

Case Name: Parker House, Parker Street, London

Case Number: 477681

Background

An application for a Certificate of Immunity from Listing (COI) was originally submitted in December 2011 (Previous case ref. 470544 from application ref. 470146). The assessment was carried out with a recommendation to grant the COI but it was belatedly found that the planning application on which the COI application was based was invalid. A COI was, therefore, not granted by the Secretary of State although a 'do not list' decision was issued instead on 25 July 2012. This application is a revised COI request based on a full planning permission application (2012/6132/P) in order to provide certainty in the planning process for the proposed development of the site.

Asset(s) under Assessment

Facts about the asset(s) can be found in the Annex(es) to this report.

Annex	List Entry Number	Name	Heritage Category	EH Recommendation
1	N/A	Parker Street House	Listing	Do not add to List

Visits

Date	Visit Type
09 January 2012	Full inspection

Context

The circumstances of the building are understood not to have changed since the original site visit and a further visit was, therefore, not considered necessary.

Assessment

The applicants and the local authority were consulted on the basis of the original report. No comments were received.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

English Heritage is satisfied that the conclusion of the original assessment that Parker Street House did not meet the criteria for listing remains valid. It is therefore recommended that a Certificate of Immunity from Listing be issued.

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION DECISION

The issue of a Certificate of Immunity from Listing for Parker Street House, 25-37 Parker Street, Camden, a model men's lodging house of 1893, designed for the LCC by JGS Gibson and SB Russell, is recommended for the following principal reasons:

- * Architectural interest: not built to its rather more impressive original design, Parker Street House is a dignified, if austere, building that lacks either the grand scale or innovative design of other listed examples of this building type. Craftsmanship and materials are generally of moderate quality;
- * Degree of alteration: additions, rebuilding and remodelling over the building's life have altered its character both externally and internally. Few original fittings remain and losses include, as would be expected, the original wooden dormitory cubicles;

* Historic interest: as the first LCC building dealing with the housing of London's working classes, the buildings has claim to historic interest in a regional context, but this does not outweigh its modest architectural quality.

Countersigning comments:

Agreed. As concluded in our previous assessment, the building does not meet the criteria for listing. A COI should therefore be issued. DK 16/4/13

Second Countersigning comments:

Agreed also. We recommended last year that the building was not of a listable quality, a upheld by the DCMS last year and as the circumstances have not changed since that time we are recommending the issue of a COI.

V. Fiorato, 23rd April 2013

Annex 1

Factual Details

Name: Parker Street House

Location: Parker House Hostel, 25 Parker Street, London, WC2B 5PJ London Borough Of Camden, Parker House 25-37, Parker Street, London, WC2B 5PA

County	District	District Type	Parish
Greater London Authority	Camden	London Borough	Non Civil Parish

History

Conditions in Victorian London's common lodging houses, or doss-houses, where the itinerant poor could get a place to stay for between 4d and 6d a night, were notoriously bad with gross overcrowding and unsanitary conditions. Following a number of reports, in 1851 the Common Lodging House Act sought to regulate this type of accommodation and the accompanying Labouring Classes Lodging House Act gave local authorities the power to levy rates to enable them to build lodging houses to increase the available provision. However it was not until the publication of the Royal Commission on the housing of the working classes in 1885 and the creation of the London County Council (LCC) in 1889 that public provision of lodging houses was undertaken in London. In 1890, the newly formed LCC '...saw that by the provision of a model lodging house, a great example would be set...' (LCC. Housing of the Working Classes in London 1855-1912). It therefore announced a competition for the design of a model Municipal Lodging House for men to be built on Parker Street, where land had been created by slum clearance the previous year. The winning design was by the Scottish architects James Gibson and Samuel Russell and was published in *The Builder* in December 1890. The design, in an Arts and Crafts style, featured a five-storey symmetrical façade with corner turrets and a roof pavilion. Ventilation of the sleeping quarters was the key principle of the design, and to this end two 70 foot long halls held three tiers of galleries and a dormitory hall, each arranged round a central light well. Each sleeping cubicle had its own sash window. A day room and dining room were provided along with washing, cooking, laundry and heating facilities.

Due to cost considerations, the finished building had a considerably altered design, being reduced in height to four storeys with a greatly simplified front elevation and the accommodation was arranged in three rather than two wings. The corner turret and central pavilion roof were replaced by a pair of gables and a single-storey kitchen and scullery block was added at the west end of the building. The interiors were austere in character with the sleeping cubicles made of wood despite the LCC's original intention for a more sturdy construction. Two types of cubicle were built, one with a single bed and the other following the 'Glasgow method' where one bed was stacked above the other with entry from cubicles on opposite sides. The day room was decorated with a fresco by the Dundee artist, Stewart Carmichael (1867-1950) entitled 'Industry'. When Parker Street House opened in 1893 it contained beds for 345 men. The admission fee - 5d a night, was above the means of the very poorest Londoners (the intention was always for it to be self-financing), but in line with the charges for private lodging houses and providing better, if more institutional, facilities in line with those of the contemporary philanthropic Rowton Houses.

