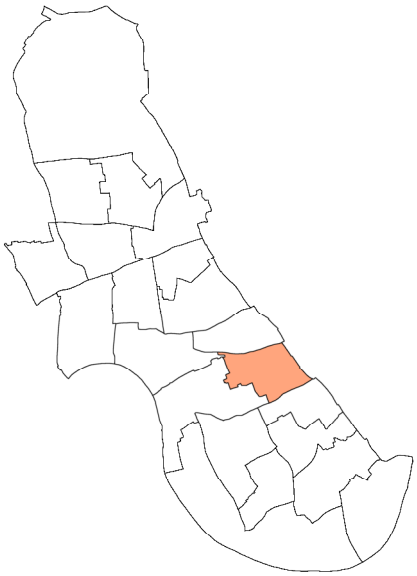
# West Kensington ward

**For years there was a Gibbs Green ward which very closely resembled today's West Kensington ward and the former North End ward. William Gibbs was the builder of much of the district of Baron's Court, so should he be the local personality with which this ward is most closely identified?**



The answer is "not really" because Gibbs Green wasn't named after Mr Gibbs - that he built much of the place is purely coincidental. As far back as the 1600s there was a highway through this area called Gybbesgreen Lane.

William Gibbs' impact on the area is important, but so too is that of Sir William Palliser who commissioned the Baron's Court estate; the packed grid of streets between Margravine Cemetery and North End Road, which is the largest population centre in the ward - by a stretch.

There are three competing theories as to how Baron's Court got its name.

The first is that Palliser wanted a name for the area that competed with Earl's Court, the more well-known neighbourhood to the east. That's the claim that puts the apostrophe in "Baron's".

The second is that Palliser named the district after his Baronscourt estate in Ireland - and, if that idea is correct, there should be no apostrophe. Nor should it be two words. Searching through the local newspaper archives for stories about Baron's Court ward, you often find the Fulham Chronicle refer to it as Baronscourt when that wasn't its name, so perhaps this shows which theory the paper was inclined to.

The third suggestion is that the ancient name for the area was the Court Baron, a title deed held by the Bishop of London, who of course resided at Fulham Palace.

The Avonmore ward profile looks in greater detail at Baron's Court ward given that almost all of Avonmore was within Baron's Court, whereas West Kensington contained a large amount of the old Lillie ward.

Baron's Court was a safe Conservative ward - from 1945 onwards the only reliably Conservative ward in Fulham borough - while Lillie ward became a Labour-leaning marginal - between 1945 and the borough's abolition in 1965 only once electing Conservative councillors.

Until the 1960s, essentially only the side of this ward west of North End Road was inhabited. There were the mansions in Beaumont Road and Beaumont Crescent, and the houses set back along Lillie Road towards West Brompton. But otherwise everything to the east of North End Road was railway land: sidings, carriage sheds and the Lillie Bridge London Transport repair depot. This was a scale of land requisitioned for the railways only otherwise seen in this borough at Old Oak.

The Baron's Court estate was built to imitate the sort of grand housing seen in Earl's Court and South Kensington more widely. One of the characteristics of the estate is that, in the main, its streets run east-west but the character of each street is not uniform. That in itself isn't surprising: many sections of streets in the borough were sold off in lots with different developers building their lot in their own preferred style. But in Baron's Court there are, essentially, two styles of housing.

West of Vereker Road, whichever of the streets you pick, you will find red brick town houses and mansion blocks, mostly with basements - a style redolent of areas like Knightsbridge. East of Vereker Road you will find white stucco town houses and mansion blocks in the Palladian style, far more typical of Earl's Court and South Kensington.

And yes, there are exceptions to this generalisation. Comeragh Road changes character further west at the junction of Gledstanes Road; Barton Road and Palliser Road have a character all of their own: a more rustic arts and craft style of home, almost Swiss. But otherwise this divide between the white and red sides of Baron's Court is clear.

This is one of the most densely populated neighbourhoods in the borough: over 4,000 residents are squeezed into this ordered grid of streets. It is a multicultural district; a high turnover district; overwhelmingly of tenants rather than owner-occupiers. It has among the highest proportion of European Union citizens, young and professional, taking advantage of the tube links at Baron's Court and West Kensington stations as well as the somewhat lower property prices than the next train stops further into the centre.

