs of C.G. Searle & Son, noted nonconformist architects. It



EXTRACT FROM
DAWS'
MAP OF
1848

was not a success and the English Presbyterians took over in 1873. They in turn left to join the Scottish Presbyterians in 1929 at the church in Allen Street.

Following this, the chapel was acquired by the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile but the building now faces redevelopment.

Personalities

Charles Booth compiler of "Life and Labour of the People of London" lived at 6 Grenville Place 1875-89.

T.S. Eliot, poet, lodged with the vicar of St. Stephen's, Gloucester Road at 9 Grenville Place and 11 Emperor's Gate between 1933-40.

Emperor's Gate, seen with Cornwall Gardens, is a poignant and powerful evocation of high Victorian architectural ostentation.

THE FRINGES – PALACE GATE & KENSINGTON ROAD

The building firm W. Cubitt & Co. bought Noel House in 1861 for redevelopment. Gloucester Road at this point was just a narrow lane, so Cubitts got the land-owners on the east side, Campden Charities trustees, to join in cutting a wide new road to be known as Palace Gate.

From 1862 Cubitts built 1-15 Palace Gate, the first houses being faced in yellow brick, and the later examples coated in stucco. These were probably Cubitts' own design, and show the rising French influence especially in the dormer treatment. Cubitts also provided stabling at Canning Place Mews. There seems to have been difficulty in disposing of the houses perhaps due to the unfinished state of the road.

No.1a Palace Gate: Palace Gate House

John Forster, historian and biographer of Dickens, had this house built for him by Cubitts with special internal arrangements to house his famous library together with a fire proof muniment room. He died in 1876 and his widow lived here till 1894.

In 1896-8 the house was almost completely re-constructed by C.J. Harold Cooper, a prominent Arts & Crafts Architect, for his client W.A. Johnstone. The interior is a remarkably complete example of Arts & Crafts design, displaying fine materials and craftsmanship. The elevation, with its tall gable and Portland stone finish was much admired in avant-garde circles.

33-37 Palace Gate

Originally a single house for Reginald Cholmondeley, this large red brick edifice was designed by F.P. Cockerell in 1869-70. It included a studio for the client, who was a keen amateur sculptor. Frank Baden-Powell lived here between 1904 and 1911.

KENSINGTON ROAD

Prince of Wales Terrace

(see p.30)

In the early 19th century, this attractive site looking across Kensington Gardens had been the site of Madeley House and its gardens. Originally built for Samuel Drew of Kensington, William Hoof, the builder, bought it in 1840 and developed some of the grounds as part of Cambridge Place and Victoria Road with the Vallotton Estate.

In 1861, the site was sold for redevelopment to Richard Yeo who leased the land to Thomas Crawley, a Bayswater builder. Prince of Wales Terrace was the name chosen to commemorate the coming of age of the Queen's eldest son in 1862. The designer of the scheme was probably Philip Wilkenson (1826-1906), surveyor.

A tight development of classical stuccoed 4 storey houses was built, again showing French influence in the high pitched roofs and patterned slates. There were no central gardens or back yards so that even rear elevations were given a measure of architectural formality. It is interesting to reflect on how a different society to ours lived in these and similar houses.

The average house contained some 20 rooms; 11 bedrooms on the top three floors, the best bedroom on the second floor. There were landing W.C.'s, and a zinc bath on the third floor.

The ground floor contained the dining room, morning room, lavatory and W.C. The basement was the service area with stone-paved kitchen, scullery, larder, house-keepers room, butler's pantry, coal and wine cellars.

In 1871, the average household contained 10 people of whom 5 or 6 were servants. By 1881, however, the average number of servants had dropped to 4 or 5, indicating the social changes on the way.

There were, of course, always exceptions.

In 1871, Mr. G.W. Hunt, barrister, Privy Councillor, M.P., J.P., lived at No.15 with his wife, 3 sons, 5 daughters, a governess, and as many as 10 servants.

Personalities

The occupants of Prince of Wales Terrace were generally minor aristocrats and lawyers, rather like Cornwall Gardens.

Other residents include:

Edward Henry Corbould, the painter who lived and worked at 53 Victoria Road, also once lived at No.6 Prince of Wales Gardens.

Henry Francis Makins, the client who commissioned J.J. Stevenson to build the revolutionary "Queen Anne" style – 8 Palace Gate – lived at No.19.

Prince of Wales Terrace remained popular for a long period, and did not succumb to conversion as flats until after 1918.

