



Parker House

Planning & Conservation Area Consent Applications

SD7: Historic Building Report

Prepared for Camden Council & E C Harris

November 2012

**PARKER HOUSE & ALDWYCH WORKSHOPS, CAMDEN
HISTORIC BUILDING REPORT**

FOR THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN



Donald Insall Associates Ltd
12 Devonshire Street
London W1G 7AB

NOVEMBER 2012

**PARKER HOUSE & ALDWYCH WORKSHOPS, CAMDEN
HISTORIC BUILDING REPORT
FOR THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN**

**Donald Insall Associates Ltd
November 2012**

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Purpose of Study
- 1.2 Methodology
- 1.3 Legislative Background
- 1.4 Significant Findings
- 1.5 Significant Issues
- 1.6 Summary Conclusion

2.0 Historical Background

- 2.1 The Site Prior to the 1880's
- 2.2 The LCC Municipal Lodging Houses
- 2.3 Parker Street House
- 2.4 20th Century Development
- 2.5 Recent Planning History (Camden Planning File)
- 2.6 The Architects
- 2.7 List of Plates

3.0 Analysis and Description of the Building and Its Location

- 3.1 The Streets
- 3.2 Parker House Externally
- 3.3 Parker House Internally
- 3.4 Aldwych Workshops
- 3.5 Assessment

4.0 Description and Justification of the Proposals

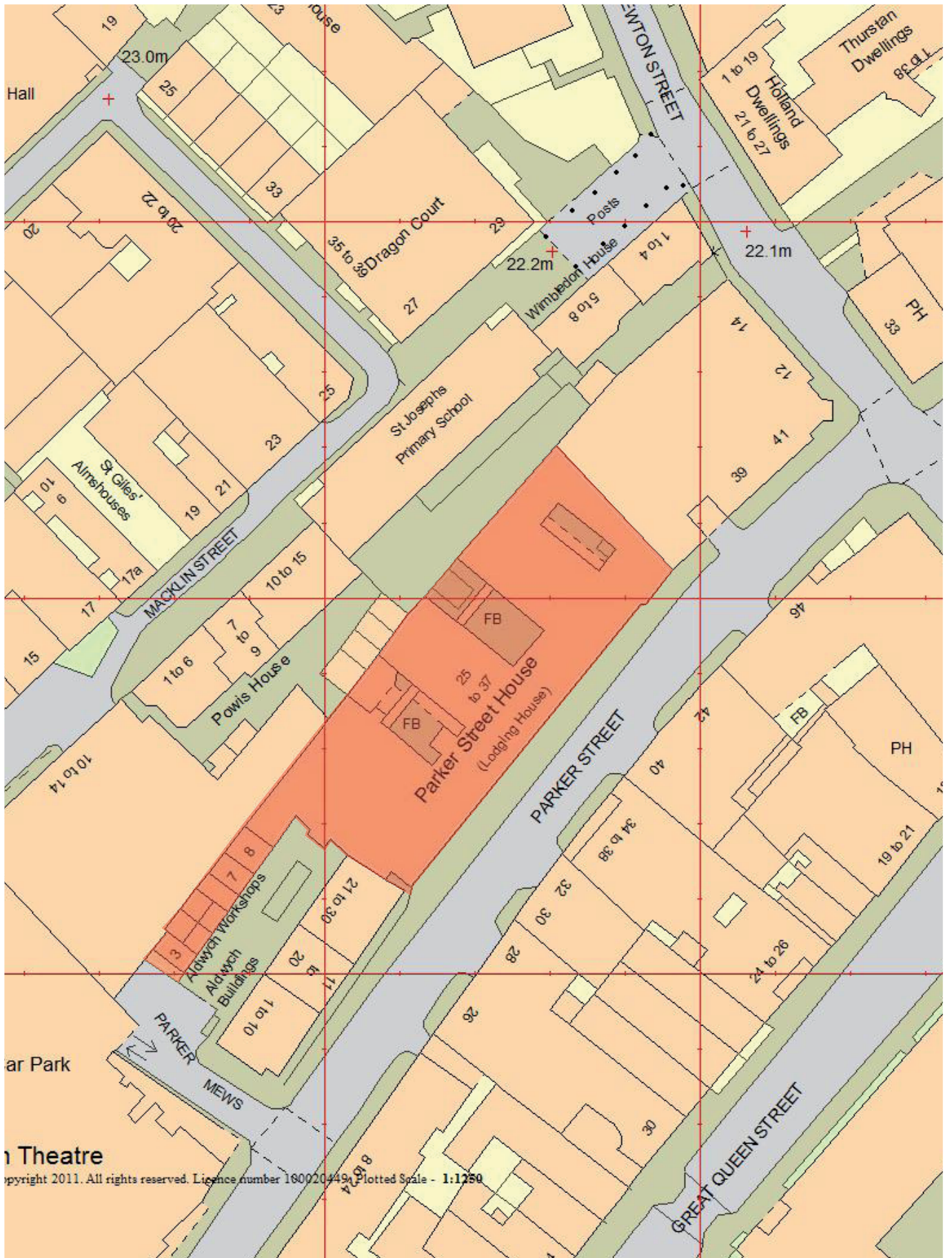
- 4.1 The Proposals
- 4.2 The Implication of the Proposal
- 4.3 The Justification of the Proposals
- 4.4 Conclusion