Mohandas Gandhi lived in Baron's Court Road as a student; so did Sir Geoffrey De Havilland, the aircraft designer. Marcus Garvey, the black rights crusader, lived in Talgarth Road, and Emily Davidson, the suffragette, in Fairholme Road. These four characters give something of a flavour of the mix of establishment and insurgence that cohabited in the Baron's Court estate.

Each of the four wards covering the W14 postal district: Addison, Brook Green, Avonmore and West Kensington has a somewhat different character from each other - but they are all quite distinct from the rest of the borough.

All were part of the relatively short-lived Baron's Court constituency: a Labour-leaning marginal, during the period when the borough's population fell and its constituency representation went from four seats, to three, to two and then to the mess we have today. They are all tightly packed districts of large houses or mansions mostly subdivided into flats or homes in multiple-occupancy. That type of housing tends to produce high population turnover - and the corollary of that is very low voter turnout.

Why are those two factors linked? Simply because if you are just passing through a community; here for six months, a year or maybe two, you are far less likely to engage with it; to care enough about local issues to find out who your representatives are and get active politically.

Throughout the 1990s, turnout from this part of Gibbs Green ward barely surpassed 20% even though it had the potential to wield far more electoral clout because it was



where the bulk of the population lived. In person turnout at the Bhavan Centre polling station in 2026 was just 26%.

Baron's Court ward extended as far south as Star Road. The Lillie ward section: the area from Star Road south to Lillie Road was of a different character and covered two different areas.

In the west was Queen's Club Gardens, a set of mansion blocks that was, without question, the Conservative stronghold in Lillie ward and which kept that ward marginal. In the east were a set of four streets: ABC streets - Archel, Bramber and Chesson, plus Turneville Road.

These were big houses with basements but almost all sub-divided and far less affluent than the Barons Court estate. Today many are owned by housing associations, a few by the council, though many of the privately owned homes - mostly at the western end, have gentrified considerably.

In the Lillie ward profile we looked at how a large part of this area was devastated by bombing during the Second World War. Eight high explosive bombs were dropped on the railway sidings east of Lillie Road - in addition to the bomb sites covering Normand Park and the Clem Attlee estate shown on the Lillie ward map.

Even before slum clearance sites had been drawn up for chunks of East Fulham and Baron's Court, Patrick Abercrombie's Greater London Plan of 1943 was also destined to have a big impact on this neighbourhood. The plan set out the government's response both to the damage done to the capital by the war, and the relatively unplanned, haphazard way London had been allowed to grow prior to the war.

One of the radical solutions for a city with rapidly growing car ownership and the ensuing congestion it was creating, was a series of arterial roads from the heart of London out through the suburbs and beyond. One of these became the A4, which ran through Talgarth Road, demolishing its entire northern terrace to make room for the dual carriageway.

The southern terrace, already backing onto the District and Piccadilly tube lines, now had its frontage blighted by round-the-clock air and noise pollution. It was here that the end scenes of the film "Trainspotting" were filmed, in a tiny Talgarth Road bedsit.

The widening of Talgarth Road made it the most physical road boundary in the southern half of the borough. It was also one reason why Baron's Court ward ceased to be viable ward in 1964 when Fulham and Hammersmith amalgamated: it was just such an obvious divide between the two sides of that old ward.

Following the Blitz, Fulham Council had cleared three streets: Dieppe Street, Eli Street and Hilmer Street, and scrubland, to build an estate just behind Beaumont Crescent. This became the Gibbs Green estate: six low-rise tenement blocks. On the western side of North End Road they built Alice Gilliatt Court - named after the first female mayor of Fulham - in a similar style to Gibbs Green.

But this was just the start. The whole of the north side of Star Road was cleared and an estate that has gone by a few names: the Star Road estate, the Cheeseman's Terrace estate and the Maystar estate, was constructed. And, on most of the sidings immediately south of the Gibbs Green estate, the West Kensington estate was built.

Both Maystar and the West Ken estates are unique, at least in terms of this borough. Maystar was built on two distinct levels. At ground level the estate was divided into fairly small clusters of terraced maisonettes, often set around squares - Vine Square, Shuters Square and Orchard Square.

But the upstairs layer: Cheeseman's Terrace, was one of the remarkable - and eventually notorious - streets-in-the-sky estates. You could walk up a twisting ramp at the Vereker Road end and then along a seemingly never ending zigzag corridor right the way to North End Road.

