

RENFREW ROAD CONSERVATION AREA (NO. 41) (PRINCES WARD)

The following report is submitted by the DTPED in consultation with DALs, DHPS. DMS.

SUMMARY

This report recommends the declaration of a new Conservation Area around part of the former Lambeth Workhouse.

RECOMMENDATIONSTown Planning Committee

- (1) That the committee approve the designation of the area shown on Plan UD.79.1 as the Renfrew Road Conservation Area (No.41) under Section 277 (1) of the Town & Country Planning Act, 1971.
- 2) That the Director of Administration and Legal Services be authorised to advertise the above designation and to notify the Secretary of State for the Environment in accordance with the provisions of Sections 277(6) and (7) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.
- 3) That the Director of Town Planning and Economic Development be authorised to prepare a scheme of preservation and enhancement as required by Section 277 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1971.

For decisionPolicy considerations

1.1 In March 1981 the Town Planning Committee approved the "Strategy for the Designation of Hew Conservation Areas"- The area described was however not included in the strategy because the major part was zoned for Hospital Use. The South East Thames Regional Health Authority declared the Masters House surplus in March 1982, and disposal of the site *is* awaiting consideration by both the Regional Health Authority and the West Lambeth Health Authority. Both have agreed that a decision may be deferred temporarily, pending decisions on the wider Lambeth Hospital site. and on a possible future use for the Master's House.

1.2 Conservation Areas represent an important part of Lambeth's policy for achieving a good urban environment. The GLDP contains no specific policies relating to the selection or designation of such areas, but Lambeth's attitude towards conservation over the last 10 years has been to take a broad approach to the care of the historic townscape. This is in line with the growth in public interest in conserving areas of special character in the urban fabric especially where the character derives from local history or community life. Conservation Area status has been given to areas of special architectural or historic interest where the Council felt it desirable to preserve or enhance the character or appearance.

1.3 The Lambeth Local Plan of 1984 statement on Conservation Areas reaffirmed the need to enhance the existing areas and to consider the designation of new areas. Designation of Conservation Areas is set out in Policy Statement UL1 in the 1981 Development Plan, which identifies "Areas of long established use and community life..." The designation of the Renfrew Road area would be consistent with the aims and policies of the Council, as set out in the 1981 Development Plan, the 1983 Development Plan Review and the 1984 Lambeth Local Plan.

## 2. Financial, Race Relations, Equal Opportunities Considerations

None.

## 3. Staffing & Accommodation considerations

3.1 The designation of the new Conservation Area will involve additional work within DTPED and DALs. It is considered that there are sufficient staff in post to undertake the additional work which may arise.

## 4. Legal Considerations

4.1 Section 277(l) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 (as amended by the Town and Country Amenities Act, 1974) states that:

*"Every Local Planning Authority shall, from time to time, determine which parts of their areas are of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance and shall designate such areas as Conservation Areas."*

Subsections (6), (7) and (9) refer to the provisions for notifying the Secretary of State, advertising and registering the designation of such areas respectively.

4.2 Section 277(B) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1971 as introduced by the Town & Country Amenities Act 1974 states that:

*"It shall be the duty of a local planning authority to formulate and publish, within such period as may from time to time be directed by the Secretary of State, proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas."*

## 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.