Appendix

- I Sources and Bibliography

Issue date: November 2012

Checked by: HXP



1. Promap image with building marked in red

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Study

This report was commissioned by the London Borough of Camden to assist in the development of proposals to carry out alterations and improvements to the building 25-37 Parker Street and 3-8 Aldwych Workshops, Camden, drawn up by Paul Davis and Partners architects.

The study's intention was to assess the historical and architectural significance of the building and to advise and provide justification for the proposals in so far as they affect the historic fabric of the building and its local context in terms of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Camden Borough Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and Core Strategy, and the London Plan.

The study and report were undertaken by Cordula Zeidler of Donald Insall Associates Ltd, the desk-top research was undertaken by Lucy Ashton, also of Donald Insall Associates Ltd, between October 2011 and November 2012.

1.2 Methodology

Historical research was carried out as a desk-based exercise with the sources of reference and bibliography in Appendix II. A site inspection, by an architectural historian with a sound knowledge of historic buildings was carried out to both confirm the findings of the historical research and assess the building, from both historical and architectural points of view. This process clarified what original and significant later fabric survived on site.

The findings of the desk-top research are included in section two. The descriptions of the site surveys are included in section three. The proposals are discussed in section four.

1.3 Legislative Background

1.3.1 The Status of the Building

The buildings are not statutorily listed but are located in the London Borough of Camden's Seven Dials Conservation Area. Development in conservation areas requires justification with regard to the policies set out in PPS 5 and the local plan.

Parker House is currently in use as a hostel, and the former workshop buildings are in use as storage associated with the flats in Aldwych Buildings.

1.3.2 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Act is legislative basis for decision making on applications that relate to the historic environment.

Sections 66 and 72 of the Act impose a statutory duty upon local planning authorities to consider the impact of proposals upon listed buildings and conservation areas.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that *'in considering whether to grant permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority, or as the case may be the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'*.

Similarly, section 72(I) of the above Act states *'with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area'*.

1.3.3 NPPF

Any proposals for consent relating to heritage assets are subject to the policies of the NPPF (2012). This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied.

The NPPF has the following relevant policies for proposals such as this:

*14. At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.*

Sustainability is further defined thus:

7. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

The NPPF sets out twelve **core planning principles** that should underpin decision-making (paragraph 17). Amongst those are that planning should:

- *not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;*
- *proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs.(...);*
- *always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;*
- *support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy);*
- *conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generation.*

Regarding **new design**, the NPPF states:

56. The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

The NPPF then goes on to list important principles that constitute **good design**. These are as follows:

58. ...Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;*
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;*
- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*
- create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and*
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.*

Regarding **architectural style** it has the following:

60. Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

As regards meeting the challenges of **climate change**, the NPPF states:

95. To support the move to a low carbon future, local planning authorities should:

- actively support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings.*

Specifically on applications relating to **heritage assets** the NPPF has the following:

131. In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

Concerning ‘**non designated heritage assets**’, such as a building that makes a positive contribution to conservation area, the document states that:

