

mansard roofs which dominate the north and south corners towards Grenville Place. Of particular interest on this building group are the figured rainwater heads and the terra cotta window architraves. It is a pity that because of the varied treatment of facades this group no longer reads as a single composition.

In contrast to Christ Church which stands prominently at the end of Victoria Road, the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile appears to retreat into its corner of Emperor's Gate. The asymmetrical brick front with stone dressings and string courses is enlivened by the ornate, white stone porchway which steps forward to link the church with the street.

The solid rubblestone and ashlar church of St. Stephen's sits on the corner of Gloucester Road and Southwell Gardens. A particularly attractive, yet unusual feature are the very low-level windows to the vestry between the two chapels. Standing on Gloucester Road they convey the impression that the whole church may have sunk several feet in the hundred years since it was built. The church is a listed building.



Path leading to St. Stephens Gardens

Mews:

**Cornwall Mews (South and West),
Cornwall Gardens Walk, Osten Mews, McLeods Mews**

Cornwall Mews South is divided into two, by Grenville Place. On the east side, the mews are tucked along the southern side, backing onto Southwell Gardens, and on the west, along the northern side against the rear of

houses in Cornwall Gardens. The pastel painted houses on the west side have undergone much fewer alterations than the houses on the east flank, a number of which have been almost totally rebuilt. The mews cottages adjoining the listed entrance arches are mainly two storey and of the same height as the archways. Number 18 Grenville Place stands out with two more storeys piled up on top of the original cottage. The dormer window with its distinctive pedimented architrave now dominates the facade, the idea for such a grand design perhaps being borrowed from the windows used in the main Cornwall Gardens terraces which it adjoins.

Further mews originally serving the Cornwall Gardens terraces are found at the western end of the development: **Cornwall Gardens Mews West** and **Cornwall Gardens Walk**. The latter is a curious block of much altered three storey properties; the few garages that still remain, with access from the rear of the block, are the only hint now of the earlier use.

Concealed behind the terraces which surround it is the attractive enclave of **Osten Mews** — even the mews arch which leads into it is inconspicuously tucked in between the terraces in Emperor's Gate. The two storey houses have undergone a range of alterations — the variety of facades is now almost as plentiful as the range of colours used to paint them. Adding to the period character of this small area are the original Kensington Patent lanterns of square design.

Even more successfully hidden are the five remaining units to **McLeods Mews**, tucked in against the back of the southern terrace of Emperor's Gate. The climbing plants growing up the facades and wall opposite and profusion of potted plants do much to brighten this small group.



Lexham Walk

Lexham Walk

One of the most delightful of several passageways found in this conservation area is the short leafy pedestrian way of Lexham Walk, paved with York stone. The walk is further enhanced by the two white painted houses of domestic scale flanking the northern side. It is the only public footpath across the railway between Cromwell Road and Kensington High Street.

POLICIES AND PROPOSALS

The first part of the Statement provided a descriptive account of the historical development of the conservation areas, and an analysis of their present character. These two chapters are the foundation for the section which now follows, which sets out the Council's policies and proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their identified character.

The relation of the Proposals Statement to the Council's District Plan has already been explained in the introductory section (page 2) but it is worth reiterating that the policies set out in the following two chapters should be seen as a more detailed outworking of the policies in the District Plan, as they apply to these three conservation areas.

The policies and proposals are, broadly speaking, of three kinds, although a number will fall into more than one category: first; detailed development control policies, which, within the context of the District Plan policies, will guide the Development Control Officers in their consideration of planning proposals. The main topics which fall into this category are front gardens and forecourt parking, roof alterations and side and rear extensions.



Secondly, there are policies and proposals where the Council itself has the main, although not always the total, responsibility for implementation. Such areas of concern include footways and road surfaces, street furniture and street trees.

