

HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM HISTORIC BUILDINGS GROUP

Newsletter



No 4 May 1993

THE LOCAL LIST.

Since the Group was formed five years ago our major aim has been to compile a list of all buildings in the borough of Historic, Architectural and Townscape Value which we believe should be preserved.

The List was to be as well-documented as possible with dates, architects and historic associations, supported by a photographic record. The first edition was published in 1989 and the second was published recently.

The Group has been able to provide the Council with a suggested list of 1200 buildings for inclusion in the Borough Local Plan. We still have a great deal to do to complete our Local List as originally conceived and we are now starting on a second five year plan and would welcome any help with research from interested individuals and groups.

The List can be bought at cost for £7 50 plus £2 50 p and p.

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

The Group has lodged objection to the policy on the Local Register of Buildings of Merit, both in and out of Conservation Areas which have been reworded and watered down since the Borough Local Plan. We are pleased to report that on the last day of the Inquiry a greatly improved wording was agreed between the Council and the Group. We are seeking to defend buildings on the Local Register whose owners are objecting to their inclusion in the Register by supplying the Council with detailed research about the six buildings. We have also suggested the addition of some 20 further entries to the Register, to which the Council has now agreed.

CONSERVATION AREAS.

The Group has been urging the Council to issue a policy statement or design guidelines for the borough's 44 Conservation Areas, outlining to owners what changes are acceptable within them. Despite long-standing pressure, it has failed to comply with its legal duty to do so. Our Chairman gave detailed evidence to the UDP Inquiry, pressing for a commitment from the Council on this important matter. We are supported in this by the Fulham Society and the Hammersmith Society as well as other local groups.

OUR CONCERNS.

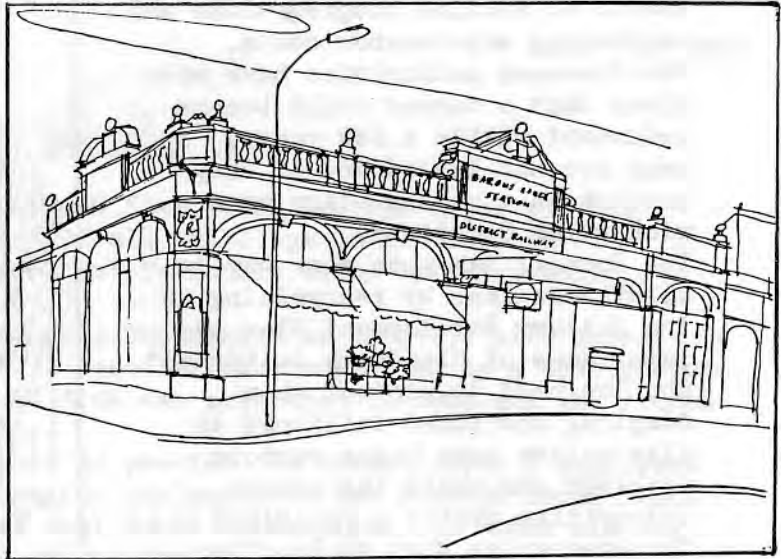
Barons Court Underground Station - Cleaning.

The Group was alarmed to hear of the damage caused to this 1905 Grade II station by the recent inexpert cleaning of the exterior without Listed Building Consent or consultation with the Council or amenity bodies. The use of an acid wash has removed much of the protective surface of the faience (a glazed terracotta) and is now likely to render the material porous and liable to frost and water damage.

We are urging the Council to prosecute London Underground for carrying out the work without the required consents and to seek whatever remedial work may be possible.

The Victorian Society has protested in similar vein.

What is especially alarming is that LU may decide to adopt the same brutal treatment with other stations at which faience in various colours was used.



West London Hospital.

Outline planning permission has just been granted to redevelop the site of the West London Hospital. The original hospital building, erected in 1870-1 and designed by George Saunders has been retained in these proposals though it is not clear how much of the interior will be left. Unfortunately, permission has been given in principle to demolish the chapel (1926) and the Wolverton Gardens wing (1894-9), the two other buildings of interest on the site. We can only hope that the owners, now they have established B1 use for a large part of the site, and therefore its value, might have second thoughts about demolition and consider re-use.



Shelly's Shoes, King St., W6.

This shop was recently renovated, doing away with the original timber-framed sash windows and setting them flush with the face of the building in breach of planning sanction and at odds with neighbouring properties. We have urged the Council to take enforcement action to require the owners to restore the character and integrity of the building and group.

ALTERATIONS TO HOUSES.

The Group is concerned about alterations to houses as owners try to give them individuality or respond to changing trends and fashions. Aluminium and plastic window-frames of different patterns, pebble-dash rendering, the random over-painting of brick in sometimes garish colours, neo-Georgian Elizabethan and Spanish-style doors and the thoughtless siting of satellite TV dishes, sometimes at front-door height, are altering the look of buildings. Some changes, especially painting individual houses in Victorian terraces can break the uniformity, doing permanent damage and reducing their value, the Group believes.

We have asked the Council as a matter of policy that windows of a different design are not fitted to properties in Conservation Areas, or outside them where houses have sash windows. There are now more than 40 CAs covering a large part of the borough and within them the cladding of any part of the exterior with stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles requires Council consent.