“135. The effect of the application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken in to account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

1.3.4 **The Local Plan**

Camden’s Local Development Framework was adopted in 2010 and contains policies relevant for sites such as this. These policies are as follows:

DP24 – Securing high quality design

The Council will require all developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, to be of the highest standard of design and will expect developments to consider:

- a) character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;*
- b) the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;*
- c) the quality of materials to be used;*
- d) the provision of visually interesting frontages at street level;*
- e) the appropriate location for building services equipment;*
- f) existing natural features, such as topography and trees;*
- g) the provision of appropriate hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatments;*
- h) the provision of appropriate amenity space; and*
- i) accessibility.*

DP25 – Conserving Camden’s heritage

CONSERVATION AREAS

In order to maintain the character of Camden’s conservation areas, the Council will:

- a) take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within conservation areas;*
- b) only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area;*
- c) prevent the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area where this harms the character or appearance of the conservation area, unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;*
- d) not permit development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character and appearance of that conservation area; and*
- e) preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a conservation area and which provide a setting for Camden’s architectural heritage.*

Camden’s Core Strategy states the following regarding heritage:

CS14 - Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage

The Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by:

- a) requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character;*
- b) preserving and enhancing Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens;*
- c) promoting high quality landscaping and works to streets and public spaces;*
- d) seeking the highest standards of access in all buildings and places and requiring schemes to be designed to be inclusive and accessible;*

1.3.5 Conservation Area Statement

The Conservation Areas Statement for Seven Dials (Covent Garden) identifies Parker House and Aldwych Workshops as buildings that make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

The site falls into Sub Area 3: Macklin Street. The history of the buildings on site is described as follows:

Macklin Street (formerly Lewknors Lane, and later Charles Street) and Parker Street were formed in the early 17th century on the site of Rose Field...

During the 19th century housing conditions seriously deteriorated around Macklin Street, as in other parts of central London. In 1886 the medical officer of health for St Giles recommended that the area around Macklin Street and Parker Street should be cleared as the houses were beyond repair and severely overcrowded. The 1884 Royal Commission into housing conditions made the link between health and overcrowded, insanitary living conditions. Clearance was seen as the solution to a very high death rate and the Metropolitan Board of Works agreed a clearance scheme in 1886, known as the Shelton Street Improvement Scheme. In practice the Board had no power to erect housing and when the land was cleared in 1889 it displaced everyone who had lived there.

The latter part of the 19th century saw dramatic changes in the role of local government. In 1889 the London County Council (LCC) was created and under the 1890 Housing of the Working Classes Act was given the duty to prepare schemes for the rearrangement and reconstruction of streets and houses within unhealthy areas. They also had the power to erect lodging houses and dwellings. The newly formed LCC 'saw that by the provision of a model lodging house, a great example would be set, and in 1890 it decided to erect the Parker Street lodging house on one of the sites cleared by the Board'. (LCC. Housing of the Working Classes in London 1855-1912)

The Shelton Street Scheme identified six sites for housing, one of which was reserved by the LCC for the men's lodging house. The remainder were offered for auction. As there was no interest in the sites on the private market the LCC took responsibility for building public housing on all the sites. These sites provided the first public housing in Camden and the first London County Council lodging house. The 1893 Building

Regulations limited the height of this type of residential development to five storeys which together with the standards set by the 1890 Housing of the Working Classes Act determined the height and layout and budgets for the new developments.

The LCC created a design team called the 'Housing of the Working Classes Branch' who were responsible for the Boundary estate in Shoreditch, the Millbank estate in Westminster and many others. The team were influenced by the Arts and Craft movement led by William Morris and in particular by the architecture of Philip Webb. In the case of the sites at Macklin Street designs were invited from outside the in-house team. Gibon and Russell designed the Lodging House. All the other LCC buildings - Aldwych, Cotterell, Lindsey, Powis, Wimbledon, were designed by Roland Plumb, another 'outsider'.

In 1893 the Parker Street Lodging House was completed for 345 people. In 1896 Aldwych, Cotterell and Lindsey (demolished in the 1960s), Powis and Wimbledon buildings were completed for 284 people. Twenty workshops were also provided. The scheme also widened Parker Street and Macklin Street.

