

Georgian Leaflet No. 1

# THE GEORGIAN GROUP

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*ITS ORIGIN AND PURPOSE*

THE GEORGIAN GROUP

2 CHESTER STREET, SW1X 7BB

01-235 3081

# THE GEORGIAN GROUP

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*The names of members of the Executive Committee are printed in italics*

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## ORIGIN AND PURPOSE

In the years between the Wars splendid examples of eighteenth and early nineteenth century architecture and town planning, essentially English in character, were constantly sacrificed to provide sites for new buildings that offered no social or aesthetic recompense. Speculators made fortunes, while local authorities, almost without exception, chose to ignore their powers for preserving the seemliness of their towns and were satisfied if the new buildings carried higher rating assessments than the old.

And so in 1937 the Georgian Group was founded by the late Lord Derwent in order to awaken and direct public opinion to the urgent need to protect the nation's steadily diminishing Georgian heritage, and by means of action in Parliament and the Press to rescue from demolition squares, terraces, and individual buildings of beauty and importance so that they should remain to represent to future generations the greatness of the Georgian tradition in architecture and town planning. It should be noted that the word "Georgian" was adopted for convenience only: broadly speaking, all buildings designed in the classical manner come within the scope of the Group's activities.

Today, partly as a result of the Group's own efforts, there is growing public interest in historic buildings and concern for their preservation. Legislation in recent years has also included provisions designed to give protection to such buildings. None the less, changing needs and social conditions make the task of preserving Georgian buildings by no means easy. It is the function of the Group to provide a focus for enlightened opinion in these matters and to direct it into well-conceived and vigorous action.

The formal objects of the Group are:

- (a) to awaken public interest in and public appreciation of Georgian architecture and town planning;
- (b) to afford advice to owners and public authorities in regard to the preservation and repair of Georgian buildings and the uses to which they can, if necessary, be adapted;
- (c) to save from destruction or disfigurement Georgian squares, terraces, streets and individual buildings of special architectural merit; and
- (d) to ensure, when an area is replanned, that Georgian buildings are not wantonly destroyed and that the new buildings harmonise with the old.

The attitude of the Group is essentially a discriminating one, it does not advocate the preservation of *every* Georgian building. It would be foolish to pretend that all exhibit the characteristics of "commodity, firmness and delight", or that after two centuries of life some are not



worn out and no longer worth repair, or that others are not so awkwardly or inappropriately sited that there is little to be said for their retention. But the Group *is* concerned to see that Georgian buildings are neither wantonly destroyed nor altered in an unsympathetic manner. Where new buildings are built in the vicinity of Georgian buildings, it is proper that they should be designed to harmonise (a matter largely of siting, scale and materials) even when they may contrast in style; in certain circumstances of replacement or new building, the Group advocates the use of the classical style.

The Group works in close association with the National Trust, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Victorian Society, the Civic Trust, the Council for Places of Worship, the Historic Churches Preservation Trust, and the Council for the Protection of Rural England, since these bodies have objects complementary to its own. It is also in constant touch with the Department of the Environment. It co-operates with local societies, where these exist, in matters of common concern. Nonetheless the Group's field of action, and its *modus operandi*, remain peculiarly its own.

The Group is a registered charity, No. 209934, under the Charities Act, 1960, and depends on the subscriptions of its Members to finance its work. Accordingly, all who value the national heritage of Georgian buildings are urged to join the Group and support its efforts.

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Subscribing Membership:	£4 per annum.
Junior Membership: (persons under 21)	£0.50 per annum.
Life Membership:	£50
Corporate Membership: (Societies, Local Authorities, Companies)	Particulars upon application.
Benefactors:	A Donation or Bequest of Five Hundred Pounds.

The work of the Group is at present handicapped by the lack of an adequate income. Subscriptions in excess of the *minima* set out above are very welcome.