Thirdly, there are more general policies and proposals which constitute advice to the owners and occupiers of properties within the area on the maintenance, repair and restoration of architectural features. The subjects treated here are, for example, stucco, painting and windows, in the main outside of planning control (see *Development and the Law*, pages 81,82). Where works to a listed building are proposed, listed building consent may however still be required if the works would alter the character of the building, and the owners are advised to check with the planning department before commencing any work.

The topics discussed in the following two chapters range in scale from road surfaces to minute details such as door knockers, yet all have a role to play in contributing to and affecting the character of the area. Whilst a re-paving scheme may have an immediate impact, it is often the condition of individual buildings together with the state of the front gardens which really determines the atmosphere and attractiveness of the area.

The order of treatment of the various topics in the following two chapters does not therefore reflect an order of priority, rather they have been grouped into two sections: streets and spaces, and buildings.

Page 44 Blank



STREETS AND OPEN SPACES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers those elements which make up the streetscene. In addition to discussing road surfaces, street furniture and trees it also indicates front gardens, and boundary walls and railings, as the appearance of these will contribute directly to the attractiveness of the streetscene.

FOOTWAYS AND ROAD SURFACES

Throughout the Royal Borough the need to provide hard-wearing and economic road surfaces has tended to dictate the use of standardised materials. The Council recognises however that the surfaces of carriageways and footways are major elements in the appearance of a conservation area, and so replacement and maintenance policies seek a balance between economy, safety and engineering standards, and visual amenity.

When first paved, most of the area's footways would have been covered with York Stone slabs of various sizes. This extremely expensive material is of high townscape value but unfortunately only a few limited areas of the original slabs still remain, one of the largest expanses being in **Canning Passage**.

Most of the footways are now surfaced with precast concrete paving slabs, sometimes with localised areas of mastic asphalt or in situ concrete where vehicular


damage has been a problem, for example in **Victoria Grove**. Where these materials have been extensively used, the surface is not as attractive visually as the texture of a slab or block surface. However, they have been necessarily used as a means of providing a safe walking surface at a more reasonable cost than, say, interlocking blocks which would be a functionally acceptable alternative. This conflict between creating a visually attractive pavement whilst providing a hardwearing and economic surface is well illustrated where **Launceston Place** meets **Victoria Grove**.

The carriageways are generally surfaced either with bituminous macadam or hot rolled asphalt, an exception being the mews around **Cornwall Gardens** where an example of an older paving material remains, namely setts. The original granite setts in **Canning Mews** have been retained and made an important part of the refurbishment scheme.

Although most pavement crossovers are surfaced with in situ concrete, there are a number covered with stone setts, for example the one at the entrance to **De Vere Cottages**. In nearly every case, these crossovers enhance the properties which they serve as well as the general streetscene. The granite kerbs used almost universally throughout the area are an appropriate and robust element of the streetscene.

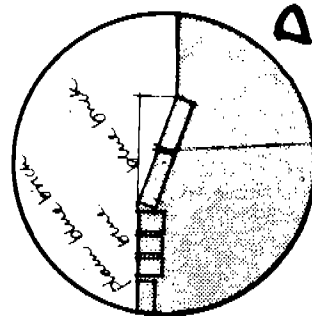
The Council will continue to ensure the retention and repair of traditional paving materials where these still

416 Kensington Court



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PLAIN BLUE
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STABLE
PAVERS



SECTION: RAMPED ENTRANCE TO PAVED AREA

[illegible]

REFURBISHMENT:

46 KENSINGTON COURT /
35a+35b KENSINGTON H

PROPOSED LANDSCAPING TREATMENT FOR
KENSINGTON COURT PASSAGE

HUNTER+PARTNERS: ARCHITECTS FOR
SEAWILLOW LTD

exist, and consider places where their reintroduction would be appropriate.

*



Traditional setts — Kynance Mews

The surfaces in **Kensington Court Passage** will be improved upon completion of the adjacent development, and enhancement of the junction of **Launceston Place** and **Victoria Grove** will be considered upon completion of the current traffic studies.