This was one of those misguided architectural ideas that tried to replicate terraced streets but within a much higher rise environment. The archetype of this type of estate: Park Hill in Sheffield, was designed almost literally as a road - milkmen could drive their floats up to the street in the sky and fulfil their round as though they were on ground level. An idea fine in theory but often very not so in the lived experience of the residents.

While it made Cheeseman's Terrace a neighbourhood unto itself - separate from the ground floor estates, the upstairs concourse had very little oversight. That provided a haven for thieves, muggers and gangs; even for harmless but rowdy teenagers to mess around. The numerous stairs to it throughout the footprint of the

**Cromwell Road Extension**

# More dual carriageway proposed

LATEST plans for the widening of Great Church Lane, Hammersmith, and Talgarth Road, West Kensington, are that the road is to be made a dual carriageway.

This amendment to the original proposal for the road widening was agreed to at a meeting of the London County Council on Tuesday.

Following suggestions from the Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation the Town Planning Committee of the L.C.C. proposed an amendment to provide for the construction of dual carriageways, each 30ft. wide and allowing for three lanes of traffic, in place of the single carriageway, 45ft. wide, previously proposed.

This will enable a uniform road layout to be provided throughout the Cromwell Road Extension.

So far as the portion between Great Church Lane and Talgarth Road is concerned, the provision of a double carriageway will not involve the acquisition of any additional property but it will be necessary to re-house eight families.

The additional work will cost an estimated extra £35,000 and will involve the loss of some of the trees on the southern boundry of St. Paul's School playing fields. An offer is to be made to the governors of the school to provide and plant new trees to replace those lost.

# CORONERS WILL HELP

Fulham Council's recommendation that local authorities should have fuller information about riders by coroners' juries when they are connected with fatal road accidents, has been replied to by the Home Office.

A report by Fulham's Works Committee says that the Metropolitan Boroughs Standing Joint Committee, who supported the recommendation, have been told by the Home Office that the Secretary of State has no authority to issue directions to coroners.

"He has, however," says the report, "brought the views of the committee to the notice of the London coroners, who have been good enough to say that they fully appreciate the desire of the metropolitan borough councils to have information about any recommendations made by juries in road accident cases, whether useful or not, and will in future keep this in mind with a view to notifying the councils concerned of all such riders and recommendations."

# 400 to be moved as council faces £5m bill




● Sharnbrook House — scaffolding provides shelter against loose bricks

## Court battle over troubled tower block

By BILL PENN AND ALAN SEAY

THE council first became worried about West Kensington Estate when bricks and tiles started falling off from the tower blocks.

Scaffolding was put up round the blocks and an independent team of engineers called in to investigate the structure.

The results were enough to convince the council of the need to move out nearly 400 families while repair work is carried out.

While the council's top lawyers battle with M. J. Gleeson Limited for the cost of the repairs, the builders are aiming to recover thousands of pounds from the council which was retained from the £3.5m building fee.

Councillors and officers are refusing to discuss the progress of the legal battles.

Gleeson have built two other housing developments for the council — at Dorset Wharf and Star Road, in West Kensington.

Dorset Wharf has between 50 and 60 riverside flats and a community centre, and Star Road development contains shops and flats.

Liberal leader, Simon Knott, predicts the housing squeeze could result in the suspension of the transfer list for moves to alternative council housing and seriously affect the waiting list for homes.

He said: "They might as well close the transfer list down during the repair work on the estate. It is a very serious situation."

Housing chairman, Richard Lazarus, admitted: "Over time the tower blocks might become unsafe.

"At the moment the tower blocks are not unsafe, although there has been the odd brick slipping off — hence the scaffolding."

The potential housing crisis has also alarmed tenants' associations in the borough.

The secretary of the new West London Federation of Council Tenants, Frank Pillman, is calling for a total ban on housing for families from outside the borough.

He said: "There is a very serious housing problem which is going to get worse. The council must take a tough line on this.

"We also want to see good tenants protected by the council and a crackdown on rent dodgers who can afford to pay their way."

Residents on West Kensington Estate have already met councillors and officers to discuss the removal programme.

The chairman of the estates housing association, Rose Palmer, said families have resigned themselves to the move.

She said: "We know it is going to be a bit of an upheaval, but we are going to have to make the best of it."