Specifically on the character of Parker Street the statement says:

The rest of the north side of the street is largely occupied by two LCC buildings, Aldwych Buildings and Parker Street Lodging House, which give the street a cohesive quality. Aldwych Buildings is five storey with two tones of brick with moulded brick cornices, gables and curved mansards. Behind it lies Parker Mews and the yard of the Aldwych Buildings. On the north side of the yard is a row of workshops that formed part of the original LCC scheme. Parker Street Lodging House is four storeys in two tones of brick with two storey links at each end. Gib[s]on and Russell were known for a mild-Baroque style which used many decorative devices but due to a stringent budget for the Lodging House their normally decorative style was reduced to one feature, a bracketed entrance hood.

1.3.6 The London Plan Policies

The London Plan (2011) contains policies that would both affect directly and indirectly the historic environment and development of locations such as this.

Policy 7.8 : Heritage assets and archaeology

Strategic

- A) London's heritage assets and historic environment, including listed buildings, registered historic parks and gardens and other natural and historic landscapes, conservation areas, World Heritage Sites, registered battlefields, scheduled monuments, archaeological remains and memorials should be identified, so that the desirability of sustaining and enhancing their significance and of utilising their positive role in place shaping can be taken into account.*
- B) Development should incorporate measures that identify, record, interpret, protect and, where appropriate, present the site's archaeology.*

Planning decisions

- C) Development should identify, value, conserve, restore, re-use and incorporate heritage assets, where appropriate*
- D) Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.*
- E) New development should make provision for the protection of archaeological resources, landscapes and significant memorials. The physical assets should, where possible, be made available to the public on-site. Where the archaeological asset or memorial cannot be preserved or managed on-site, provision must be made for the investigation, understanding, recording, dissemination and archiving of that asset.*

Policy 7.9 : Heritage-led regeneration

Strategic

- A) Regeneration schemes should identify and make use of heritage assets and reinforce the qualities that make them significant so they can help stimulate environmental, economic and community regeneration. This includes buildings, landscape features, views, Blue Ribbon Network and public realm.*

Planning decisions

- B) The significance of heritage assets should be assessed when development is proposed and schemes designed so that the heritage significance is recognised both in their own right and as catalysts for regeneration. Wherever possible heritage assets (including buildings at risk) should be repaired, restored and put to a suitable and viable use that is consistent with their conservation and the establishment and maintenance of sustainable communities and economic vitality.*

1.4 Significant Findings

The significant findings of this report are:

- Parker House and Aldwych workshops are not statutorily listed. They are located in the Seven Dials Conservation Area to which their street and yard-facing elevations make a limited positive contribution. Parker House is of some historic interest as an early LCC lodging house, and this interest is greater than its architectural merit.
- The buildings were constructed as part of a slum clearance exercise in the first half of the 1890s when much of the neighbourhood was rebuilt. Parker House was built by the London County Council as a lodging house for men, and Aldwych workshops was constructed in association with a block of flats, Aldwych Buildings. The architects for Parker House were Gibson and Russell, and Rowland Plumbe designed the workshops and Aldwych Buildings.
- Parker House has been in use as lodging house and hostel since its construction, and the workshops are in use as storage for the flats in Aldwych Buildings. Parker House has tired and poorly altered fabric, particularly on the inside and to the rear.

1.5 Significant Issues

The significant issues identified by this report are:

- Would it be appropriate with regard to the policies and guidance set out in the NPPF, the Local Plan and the London Plan, to convert the buildings for modern residential use by retaining the main elevation of Parker House, extending the building vertically and providing modern living accommodation on this site?

1.6 Summary Conclusion

Remembering that the NPPF makes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and taking into account that the proposed alterations would not diminish the significance of the building and would ensure a viable use for the building, thereby helping to secure its future in the long-term, it may be concluded that on balance the scheme includes sufficient public benefits to outweigh the minimal harm that might be caused, and should therefore, be acceptable in terms of the relevant planning policies and should be welcomed.