The building has been altered over the years. In around 1905-7 a second storey was added to the western kitchen block and a two-storey bath house for women staff was added to the north-west corner of the building. In the C20 a further storey was added at the eastern end of the façade and the east wing largely rebuilt. Some alterations have been made to the fenestration (including the creation of a second entrance in place of the original arched window). Internally the wooden cubicles have been replaced with brick or concrete rooms and changes in use to various ground floor spaces have occurred.

The architects, James Glen Sivewright Gibson (1861-1951) and Samuel Bridgman Russell (1864-1955) went into partnership in 1890, the year they won the Parker Street House competition, having met in the employ of the architect William Wallace. The partnership continued until 1899 with further competition commissions including the West Riding County Offices, Wakefield (1894-8 - listed Grade I), West Ham Technical College, LB Newham (1895 - Grade II*) and the Free Library, Hull (1900 - Grade II). Following the dissolution of the practice both partners continued with other partners and have a number of listed buildings to their credit. Gibson has eight further listings including the Grade II* Middlesex Guildhall on Parliament Square, LB Westminster (1906-13), Walsall Town Hall and Council House (1902-5 - Grade II), and two department stores, the former Debenham and Freebody's, Wigmore Street, LB Westminster (1907) and Arding and

Hobbs, Lavender Hill, LB Wandsworth (1910), both Grade II. Russell has four further listings including the Passmore Edwards Library, West Ham, LB Newham (1902), Watford Boys Grammar School (1910-12) and the Town Hall and Theatre, Stoke on Trent (1911), all Grade II.

Details

Parker House has an E-shaped plan with a block fronting onto Parker Street and three dormitory wings extending to the rear. The main building is of four storeys (with a fifth storey added to the eastern wing in the C20) with flat asphalt covered roofs and lantern roofs over the light wells of the three accommodation ranges. At the east end of the building is a two-storey block (originally the lodgers' kitchen) extending to the rear where it adjoins another two-storey block facing a courtyard which was originally a bathhouse for female staff members, now offices.

The principal (south) elevation to Parker Street is of five main bays with a narrow sixth bay at the eastern end and the kitchen block at the western end, built in yellow stock brick, faced with red brick on the ground floor over a glazed brick plinth, with some replacement where doors have been added and subsequently removed, and with red brick dressings. Portland stone is used for the string courses and plain cornice. The narrower second and fourth bays are topped by triangular gables fronting clay tiled, pitch-roofed pavilions. The first, third and fifth bays, each four windows wide, have paired sash windows set in square-headed red brick surrounds. These have sloping brick sills and Portland stone lintels and drip moulds. The windows to the fourth storey have been altered by the insertion of concrete lintels (probably at the time the fifth storey was added to the western bay which has the same window details) and some of the sashes replaced. The gabled bays have paired casement windows set to the outer edge of the bays on the second and third storeys and a centrally placed run of four casements on the fourth storey with a small paired casement window in the gable. The ground floor fenestration is treated differently, with five tall sash windows to the long bays, grouped with three close together in the centre of the bay. They have moulded rubbed brick surrounds and moulded Portland stone sills continuous with a stone platband. The windows have modern security grilles. The gabled bays contain the two arched entrances with Portland stone surrounds with hood mouldings. The western entrance has been converted from the original window and a small window has been added to the original, high set casement window. The original entrance in the eastern gabled bay has an elaborate Baroque Portland stone segmental hood supported on scrollwork consoles and extending over a double casement window with Portland stone surrounds and metalwork grille, probably for issuing entrance tickets. The space between the stone lintel of the doorway and the curved hood is filled with decorative ironwork bearing the name of the building. The panelled doors are not original.

The kitchen block is of two storeys, the gabled upper storey having been added in 1905; sitting within the concave cornice of the original single-storey elevation. The upper storey is in red brick the lower in yellow stock brick with red brick window dressings and glazed brick plinth. The ground floor fenestration has been altered with one of the original pair of sash windows converted into a door. The narrow easternmost bay projects forward from the rest of the elevation and has been extended upward from the original four storeys; this being in the form of blind brickwork with a diaper pattern.

The elevations of the rear accommodation ranges are of yellow stock brick and have regular fenestration of paired horned sashes (a mixture of four-over-four originals and later replacements) set in square-headed openings with painted stone or concrete lintels and Portland stone sills. The eastern range has been rebuilt above the third storey (with a fifth storey added). Modern steel link bridges have been added between the blocks at their north ends.