The Great Exhibition (1851) the Metropolitan & District Railway (1866) and the Metropolitan Board of Works Scheme of road improvements and slum clearance had all contributed to making Kensington High Street a thriving shopping street towards the end of the 19th century.

No.3 is a fine quality "Queen Anne" building of 1881, which was absorbed into the similar London and County Bank, dated 1884-5.

The Goat Public House, already mentioned as a 17th century inn, was refronted with its neighbour No.3 in 1881 as part of the commercial smartening-up of the High Street.

No.27 was a 17th century house used as Whites Music Warehouse. Bannister Fletcher & Sons designed the lively and inventive new building with tiles of the Muses in the upper storey recesses, and oddly clever iron balconies set either side of a central canted bay.

The tall gabled No.29 was the work of theatre architects Thomas & Frank Verity and shows along with No.27 the leap in scale and showy confidence their buildings display as compared with the restraint of the 17th century buildings.

Nos.49-53, now Kensington Market took its present form in 1968-9, but had been the offices of Storey & Co., decorators from 1899 to 1900. Even here, the vestige of 17th and 18th century building remains within.

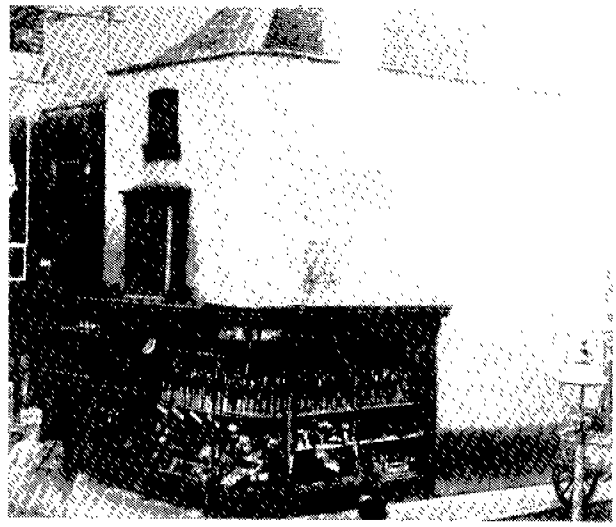
KENSINGTON COURT

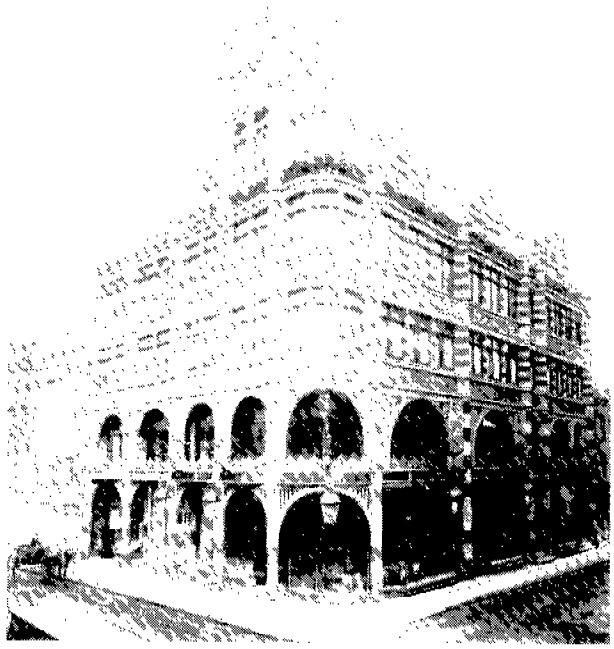
Albert Grant and Kensington House

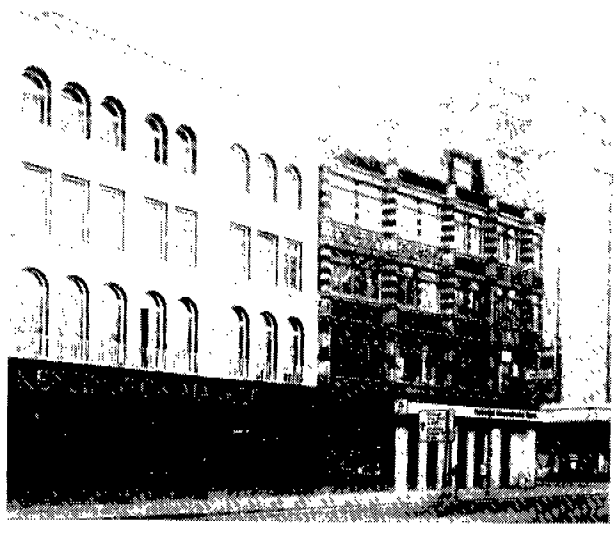
The later 19th century development of the area south of Kensington Road had increasingly left Kensington House looking more and more forlorn. In 1873 a business man of the classic Victorian mould took an interest in the site. Albert Grant (1830-99) known as Baron Grant from an Italian title granted to him by Victor Emmanual, was a wealthy man due to a mxiture of skill and luck in many nefarious undertakings. He acquired a large plot during 1872 by combining the sites of Kensington