A confidential document given to the Gazette gives details of the council's plans for payments to tenants to be moved.

Those moved permanently could receive a 'home loss payment' of up to £1,500.

They could also qualify for an allowance to cover carpets and curtains which cannot be adapted to their new homes.

The council may be prepared to pay up to £5.50 per square yard for carpets and £2 for curtains.

The report also says families moved temporarily can claim for storage costs for surplus furniture while the work is done and expenses for refitting carpets.

The council may also be making advance payments to tenants.

The estate is in North End Road.



● Simon Knott — transfer list is threatened



● Richard Lazarus — blocks are not unsafe

estate meant there were escape routes aplenty for them when the police were called.

In the early 2000s this street-in-the-sky was ended as the walkways were broken up and controlled entry systems introduced: now you can walk only the length of a block: a couple of dozen homes, with stairways at each end.

The West Ken estate was even bigger than Maystar. It's a mix of three types of housing. There are five relatively high-rise blocks of nine or ten storeys: Churchward and Fairburn, Desborough and Lickey, and Sharnbrook Houses. Staggered along North End Road are some zigzag four storey blocks. And swishing through the edges and centre of the estate are terraced streets of town houses like Aisgill Avenue, Ivatt Place and Stanier Close.

Gibbs Green estate was opened in 1961 and the West Ken in 1974. These were significant amounts of council housing: 160 homes on Gibbs Green, 315 on Maystar, 77 on Alice Gilliatt, and over 600 on the West Ken estate: well over 1,152 homes just on these four estates.

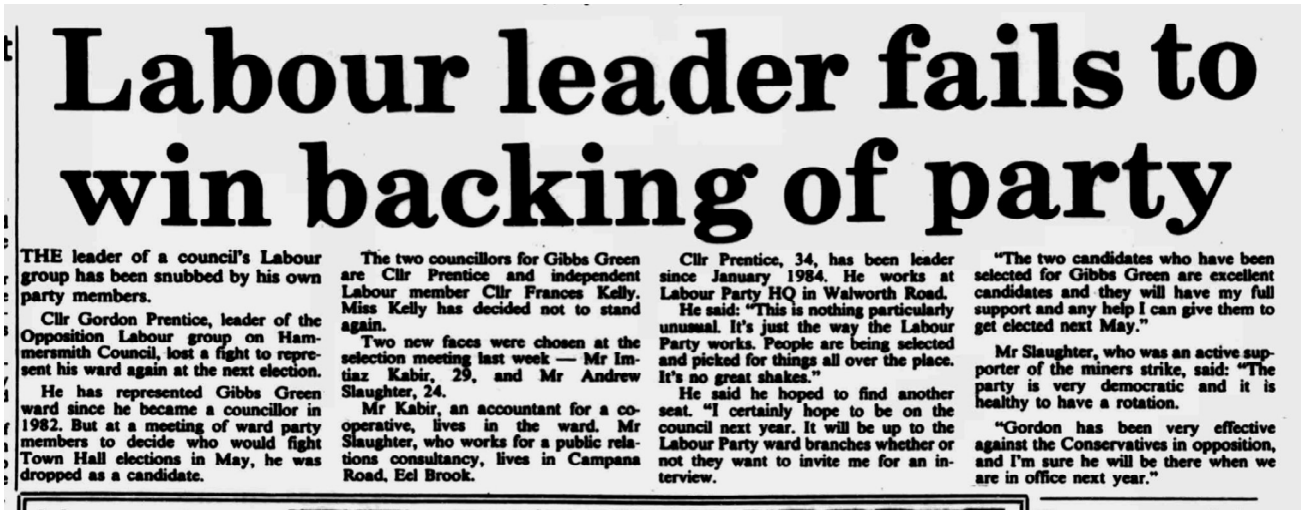
And, of course, there were the council- and housing association-owned homes in the ABC streets, smaller blocks like Browning Court 25 and 50 Vereker Road, Robert Gentry House in Gledstanes Road (whose residents get a free view of the Queens Club tennis tournament each summer as it backs onto the courts). and Ada Lewis House in Palliser Road.

