

Renfrew Road

Conservation Area

Appraisal

The character appraisal below is reproduced from the Council's original designation report of 28 October 1985. It is reproduced here to provide guidance on what the Council believes makes the area worthy of its conservation area status and should be consulted by anyone wishing to undertake development affecting the conservation area.

5. Detailed Consideration

5.1 The Workhouse was built in 1871 for the Lambeth Board of Guardians. When built, it represented the latest thinking on accommodation for the destitute. There was strict segregation of sexes, age groups and character types. As a child Charlie Chaplin with his mother are thought to have been inmates of the institution. The strict regime was relaxed when the building was taken over by the LCC in 1930 *"as the Council endeavoured to bring more dignity into the lives of those unfortunate enough to find themselves needing relief"* (Hunter & Mace 1984). The buildings were taken over by the NHS in 1948.

5.2 The Master's House with its interesting hammer beam roof and polychrome brickwork has survived almost intact. The other remnants of the workhouse are two gate lodges and male and female receiving wards built against the original external wall. Those buildings, together with the redundant hospital water tower make up the Lambeth Hospital component of the Conservation Area.

5.3 The Renfrew Road buildings consist of the L.B. Lambeth Kennington District Housing Office, Lambeth Magistrates Court and the Court Tavern Public House. These buildings were built between 1860 and 1890 and taken together with the workhouse buildings, are of significant group value.

5.4 Lambeth Magistrates Court is a high security building but inclusion of this building in the Conservation Area will not conflict with planning procedures exemptions currently enjoyed by the Property Services Agency.

5.5 In November 1984, following a commission by the St. Thomas' Special Trustees, the London History Workshop Centre published a report proposing that a Health Care History Centre should be set up in the redundant Lambeth Workhouse buildings. Copies of this report are available from the Committee Clerk.

5.6 It is understood that the proposed Health and History Centre would base its work on the broad aims of health education as outlined in the Black Report. Briefly, this would include activities to encourage good health, to describe and interpret the history of health, self-help matters, and to act as a forum for current health issues.

5.7 A major benefit of Conservation Area status will be the availability of DoE finance for restoration work to the workhouse buildings and general environmental improvements to the area."