The Group's concern was recently endorsed by Dr. Gordon Higgott, Statutory Officer for the London Region of English Heritage when he complained that "such disfiguring alterations have been inflicted on our CAs in a tidal wave of change which threatens to obliterate the very essence of our much-loved social scene." Homeowners were "wreaking havoc" on sensitive areas under the banner of "improvement," he said.

Encouragingly, the Department of National Heritage recently announced that it intends to tighten planning regulations on such changes and is issuing a consultation paper.

Hurlingham Club, Ranelagh Gardens, SW6.

One alarming alteration which the Group successfully opposed was a plan by the Hurlingham Club to cover four tennis courts with a white plastic marquee to create an indoor tennis hall because of the potentially damaging effect on the Conservation Area and the setting of the Grade II listed Hurlingham House (1760). The Department of the Environment inspector, dismissing the appeal against the Council's planning refusal, ruled that the marquee would be visually harmful to the character of the CA and to the listed building.

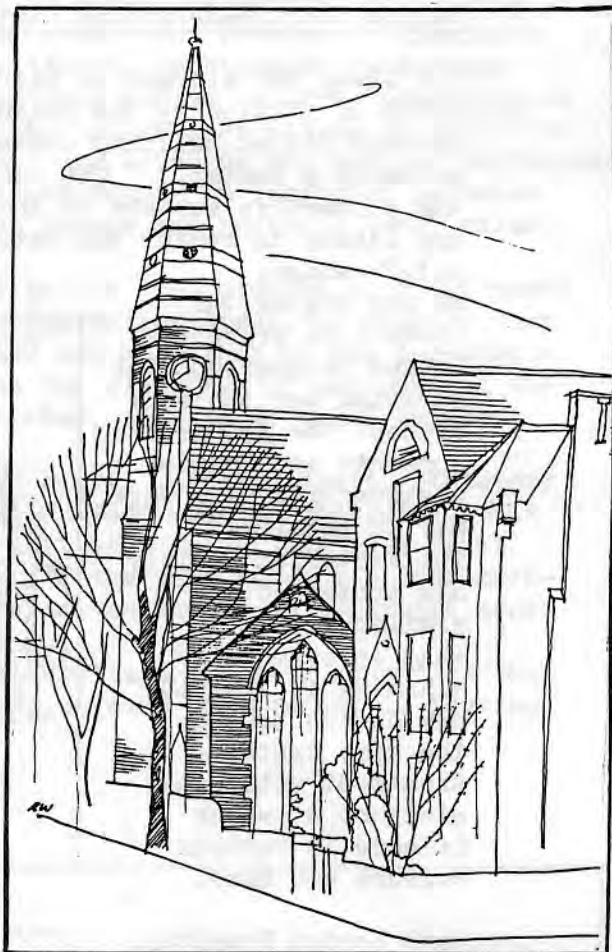


Rockley Road, W14 - car port.

The Department also recently upheld a Council planning refusal, supported by this Group, which will have borough-wide implications for people wishing to convert their front gardens for car parking. Under our policy of protecting unspoilt terraces and parades, we argued that replacing a bay window with a recessed window would spoil the house (no. 24) and damage the integrity of the 1876 terrace. It would also set an undesirable precedent, making it difficult to refuse similar applications and resulting in the destruction of the style of the terrace. The D of E inspector held that the proposal would "adversely affect the character and appearance of the unspoilt Victorian terrace and would be detrimental to the street scene."

St. Simon's Church, Rockley Road W14.

This 100-year-old church is threatened by the collapse of the roof. Because of the dangerous condition, the congregation has been banned from using the church and hall and has launched an appeal to raise £125,000 for repairs. The case illustrates our continuing concern about the fate of several churches in the borough beset by static or falling congregations and increasing maintenance costs. The diocesan authorities have made clear that a number could become redundant within a few years. Many are not listed and if they are not in a conservation area risk being demolished. The Council has gone some way to allay this fear by recognising in the Unitary Development Plan the importance of "landmark buildings" and the need to protect them. Adapting cherished buildings to alternative uses poses serious problems and while the church authorities prefer a religious use they recognise that it is often only commercial interests which can bear the heavy restoration and maintenance costs.



English Heritage List of Buildings at Risk.

It is disturbing to note that a number of the listed buildings which have appeared in past years on the EH register of buildings at risk feature again in 1993. The vacant BBC TV Theatre on Shepherds Bush Green and the adjoining Odeon (formerly the Pavilion Cinema) reappear, as does the Castle Club in Broomhouse Lane, Fulham, now owned by the Council. A similar subject of past concern by the Group is Fulham Football Club's Stevenage Road grandstand, the demolition of which we have consistently opposed. One new entrant is the former Munster Primary School.

EH publishes the list to rouse public awareness to the problem of disused historic buildings and to stimulate their reuse. Local authorities have a legal duty to ensure they are kept secure and watertight to prevent further deterioration.

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WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS & HELPERS

Subscription - £5.

Name.....

Address.....

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The Group wishes to thank Kall-Kwik of
102, King St., W6 for help in producing this newsletter.