The former female staff bathing block adjoining the building at the north-west corner is built against the massive retaining wall of the building to the rear of the site. It is of yellow stock brick with red brick window dressings and a slate cat-slide roof with overhanging eaves. The regular fenestration of the southern elevation comprises a pair of triple sashes on the upper storey and three single sashes with shallow brick arches on the lower. The building extends into a row of flat-roofed single-storey workshop units that are not in the ownership of the hostel.

The range along Parker Street contains the entrances and stairwells with modern offices on the ground floor and the three accommodation ranges to the rear. These originally had a canteen, day room and laundry facilities on the ground floor and accommodation arranged round a central light well on the floors above, but the interior has been heavily modernised.

On the ground floor, the rooms have been largely reconfigured with the large communal rooms subdivided. Virtually all decorative features have been removed or overpainted. Some fanlights remain in the corridor

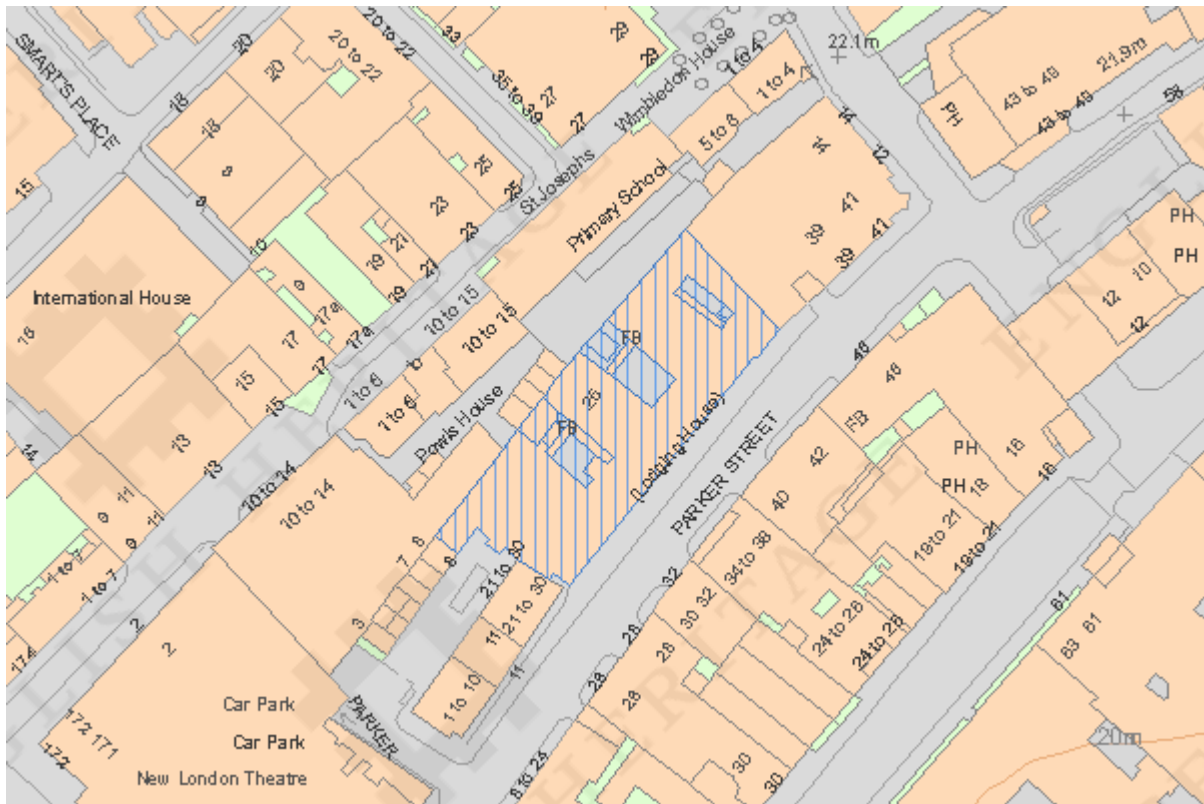
arches and the concrete stairs retain their metal balustrade (the west stair is boxed in and it is unclear if the balustrade survives).

The upper floors of the central and western accommodation ranges are relatively unaltered. The original wooden cubicles have been removed and replaced by larger rooms (with modern fittings) and toilet facilities but the open landings with ironwork balustrades and tie-rods and timber cornice below the lantern roof in the central range, remain. The lantern roofs have been replaced. The east range has been largely rebuilt and whilst retaining the light well this has a concrete structure and modern balustrades with transparent PVC screens.

Selected Sources

John Nelson Tarn, *Five Per Cent Philanthropy*, 1973

Pevsner, N and Cherry, B, *The Buildings of England: London 4: North*, 1998, 320

Map**National Grid Reference:** TQ3040681339

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