*

*

STREET FURNITURE

Street Lights

Changing standards of lighting, physical deterioration and higher running costs resulted in the removal of many of the original Victorian street lights in the late 1950's, although they were retained in many of the smaller residential streets. These lamps, where they have been retained, provide a distinctive Victorian character to these streets.

A new sodium lantern was especially developed nearly ten years ago to gain improved performance and lower running costs. Whilst visually the design characteristics were evolved to be appropriate to the ambience of the Royal Borough, they do not compare favourably in amenity terms to the Victorian lanterns that remain in this area. Additionally some residents consider that the colour of their light detracts from the character of the area at night, which is an important consideration.

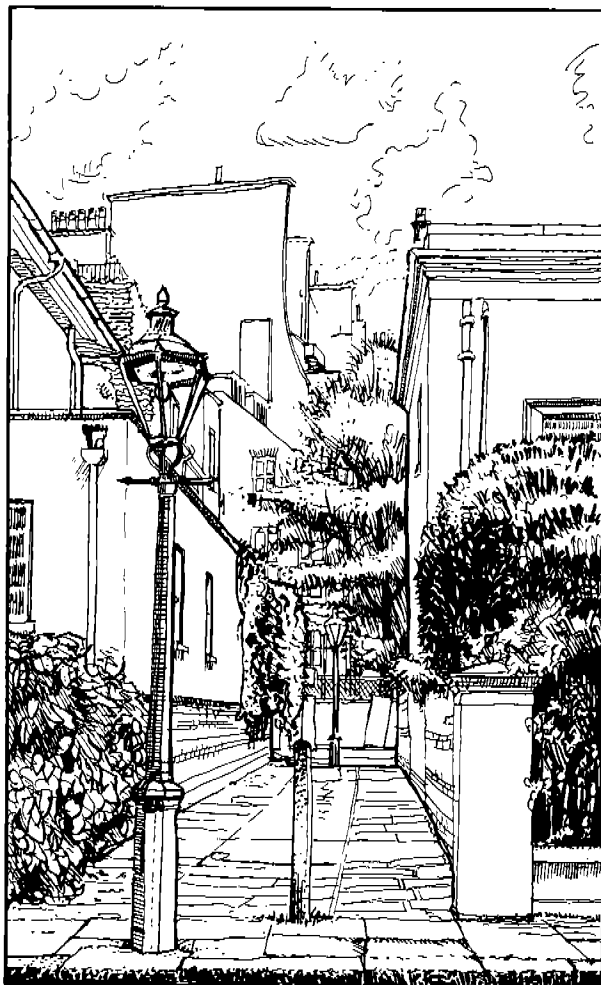
Where Kensington Patent lanterns remain, for example **Cambridge Place**, **Albert Place**, **Douro Place**, **Canning Passage** and the whole **Victoria Road** area south of **St. Albans Grove**, they are much appreciated by local residents. The Works and Town Planning Committees have agreed to the reintroduction of replica street lighting in **Canning Place**, **Launceston Place** and **Victoria Grove**. This is regarded by residents as a significant visual enhancement, since the Victorian design originally used is preferable to a modern one, however sensitively designed.

*

If this reintroduction is successful the Council will consider favourably further proposals for reinstatement if funds are available and residents are prepared to contribute toward such enhancement proposals.