To begin with, Gibbs Green was a highly marginal ward, given the presence of the Barons Court estate and Queen's Club Gardens - and because most of the council housing hadn't been built. But the massive demographic shift against the Conservatives among the sorts of leaseholders who live in Baron's Court had already begun. In the last elections to Fulham Council in 1962 the Conservative majority had been whittled down to 17%: 49% to 32% - and the stronger Tory areas had been moved to Avonmore. Labour had won Lillie ward in 1962 by 44% to 26, though a lot less of Lillie moved to Gibbs Green than did Baron's Court.

figure majorities elsewhere in the borough at that election.

The reason - or at least a part of it - was boundary changes. Gibbs Green was shrunk to a 2-councillor ward. The Maystar estate, the ABC streets and, critically, Queen's Club Gardens, were moved to Normand ward.

Gibbs Green became just the Baron's Court estate west of North End Road and the Gibbs Green and West Ken estates east of it. The change in the sort of people living on the Baron's Court: from stable, long-term Conservative-voting couples to transient, disengaged singles, eroded Conservative support enough that they simply weren't strong enough on this side to outvote the council estates. In 1982 this was one of the wards where the impact of the SDP/Liberal Alliance into the contest hurt Labour more than the Conservatives.



# Labour leader fails to win backing of party

THE leader of a council's Labour group has been snubbed by his own party members.

Cllr Gordon Prentice, leader of the Opposition Labour group on Hammersmith Council, lost a fight to represent his ward again at the next election.

He has represented Gibbs Green ward since he became a councillor in 1982. But at a meeting of ward party members to decide who would fight Town Hall elections in May, he was dropped as a candidate.

The two councillors for Gibbs Green are Cllr Prentice and independent Labour member Cllr Frances Kelly. Miss Kelly has decided not to stand again.

Two new faces were chosen at the selection meeting last week — Mr Imtiaz Kabir, 29, and Mr Andrew Slaughter, 24.

Mr Kabir, an accountant for a co-operative, lives in the ward. Mr Slaughter, who works for a public relations consultancy, lives in Campana Road, Ecl Brook.

Cllr Prentice, 34, has been leader since January 1984. He works at Labour Party HQ in Walworth Road.

He said: "This is nothing particularly unusual. It's just the way the Labour Party works. People are being selected and picked for things all over the place. It's no great shakes."

He said he hoped to find another seat. "I certainly hope to be on the council next year. It will be up to the Labour Party ward branches whether or not they want to invite me for an interview.

"The two candidates who have been selected for Gibbs Green are excellent candidates and they will have my full support and any help I can give them to get elected next May."

Mr Slaughter, who was an active supporter of the miners strike, said: "The party is very democratic and it is healthy to have a rotation.

"Gordon has been very effective against the Conservatives in opposition, and I'm sure he will be there when we are in office next year."

Labour - whose three councillors in 1964 included Betty Boothroyd, the future Speaker of the House of Commons - won the inaugural battle for Gibbs Green by barely 150 votes. They lost it by a country mile in 1968: 70% to 30% - it was the second safest Tory ward that year after Avonmore.

But then the council estates began to populate. Labour got Gibbs Green back in 1971 and increased their majority in 1974 (when there was a national and borough swing away from them). Nonetheless, Gibbs Green was hardly a safe ward and 1978: a big Conservative wave year, was rapidly approaching.

Yet the Conservatives did not win Gibbs Green in 1978. The result was tight - but nothing compared to the tiny

New councillor Gordon Prentice only hung onto his seat by twenty votes; a defeated Tory candidate being Michael Fallon, the future Conservative Party chairman and Defence Secretary.

Both Gibbs Green and Normand swung very heavily to Labour in 1986 after the Fulham by-election: a 16% swing here giving them over 60% of the vote. The ward looked safe for the first time. However, that was a slightly false dawn because both wards swung back more heavily than average to the Tories in 1990. Neither Gibbs Green nor Normand were exactly marginal - but they once again couldn't be called safe either.

Labour pulled significantly clear in 1994; then they won by a landslide in a 1997 by-election. Charlie Treloggan,

the new councillor, won with almost three quarters of the vote in a very low turnout summer by-election. By now Gibbs Green had diverged a lot from Normand: the Conservatives almost snatched that ward in 1998 while Labour's majority grew and grew in Gibbs Green.

In the electoral review of 2000, the pre-1978 version of Gibbs Green returned. Back came Queen's Club Gardens, those ABC streets and the Maystar estate. The new ward was (stupidly) called North End: confusing for those living in other wards North End Road ran through and not all that accurate historically as the township of North End was further north.