THE CHANGING FACE OF KENSINGTON

59-61 Kensington High Street – corner of Young Street



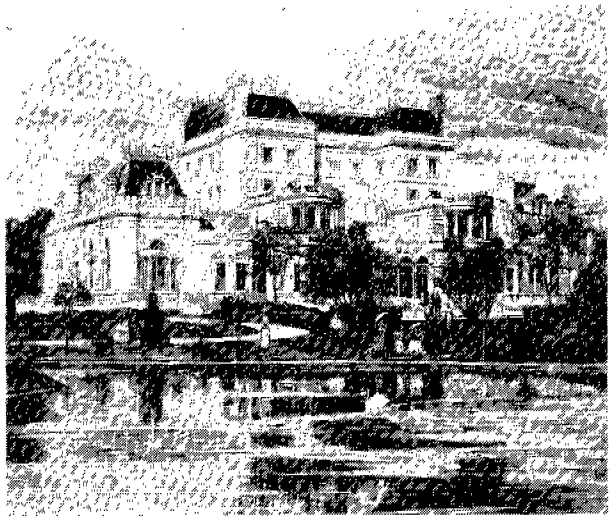




G.L.C.

House, Colby House, the rookeries of Jennings buildings and other properties right through to Kensington Square. On this generous plot he conceived the plan to build a palace suitable for his pretensions in life.

It was a matter of comment at the time how Grant dealt with the teeming slum of Jennings Buildings.



Baron Grant's Kensington House

These and similar courts stretched back to Kensington Square and had long been notorious, especially since a cholera outbreak in 1849. The Metropolitan Commission of Sewers complained bitterly of a "worse than useless sewer" and the ramshackle buildings frequently housed one family per room. By 1851 almost half the inhabitants were Irish building workers, probably refugees from the atrocities of the Great Famine. They may have worked on the Great Exhibition site.

Grant's ingenious solution to clearing these slums was to offer £2 per room to quit, plus all the materials the tenant wanted from the building and the opportunity of new improved dwellings in Notting Hill.

By May 1873, Grant had assembled and cleared the plots he needed and appointed James Knowles Junior as his architect. The result was a mammoth house, built in Bath stone in a somewhat ponderous French classical style but with a hugely expensive and elaborate interior. The external landscaping was equally lavish to the designs of John Gibson. The whole scheme cost £300,000 and took four years to build.

Grant was fated never to live in the house. Even before building work finished the vast fabric of his questionable financial empire was becoming unravelled. In 1877 he was forced to sell the house's pictures, but the house failed to find a buyer. Repeatedly the house failed to sell, so that by 1882, the mansion was razed to the ground and the rich materials and fittings sold for £10,000. Madam Tussaud's took the great marble stair, and the iron railings were installed around Sandown Park.

The last memory of this fantastic mansion are the Italianate fronts of 3 and 4 Kensington Square, originally built as fronts to Grant's stables.

KENSINGTON COURT

Land Securities Company had foreclosed on Grant and taken possession of the site. In May 1882, they agreed to sell to Jonathan T. Carr, an already accomplished developer.

Carr bought 7 acres in a triangular formation, becoming narrower to the south. A layout, perhaps by surveyor T.M. Rickman, showed a cramped development of 77 plots with a small central area.

Carr could perhaps be expected to make something even of this uninspired material. He had been the developer of Bedford Park in West London, that aesthetic suburb for artistic people in the vanguard of public taste. Carr's success was based on carrying out a good idea with an imaginative architect. In the case of Bedford Park, Norman Shaw was used, but now Carr turned to J.J. Stevenson.

Stevenson had a track record as a "Queen Anne revival" architect at nearby 8 Palace Gate and had designed a number of Pont Street houses in a dense development similar to that required at Kensington Court.

Work started to Stevenson's designs in 1883 and included Nos.3-15 and 22-25 on the eastern side of the site. Carr had allowed for a novel innovation in his development. Spacious ducts were provided under the street to take gas, electric and water services. Hydraulic power was provided via the London Hydraulic Power Company building near the stables at the south east corner of the estate. This development was the first in Britain to be provided with this form of power and was supposed to allow a service to be left in every house.

Kensington Court