

## **QEC - KENSINGTON WALK**

Meet at the **Windsor Castle pub** on the junction of Campden Hill Road and Peel Street (for lunch and/or a drink) and a walk around the area starting at 1.30pm Sunday June 12th 2005.

Nearest underground: Notting Hill Gate. Also Holland Park or High Street Kensington.

**TOUR** of **OLD KENSINGTON SLUM**, modern **QEC** and **OLD KENSINGTON VILLAGE** finishing in **HOLLAND PARK** for **TEA**.

### **TOUR**

Starting from the Windsor Castle pub walk up Campden Hill Road Kensington Place on the right and wander up Hillgate Street and Hillgate Place. These densely packed terraces were built in the 1850s to house the servants, gardeners and coachmen employed by the nearby wealthy residents. Almost immediately these terraces had multi-occupancy and thus they became a terrible slum - **Old Kensington Slum**. However today the rainbow-coloured frontages are the result of C20 gentrification

Turn back along Kensington Place, cross over Campden Hill Road to Aubrey Walk. Much of this area has been developed with very exclusive flats and houses. Stop at **St George's church** on the north side of Aubrey Walk. It was built in 1864 by a quirky rogue-architect. The front of the church has turrets and towers, arches and arcades. The bricks are yellow London Stock with cream, red and black bricks around the arches while the walls are made from fossiliferous limestone, red sandstone and possibly Kentish Rag. At the furthest end of Aubrey Walk is Aubrey House, the site of the renowned C18 medicinal spring - Kensington Wells.

Walk back to Campden Hill Road and down the hill past the Windsor Castle to the residences of Kensington Heights opposite to Bedford Street. These houses were built in the 1850s. Just down the road is High Veld, the South African embassy. Now turn right into Campden Hill where Abuja House is the Nigerian Embassy. Walking along Campden Hill there is the new luxurious housing of the **Phillimore Square** development. At the end of this road is the famous **Holland Park School** with much greenery and shrubs. Planned by LCC Architect in late 1950s for 2000 pupils, Holland Park School was the first large post-war comprehensive in West London.

Onto Campden Hill Road again where the opulent houses of 1883 in the Observatory Gardens have a French flavour. And at last we come to **Queen Elizabeth College** - originally the Ladies' Department of King's College founded in 1885 but this site was established in 1915 (as the massive gates show) for the Household and Social Science departments and renamed in 1953 in honour of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. It is no longer QEC but The Phillimores. Walk along Duchess of Bedford Walk to see **The Refectory** which is the (Sales) reception area (and is open by appointment) where apartments for £1.4 million or £ 1.7 million can be bought. The full extent of the new Phillimore Square development can be glimpsed behind the end of QEC

buildings. For those who wish to shorten this walk the entrance to Holland Park is at the end of this road.

Crossing back over Campden Hill Road to Holland Street on the way to **Old Kensington Village**. Holland Street was originally a public way from Church Street to Holland House. Past the Town Hall and all the way down to near the end where one of the C18 houses is **Old House** with a Blue Plaque for Walter Crane, the artist. Onto Kensington Church Street where on the opposite side at **Dunes** has an elaborate doorway in the Art Nouveau style.

Walk down to **St Mary Abbot's church**. This was built in the late 1860s by Sir G C Scott and it stands on the site of the original parish church of Kensington. The suffix Abbots is derived from the connection with Abingdon Abbey which owned the manor in C13. The spire is over 60 metres high and houses a striking clock but with no dial on the outside. Inside the church are many minor works removed from the older church. Walk around the side of the church to the back and there are the late C19 **Girls' and Boys' schools** with two blue charity statues visible high up. Follow the Kensington Church Walk (note the modern wall paintings) back to Holland Street and thence across Campden Hill Road into Duchess of Bedford Walk to reach the entrance to Holland Park

**Holland Park** with the peacocks, rabbits, Open Air Theatre, birds and woodland walks is a beautiful 'green lung' in Campden Hill. Follow the path ahead which goes past the best-sited Youth Hostel in London and then walk up the steps leading to the gates (locked) in front of the Jacobean **Holland House**. This house was built around 1608 but was bombed and gutted during World War Two leaving only the East Wing worth restoring.

At the end of this path is the **Café**. But surrounding the café are several **flower gardens** including the Dutch or Formal Garden and the Rose Garden, all ablaze with colour at this summer season. The round brick C18 building - the **Ice House** - will have an art show. There are numerous walks further away to the Arboretum, the Wildlife Pond and to see the various statues including one of the third Lord Holland - the statesman Henry Fox (and his pond). Lastly a must, the serene **Kyoto Garden** with a small lake, water cascade and other Japanese features.

### **Acknowledgments.**

Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner; London 3: North West Geoffrey Young;

Walking London's Parks and Gardens

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