2.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The Site Prior to the 1880's

The earliest reference to Parker Street, formerly known as Parker Lane, dates from 1620.¹ The street probably owes its name to Philip Parker who had a share in building the first houses there and lived on Drury Lane.²

Morgan's Map of 1681 [plate 1] appears to show Parker Street as a fully built up street following the same line as it does today. However, Horwood's maps of 1799 & 1817 [plate 2 & 3] suggest that either some earlier buildings had been demolished by the time Horwood surveyed the area, or some of the plots were actually still vacant since several gaps are shown between the standing buildings. From Horwood's survey, Parker Street seems to have been lined with narrow houses with yards behind.

By 1884, many of these narrow houses to the east end of Parker Street had been torn down and their plots amalgamated into larger landholdings [plate 4] and used for industrial purposes. No 25 was occupied by a carriage builder, No 35 was a printer's joiners and there was a smithy to the rear of No 31 while No 27 contained a pub.

Meanwhile those houses that remained were fiercely overcrowded. A Board of Works report assessing the poverty and unsanitary conditions in the area, recorded Parker Street as containing only 21 houses, yet within these 269 people lived. Most of these residents were Irish in origin and extremely impoverished. Each room within the houses tended to be sublet.³

2.2 The LCC Municipal Lodging Houses

Following the publication of several eye watering reports into the depth of deprivation within the capital of the British Empire and in particular accounts of conditions in private lodging houses, London County Council (LCC) resolved to erect a model Municipal Lodging House in 1890. It was the LCC's intention that this lodging house should be self-financing⁴, and deputations were sent to research State run lodging houses in Glasgow and the following year the LCC ran a competition to design a model lodging house.

Out of seventy-five entrants, the winning design was submitted by the Scottish architects James Gibson and Samuel Russell [plate 5] and published in the Builder in December. The accompanying article explains that the design vastly improved upon the layout of the best lodging house in Glasgow and that:

*"the dormitories govern the general disposition of the building... they are of primary importance, seeing that they are the parts which the inmates use during the longest period; therefore thorough ventilation with a constant supply of fresh air to each sleeper is essential."*⁵

¹ Riley & Gomme 1914

² Riley & Gomme 1914

³ Board of Works 1884

⁴ Pers.Com Dr Preston 2011

⁵ The Builder 1891 p491

To provide this essential air, two 70f halls held three tiers of galleries arranged a central light well. The galleries were divided into individual cubicles, with each cubicle having its own sash window plus an air inlet at floor level which also helped to heat the space. In addition, there was 70f day room and a similar sized dining room plus all the necessary washing, cooking, laundry and heating facilities.⁶

2.3 Parker Street House

From the LCC Minutes, it seems that the construction of the lodging house was fraught with delays.⁷ By the time the lodging house opened in 1893,⁸ it bore little resemblance to Gibson and Russell's competition winning design. Gone were the roof pavilions, gone was the handsome Arts and Crafts brick arcading and gone was the window detailing.

What was built was a larger, far plainer and more utilitarian institution almost devoid of external ornamentation [plate 6]. It was arranged around three galleried halls, rather than two [plate 7a & b] and the length of the communal rooms had been reduced by 10 feet. At the west end of the building a single storey block contained the lodger's kitchen and the scullery.

Internally what little decoration there was, was somewhat worthy decoration – the minor Scottish artist Steward Carmichael painted a fresco entitled Industry in the day room and over the fireplace an inscription exhorted residents to “*Labour!*” in large letters.⁹

Photographs taken around the turn of the century show austere interiors and furnishings. The LCC had wanted the sleeping cubicles to be made of something sturdier than wood, but cost intervened¹⁰. Two types of cubicle were built, one containing a single bed, the other followed the ‘Glasgow method’ where one bed was stacked above the other with entry from cubicles on opposite sides.¹¹

The cubicles visible in Plate 8 are not entirely enclosed, the walls and narrow door forming only a partial partition about 5 feet high and the floor appears to be of concrete. Plates 9 and 10 show the communal rooms which were furnished with wooden benches and tables, and perhaps a wood block floor. Both rooms were lit with electric lamps.