The first contest in North End was close. The Conservatives worked very hard to try to oust the council leader Andrew Slaughter and education cabinet member David Williams, and Labour only held on by 6%: 45% to 39%.

That sort of lead was nowhere near large enough for Labour to defend in 2006 when the third Tory landslide enveloped the borough. For the first time since 1971 West Kensington had three Conservative councillors. The Tory majorities ranged from 197 to 290.

The Gazette
Friday, July 4, 1997

# Candidates line up for by-election battle

VOTERS in Gibbs Green, West Kensington, go to the polls next Thursday to choose a replacement councillor for Iain Coleman, who became MP for Hammersmith and Fulham at the General Election. **MIKE PARKINSON** looks at the candidates:

### James Browne – Conservative


James Browne

JAMES Browne is a 29-year-old barrister who lives locally.

Part of his work involves helping people win compensation for road and industrial accidents. James has a very active record of community service and, having spoken to many Gibbs Green residents during the General Election, he is now fighting to improve the quality of life in the borough. He said: "I am campaigning for better quality council services and for a lower council tax, which, under Labour, has risen by 50 per cent over the past three years.

"I am also campaigning to take better care of our local environment; to end the sweetheart deals between Labour and the unions; and to stop squeegee merchants and beggars pestering residents at West Kensington tube station and at the Talgarth Road junction.

"I also want to establish a 24-hour graffiti and vandalism hotline and a pledge that work on cleaning up vandalism and graffiti will be started by council workers within 24 hours of a resident's complaint.

"It is also important to ensure the council's noise complaints line is run properly.

"Finally, I would like to improve controlled parking in Barons Court to stop commuters taking residents' parking spaces."

### Tamara Dragadze – Lib-Dem


Tamara Dragadze

TAMARA Dragadze, 50, was born in Oswestry, Shropshire. Her grandparents came from Georgia in the former Soviet Union. She works as a university researcher and has a son, 18, and a daughter, 16, whom she has brought up in Fulham.

She said: "I would like to serve on the council of the borough in which I have lived for so many years and know so well.

"Parking problems in Gibbs Green continue to be difficult for some residents. Safety is another important issue, while others share like myself the anxiety of seeing their children unable to afford to remain in the borough once they have grown up. The Labour government has promised that affordable housing will be available. As a Lib-Dem councillor I would have the independence to speak my mind and make sure the council keeps its promises.

"I hope Gibbs Green residents will give me a chance to demonstrate that I can make a difference for important improvements to the area they live in.

"A third Lib-Dem councillor would make a real difference to the council, whereas an extra Labour or Conservative councillor would make no difference at all."

### Charlie Treloggan – Labour

BLACK-CAB driver Charlie Treloggan has lived in Fulham all his life and in the West Kensington Estate for the last 25 years.

He is a widower with a daughter and two grandchildren and has been vice chairman of Fulham North Housing Forum and a leading figure on the West Kensington Action Group.


Charlie Treloggan

He said: "I have seen the problems faced by local people and many asked me to stand for the council because they know I share their concerns. Concerns about rising crime, about job prospects, about the availability of decent, affordable accommodation.

"For years people have suffered because Tory policies helped only a privileged few. Tax rises, a crumbling NHS, falling education standards and rising crime. That is the legacy they've left our new government. So, things are not going to suddenly improve. But I believe that things can and will get better.

"One example of how the new Labour government will make a positive and practical change for local people is the availability of accommodation at affordable rents. The Tories did not allow councils to use the money raised from the sale of council homes to build new accommodation.

"Labour, in government, will now allow councils to use the money over a period of time to build new homes for local people who need them."

The new Conservative council had big plans for West Kensington. Developers Capital and County (Capco) had purchased the famous Earls Court exhibition centre site, which straddled the borough boundary. The new Tory administration wanted to extend this redevelopment all the way to North End Road, demolishing the West Ken and Gibbs Green council estates in the process. This vast new neighbourhood would contain well over 10,000 new homes.

By 2010 the plans were at an advanced stage but were just that: plans. Nothing had been formally agreed, no contracts exchanged. But the council elections that year reminded the Conservatives why they needed to realign North End ward politically. Labour's Daryl Brown - a well-known community activist - won back one of the three seats here. But Hammersmith and Fulham stayed Tory and the sell-off plans proceeded. In 2012 the council sold the two estates to Capco for £105 million and the estates were on a clear trajectory to demolition.