Street Signs

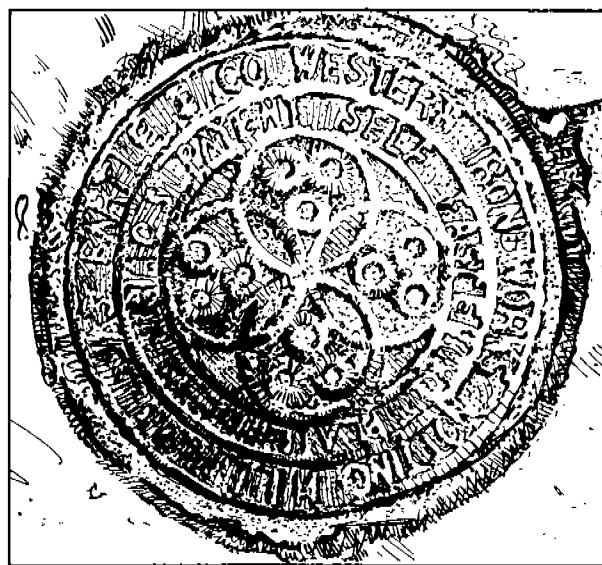
The location of traffic and parking signs, street name plates and similar signs is governed by very detailed Department of Transport regulations. Its manual aims at a balance between safety and amenity — with the latter gaining ground in recent years. There is little scope for changing most signs in the area, although there are a few examples of unsightly installations where some enhancement may be possible.



Passage leading from Albert Place to Canning Place

Coal Hole Covers

Where these occur their variety adds much interest to the footpaths. While the Council is obliged to offer the service of removing them on request, it encourages property owners to consider other ways of curing whatever damp penetration problems they may have resulting from pierced covers or leaking rims which allow water to seep into under-pavement vaults. Old covers can be rebbed in the footway surface over blocked-in openings and replacement unpierced coal hole covers can be purchased from stocks held by the Director of Engineering and Works Services at the Council's Central Depot. However non-standard sizes do mean that sometimes a whole new stone, ring and plate are required. *



Coal hole cover

Other Items

As in most of the Royal Borough there are a range of bollards and various substitutes in the area. When of a pattern carefully chosen to complement their surroundings they can be a considerable enhancement, as evidenced by the recent installation at the end of **Kynance Place**. These bollards are the current standard for use in conservation areas. However, there are examples at the south end of **Canning Passage** and at the north west corner of **Kensington Court** where inappropriate installations detract from visual amenity. *

A particularly important element of the Victorian character of **Cornwall Gardens** is the hexagonal pillar box remaining on the north side of the western enclosure.

The Council will continue to seek a high standard of visual amenity, where consistent with safety, when siting new street signs and other street furniture in the conservation areas. Where finances permit, the Council will consider ways of improving existing layouts, and of reducing visual clutter. *



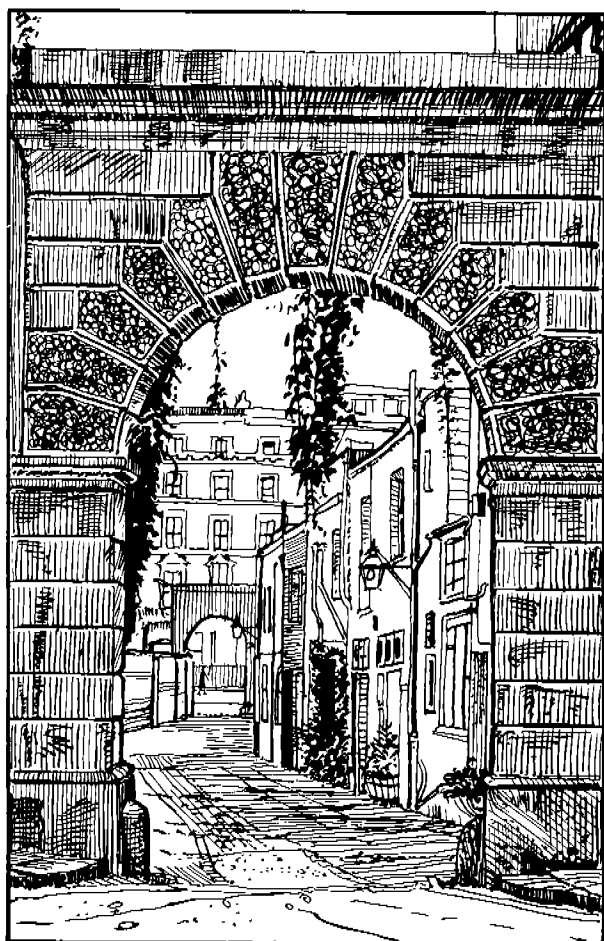
Street signs — North end of Launceston Place