When Parker House opened the Press compared it unfavourably with the larger, privately-built Rowton Lodging House in Vauxhall that had opened a month earlier.¹² Parker House was much criticised for having the appearance of a prison, while also being denounced for being too ‘good’ a building. This impression seems to have been partly formed because Parker House had a piano, some sporting prints and a stage

⁶ The Builder 1891

⁷ LCC Minutes 1889 - 93

⁸ The Builder 1892

⁹ Pevsner, N. 1999

¹⁰ Pers.Com Dr Preston 2011

¹¹ Gee, E 2010

¹² Pers.Com Dr Preston 2011

curtain. In general the Press felt that a lodging house was not something the public purse should pay for – but then the press was largely Tory and the LCC was largely Liberal.¹³

The LCC had wanted to keep the price of a night very low but out of the need for the house to be self-financing, the cubicle rate was set at five pence a night – a cost that still excluded the poorest individuals. Many of the lodgers were employed in the various markets nearby and about half lived at Parker House permanently. In the first years, the chief complaint from residents was about the noise at night and people stealing items over the top of the cubicles.¹⁴

Yet despite such criticism, sanitary commissions from around the world came to visit Parker House and photos of the building were dispatched abroad and have recently been found in various foreign university libraries.¹⁵

2.4 20th Century Development

Sometime between 1895 when the plot to the west of Parker House was cleared [plate 11] and 1907, Aldwych Buildings was constructed and some alterations were made to Parker Street House. Unfortunately no records appear to have survived detailing the construction of Aldwych Buildings and the workshops behind, but it appears to have been privately constructed as four storey tenements with a row of single storey workshops behind presumably to be rented by the tenants [plates 12 & 13].

The boundary between Parker House and Aldwych Buildings was not simply drawn. Undated plans [plate 14a & e] probably from the 1930's label the two storey building in the centre of Plate 13 as a store and bathing room for female staff. Meanwhile the single storey building formed a link corridor between this store, Aldwych yard and the kitchens which was presumably used to bring coke and food supplies into Parker House. Plate 12 also shows that a second storey had been added to the Parker Street elevation of the kitchen block.

The building was apparently little altered by the mid 20th Century. A ground floor plan from 1953 [plate 15] notes that the central washing area and lavatories had been replanned but beyond that, the plan form appears to be largely original. A photograph of the day room in 1962 [plate 16] shows that the furniture and light fittings have been replaced but the room itself is essentially the same. The street façade and entrance canopy were also largely unaltered by the 1970's [plate 17 & 18]

2.5 Recent Planning History (Camden Planning File)

Records kept with Camden's planning department show the following alterations:

¹³ Pers.com Dr Preston 2011

¹⁴ Pers.com Dr Preston 2011

¹⁵ Pers.com Dr Preston 2011

1980 The installation of a new fire door on the western end of the ground floor, Parker Street, frontage.

1991 The erection of a lift shaft the installation of a lift and associated external alterations. Granted.

2007 Demolition of an existing glazed roof lean-to and replacement with the erection of a 'garden' pavilion in the rear courtyard and associated landscaping improvements. Approved.

2.6 The Architects

J.G.S. Gibson and **S.B. Russell** were a respectable late Victorian practice, beginning their partnership in 1890, the same year that they won the LCC's Municipal Lodging House competition. Both architects were Scots and Gibson had moved to London and worked for T.E.Collcutt in the early 1880's. They entered numerous competitions and won commissions for the West Riding County Offices (1894), West Ham Technical College (1895) listed II*, North Bridge Scheme, Edinburgh (1896) and the Free Library, Hull.¹⁶

The partnership broke up in 1900 when Russell joined Edwin Cooper. Gibson went on to win the Walsall Municipal Buildings competition with William Wallace and worked with him again on the Debenham and Freebody Department store in Wigmore Street. Gibson's best known building is the former Middlesex Guildhall (1912-13) in Westminster built in what Pevsner describes as an *art nouveau gothic* theme and listed II*.¹⁷