Labour won back the remaining two seats in North End in 2014. There was little evidence that North End voters cared that much about the redevelopment plans - or perhaps it might be more accurate that residents may not have believed things would change if Labour won.

It's also wrong to assume that everyone here wanted to halt the estate demolition. One of the Conservative arguments was that the replacement neighbourhood would lift up a relatively dowdy area with higher quality housing. Some estate residents may also have looked forward to being allocated a new home within this neighbourhood.

But the newly-elected Labour council was committed to halting the plans for the estates. Yet despite going through the contracts with a fine tooth-comb they could not find a way to default on the deal and Capco was uninterested in selling them back.

By this time the estates had also organised themselves into a vocal, smart, high profile campaign. They called themselves "The People's Estates", got funding to hire a professional community organiser, roped in left-wing architects to come up with a viable alternative that would retain the estates, and started the process of trying to take community ownership of their homes.

These were all vital steps towards saving the estate, but what actually sank Capco was the economy. They had purchased Earls Court prior to the financial crisis and the land had lost a lot of value subsequently, gumming-up the



company's liquidity. Then the mayoralty of London switched from Conservative Boris Johnson to Labour's Sadiq Khan. Capco had lost the backing of the capital's mayor: the straw that broke Capco's back.

Now keen to get some liquidity into the site, they sold the Empress State Building: the 28-storey tricorn tower block on the edge of the Earl's Court site to the Met Police for £250 million. This was a bespoke deal but it gave hope that, as bits of the site were now negotiable, the estate sell-off might be reversed ignited.

In 2018 Labour, which had been vociferous in their championing of the estates, won North End by margins not seen since that 1986 landslide. All three councillors won with majorities of over a thousand on a near 16% swing - the largest swing in the borough that year.

A year later Capco, crushed by the continuingly worsening losses they were being saddled with because of their stagnant planning permission and the terrible headlines they were getting, sold their interest in Earls Court to Delancey. If it can be called a consolation, at least the first stage of Capco's masterplan: Lillie Square, in Seagrave Road, just across from the main Earl's Court site, had been partially completed.

Wanting to focus on the parts of the site that had been cleared - Earls Court One and Two - Delancey sold the two estates back to Hammersmith and Fulham for the same price Capco had purchased them for: £105 million. The saga was over, the estates were saved and the residents had won.

Earl's Court minus the estates still contained land with planning permission in North End ward. As such, when the 2019 boundary review commenced, the ward was projected to grow by almost 1,400 voters by 2025. That electorate would make the ward far too large, and so changes were needed.

North End - renamed West Kensington: the fourth name for this area (Baron's Court, Gibbs Green, North End, West Kensington) remained broadly unchanged but Queen's Club Gardens was removed.

Even though Queen's Club Gardens wasn't any longer quite the vault of Conservative votes it used to be, removing these mansion blocks made West Kensington virtually unwinnable for that party. They would not have won it in 2010 and 2006 would have been questionable.

**West Kensington summary results**

| | Con | Lab | LD | Grn | Oths |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gibbs Green ward** | | | | | |
| **1964** | 45.5 | 51.3 | | | 3.2 |
| **1968** | 69.9 | 30.1 | | | |
| **1971** | 46.9 | 53.1 | | | |
| **1974** | 38.1 | 50.9 | 11.0 | | |
| **1978** | 41.9 | 49.4 | 3.4 | | |
| **1982** | 39.7 | 43.3 | 18.6 | | |
| **1986** | 26.5 | 63.1 | 9.3 | | 1.1 |
| **1990** | 39.3 | 53.8 | 6.9 | | |
| **1994** | 31.4 | 56.0 | 12.6 | | |
| **1997B** | 20.2 | 74.4 | 5.4 | | |
| **1998** | 25.2 | 59.8 | 15.0 | | |
| **North End ward** | | | | | |
| **2002** | 39.5 | 45.5 | 9.9 | 5.0 | |
| **2006** | 49.6 | 40.0 | 10.4 | | |
| **2010** | 42.8 | 38.6 | 18.6 | | |
| **2014** | 38.0 | 46.7 | 7.9 | 7.4 | |
| **2018** | 23.7 | 63.3 | 10.6 | 2.4 | |
| **West Kensington ward** | | | | | |
| **2022** | 20.3 | 64.4 | 12.8 | 2.5 | |
| **2026** | 15.0 | 39.0 | 9.7 | 24.5 | 11.8 |

Labour won another huge majority in 2022 - slightly smaller than 2018 but still 64% to 20%. But in 2026 Labour's vote crashed again: down more than 25 percentage points, leaving them below 40%.