Occasional instances of what looks like duplication do occur, and in some locations (for example, at the north end of **Launceston Place**) groups of signs which have been installed incrementally could perhaps be improved in appearance by a comprehensive redesign. *

There are some signs on posts which could with visual advantage be fixed to nearby walls or railings if their owner would permit; parking signs at the west end of **Cornwall Gardens** may be one such instance, as well as those around the little garden enclosure in **Emperor's Gate**. *



Street furniture — Lexham Walk



Entrance arch to Kynance Mews (east)

MEWS ARCHES

The De Vere, Cornwall and Queens Gate Conservation Areas share the characteristic of having a concentration of ornamental archways leading into their mews. These are major ornaments to the appearance of the area, but also, originally, served the practical purpose of decorously concealing from view many of the considerable service population required to keep late Victorian society functioning comfortably. The mouldings and detail visible to the main street were, of course, generally considered unnecessary on the face next to the mews. Designs of considerable charm were devised, presumably by the surveyors or architects responsible for the overall estate layout, and the standard of construction must have been reasonable to ensure their survival for so long. The ownership of most of these arches is now uncertain or unacknowledged, resulting in their having had less regular maintenance than most of the buildings in the area. Consequently a number of them have become rather rare examples of stucco still appearing in the way intended by the Victorian builders, who were aiming at a material resembling masonry. Today's almost universal use of a full gloss paint system to improve the weather resistance of the material (and its appearance by today's taste) makes it difficult to visualise the overall appearance of the stucco terraces as originally built.

FRONT BOUNDARIES AND FORECOURT PARKING

The extensive use of railings for boundary demarcation characterises large parts of the conservation areas in particular in the areas of large formal terraces with basements, such as **Kensington Court**, **Prince of Wales Terrace**, and **De Vere Gardens** and the area around and to the south of **Cornwall Gardens**. Walls and balustrades are used for many of the properties in the Kensington New Town area, sometimes in combination with railings, although many properties had them before they were removed in the Second World War. Most of the properties in this central part are set back from the street which has enabled the introduction of a wide variety of parking spaces, and garages have even been formed within some of the houses.

The laying out and physical construction of a hard standing for vehicles is subject to planning control only for buildings other than single-family dwellings. However, the removal of a front garden wall, fence or railings, or of the piers, more than one metre high in a conservation area requires listed building consent. For listed buildings most alterations require such consent.

When considering applications for alterations to front boundaries, the Council will adhere to the categories set out on the map on page 51, as amplified by the text on page 50-3. Where consent is not required for the proposed changes, residents are also encouraged to respect the policy. *

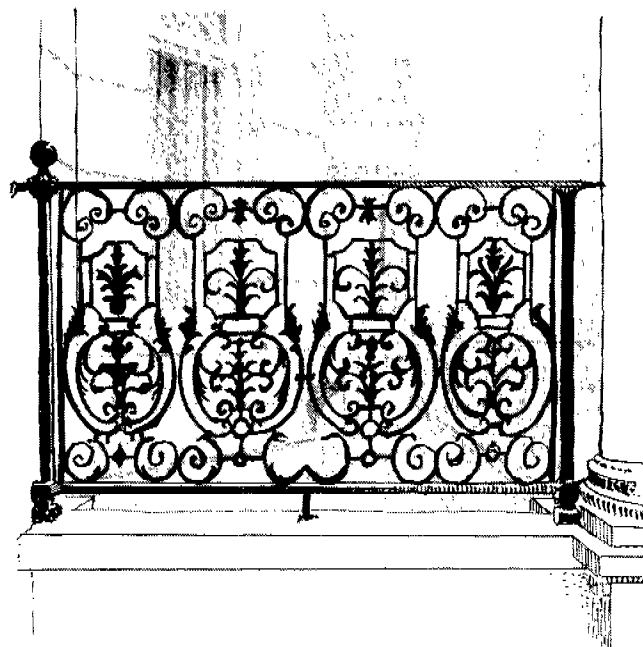
When funds are more readily available grants will be offered to group schemes for the restoration of boundaries to a uniform design to the streets identified in Category 2. At present there is a lack of such funds. *



