

PROPOSED EXTENSION TO THE CLAPHAM CONSERVATION AREA NO. 1 (Clapham Park
Road)

Report by DTPED in consultation with DALs.

SUMMARY

This report recommends that the existing Conservation Area No. 1 (Clapham) be extended to include the South London Hospital for Women building and its site. The building is of special historic interest and of architectural merit, and it is under urgent threat of demolition. Local Societies, Women's organisations and individual members of the public have expressed overwhelming support for the retention of this building. Its inclusion in the Conservation Area will bring its threatened demolition under planning control.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Committee approve the extension of the existing Conservation Area No. 1 (Clapham) to include the whole of the site of the South London Hospital for Women, as shown on the displayed plan No. UD/03/1A, according to their powers under Section 277(1) of the Town & Country Planning Acts 1971-1974;
- (2) That the Director of Administration and Legal Services be authorised to advertise the above designation and to notify the Secretary of State in accordance with the provisions of Section 277(6) and (7) of the Town & Country Amenities Act 1974.

For decision

1. Reason for approval being sought under the urgency procedure

1.1 Approval to the extension of the existing Conservation Area No.1 (Clapham) is being sought under the urgency procedures because it is under urgent threat of demolition and its inclusion in the Conservation Area will bring it under planning control.

2. Policy considerations and Previous decisions

2.1 Conservation Area No. 1 (Clapham) was declared originally in 1968 and was subsequently extended in 1969, 1976 and 1980 in response to changing local requirements and planning circumstances. The need to include the South London Hospital for Women has not arisen in the past as the building did not appear to have come under threat of alteration or demolition.

2.2 The Lambeth Local Plan states (Conservation Areas, objective, p. 130) that the overall objective relating to Conservation in Lambeth is (amongst others) to preserve and enhance the character of parts of the environment which are of special architectural or historic interest. The South London Hospital for Women is not only of

considerable architectural interest but of almost unique historical importance having been reputedly the biggest European hospital for women and run entirely by women, and through its associations with pioneer women scientists in this country. In the same section the Lambeth Local Plan states that Conservation in Lambeth should aim towards providing "a coherent physical and social historical framework to which future changes should relate". Both physically and socially the Hospital is considered as an important historical landmark.

2.3 Policy U11 of the Lambeth Local Plan (p. 130) states that "consideration will be given to the designation of further Conservation Areas" to include parts of the Borough whose development is related to important open spaces. The South London Hospital in its prominent location marks the southern corner of Lambeth's most important open space Clapham Common.

3. Detailed considerations

3.1 The South London Hospital for Women was founded in 1912 by Maud Chadburn a former surgeon of the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital - the first ever hospital for women run by women. Spurred on by a lack of bed spaces and trained female staff at the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital (EGA), Miss Chadburn searched for a site for a second hospital. Because the EGA was in the north, it was decided to search south of the river and during the late part of 1911, suitable accommodation in the form of two large houses in Clapham Common were found for which she paid £5,000. Four years later the South London Hospital for Women was built after a £93,000 appeal. It was designed by M.E. Collins Esq and officially opened on the 4th July 1916 by H.M. Queen Mary.

3.2 In 1922 an extension was built providing an additional 40 surgical bed spaces to the 80 already provided. In 1926, however, it was decided that it would be more economical and convenient to build a new hospital on the site, and the present hospital, designed by Sir Edwin Cooper was built. It is not clear how much of the original building was incorporated by Sir Edwin but from the illustration of the architects conceptual drawing it is clear that it was never fully completed.

4. Legal considerations

4.1 Section 277(1) of the Town & Country Planning Acts 1971-74 states that "every Local Planning Authority shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and shall designate such areas as Conservation Areas."

4.2 Sub-sections 6, 7 and 9 of the same section of the Act refer to the provisions for notifying the Secretary of State, advertising and registering the designation of such areas respectively.

5. Equal Opportunity considerations

5.1 The recent history of the hospital is closely linked with ethnic and religious minorities in London as it has been one of the very few hospitals preferred by women who, for religious or cultural reasons,

want to be treated by female doctors and medical staff. In this respect the building has acquired additional historic and cultural associations in the last few decades.

6. Financial, staffing and accommodation considerations - None.

7. Town Planning considerations

These are contained in the body of the report.

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