If the Conservatives had been the beneficiaries of that Labour collapse they would have won the ward - but they lost about five points of support too, ending up 15%.

Reform debuted with about just under 12% of the vote - one of their candidates here being "Brexit Barrister" Martin Howe who had represented Colehill ward for the Conservatives in 1982: a gap between the two elections of 44 years - almost certainly a local record. But the Greens, who only fielded one candidate, came second to Labour - winning one quarter of the votes cast.

West Kensington was not a Green target ward: that can be seen in them only finding one activist to stand here. All their efforts were in Shepherds Bush, not Fulham - so this vote was even more remarkable. The gap between the third Labour councillor and the Green was just 283 or 11.5%, making this their best result in Hammersmith & Fulham. What might they have achieved if anyone had realised they would get so close and campaigned here?

Yet the ward does have flags that suggested it would make a decent Green target. Unlike White City: their chosen target, the Labour vote in West Kensington has been pretty volatile. The combined population living in council rented and private rented homes here is 76%.

The Baron's Court estate in particular contains stacks of the sort of young, transient professionals attracted to the Greens' left-wing message; animated by Gaza and other social justice causes - but not all that intent in turning out in a council election.

That's why campaigns and get out the vote efforts on polling day matter in a ward like this. Hindsight, of course - and Hammersmith and Fulham will likely never be the sort of borough the Green Party is strong enough to run the sort of intensive campaign needed to make this ward more competitive.

Labour's 39% is less than they lost by in 2006 and on a par with their 2010 showing when they still lost two of the three seats here.

It's part of a row of weak Labour showings down the eastern side of the borough: 38.6% in Avonmore, 35.9% in Lillie, 35.7% in Walham Green and just 30.4% in Sands End.

It's not obvious why this wall of wards especially soured on Labour in 2026 (compared to other parts of the borough more traditionally marginal) and somewhat remarkable that they still managed to win all but two of the twelve seats within them. West Kensington is the only one of them where the Greens finished second and is still the least winnable for the Conservatives.

As Earls Court starts to get built and occupied, it may realign politics in this ward. Lillie Square: that earlier part of the development in Lillie ward may have helped the swing to the Conservatives there. But Earl's Court will also contain a lot of private renters, a lot of leaseholders and some student accommodation - all part of a cost of living crisis constituency spending a huge chunk of their income on rent or mortgage repayments.

But it's unlikely to have voters on the register by 2030: the next council elections, so if anyone wants to stage an upset, they'll have to do so with the ward as it is now, not as it will be.

## Rollcall of West Kensington ward councillors

including North End ward (2002-2022) and Gibbs Green ward (1964-2002)

**2026**
- Victoria Brignall
- Daryl Brown
- Florian Chevoppe-Verdier

**2022**
- Daryl Brown
- Florian Chevoppe-Verdier
- Sally Taylor

**2018**
- Daryl Brown
- Larry Culhane
- Zara Quyyum

**2014**
- Daryl Brown
- Larry Culhane
- Ali Hashem

**2010**
- Daryl Brown
- Georgie Cooney
- Thomas Crofts

**2006**
- Caroline Ffiske
- Sarah Gore
- Lucy Gugen

**2002**
- Andrew Slaughter
- Charlie Treloggan
- David Williams

**1998**
- Andrew Slaughter
- Charlie Treloggan

**1996B**
- Charlie Treloggan

**1994**
- Iain Coleman
- Andrew Slaughter

**1990**
- Iain Coleman
- Andrew Slaughter

**1986**
- Syed Kabir
- Andrew Slaughter

**1982**
- Frances Kelly
- Gordon Prentice

**1978**
- Frances Kelly
- Geoff Taylor

**1974**
- Marie Louise Clarke
- Frances Kelly
- Adrian Norridge

**1971**
- Adrian Noridge
- Harry Perlin
- Phyllis Perlin

**1968**
- Cyril Arnold
- Margaret James
- George Patterson

**1964**
- Betty Boothroyd
- Leslie Jones
- Harry Perlin