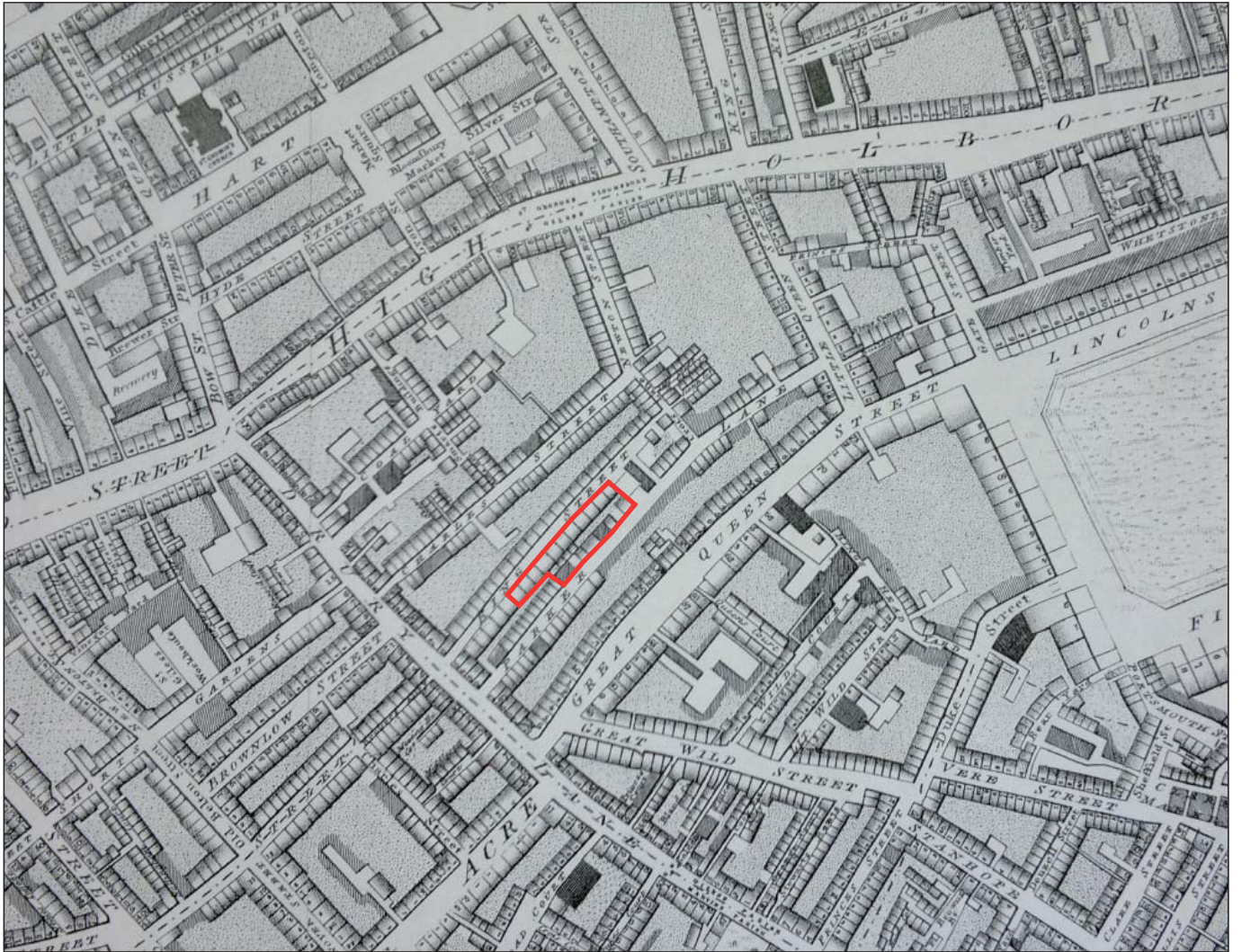
2.7 List of Plates

1. Morgan's Map 1681 (LMA)
2. Horwood's Map 1799 (LMA)
3. Horwood's Map 1817 (LMA)
4. LCC map of Shelton Street Area (LMA)
5. Competition drawings for Parker House 1890 (The Builder)
6. Parker Street House 1895 (LMA)
- 7a. Ground floor plan 1893 (LMA)
- 7b. First floor plan 1893 (LMA)
8. Cubicles c1900 (workhouse.org)
9. Dayroom c1900 (workhouse.org)
10. Room c1900 (workhouse.org)
11. Ordnance Survey map 1895