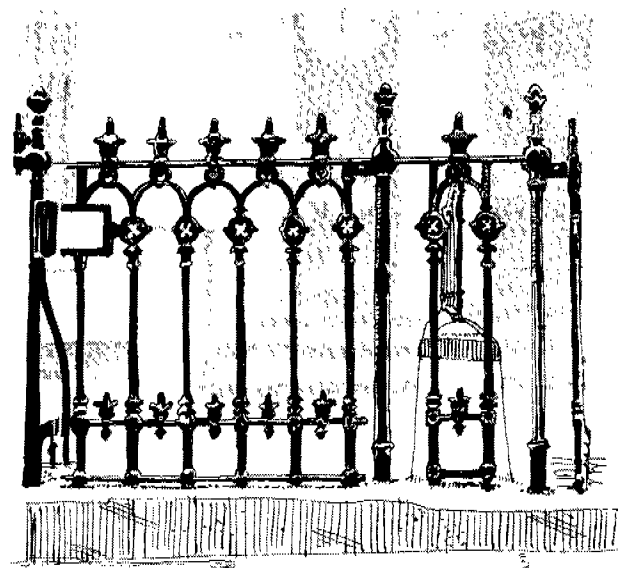
Forecourt parking — Stanford Road



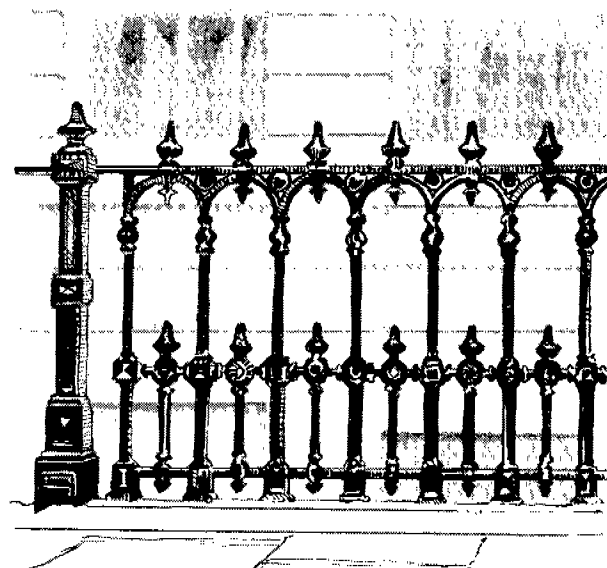
Kensington Court



De Vere Gardens



Kensington Court Place



Cornwall Gardens

Category 1. The form of buildings in **Kensington Court** and in **Cornwall Gardens** and the area to its south precludes the creation of any forecourt parking spaces. The railings which form the boundaries to most of the terraces in these streets are intact, and in a good state of repair.

A considerable variety of railings are found in the conservation areas, although a common pattern is usually retained for the length of any one terrace of uniform design. They serve to emphasise the unity of the building group without masking it from view.

Repetitive geometry is their most distinctive feature, and one or two missing heads or broken railings can

easily destroy their effect as part of the uniform linked details of a building group. For the same reason poor painting shows up badly, especially where highlighted against a stucco background. Their impact on a building group is further emphasised when complemented by a wrought iron balcony at first floor level. The blocks in **Kensington Court**, **Prince of Wales Terrace** and **St. Albans Mansions** well illustrate this point. In general, where uniform railings to most properties in a group are intact, the expense may be warranted to restore any gap or damage in an otherwise continuous run of railings. The Council's officers can advise on sources of supply for reproduction railings and a list of suppliers who have been active in the Borough is available from the Town Planning Information Office.