¹⁶ Stuart Gray, A. 1986

¹⁷ Pevsner, N 2003

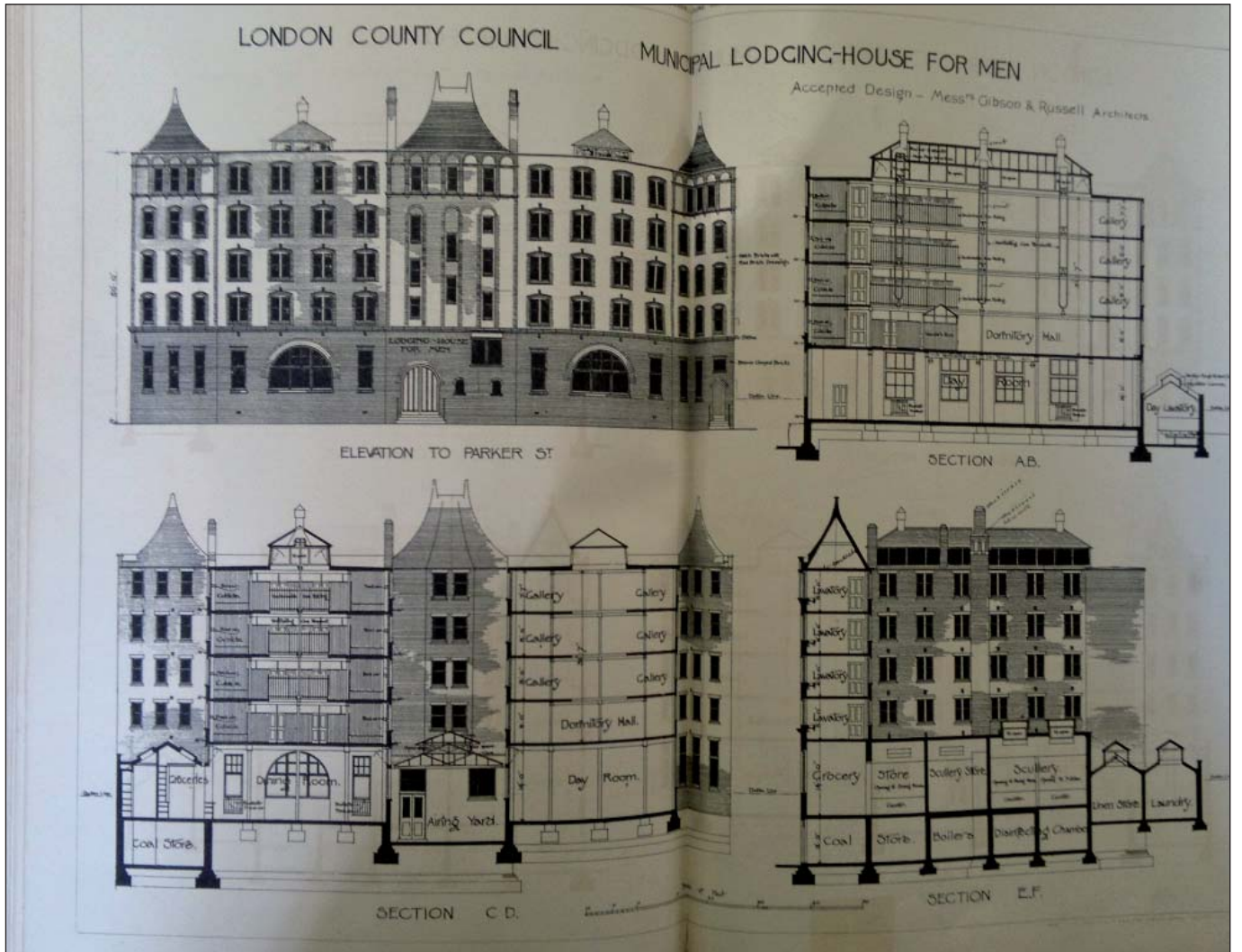
12. Aldwych Buildings & Parker Street House 1907 (LMA)
13. Aldwych Workshops with Parker Street House behind 1907 (LMA)
- 14a-e. Undated Plans c 1930. (LMA)
15. Ground Floor Plan 1953 (LMA)
16. Dayroom 1962 (LMA)
17. Parker Street House 1975 (LMA)
18. Entrance 1975 (LMA)



2. Horwood's Map 1799 (LMA)



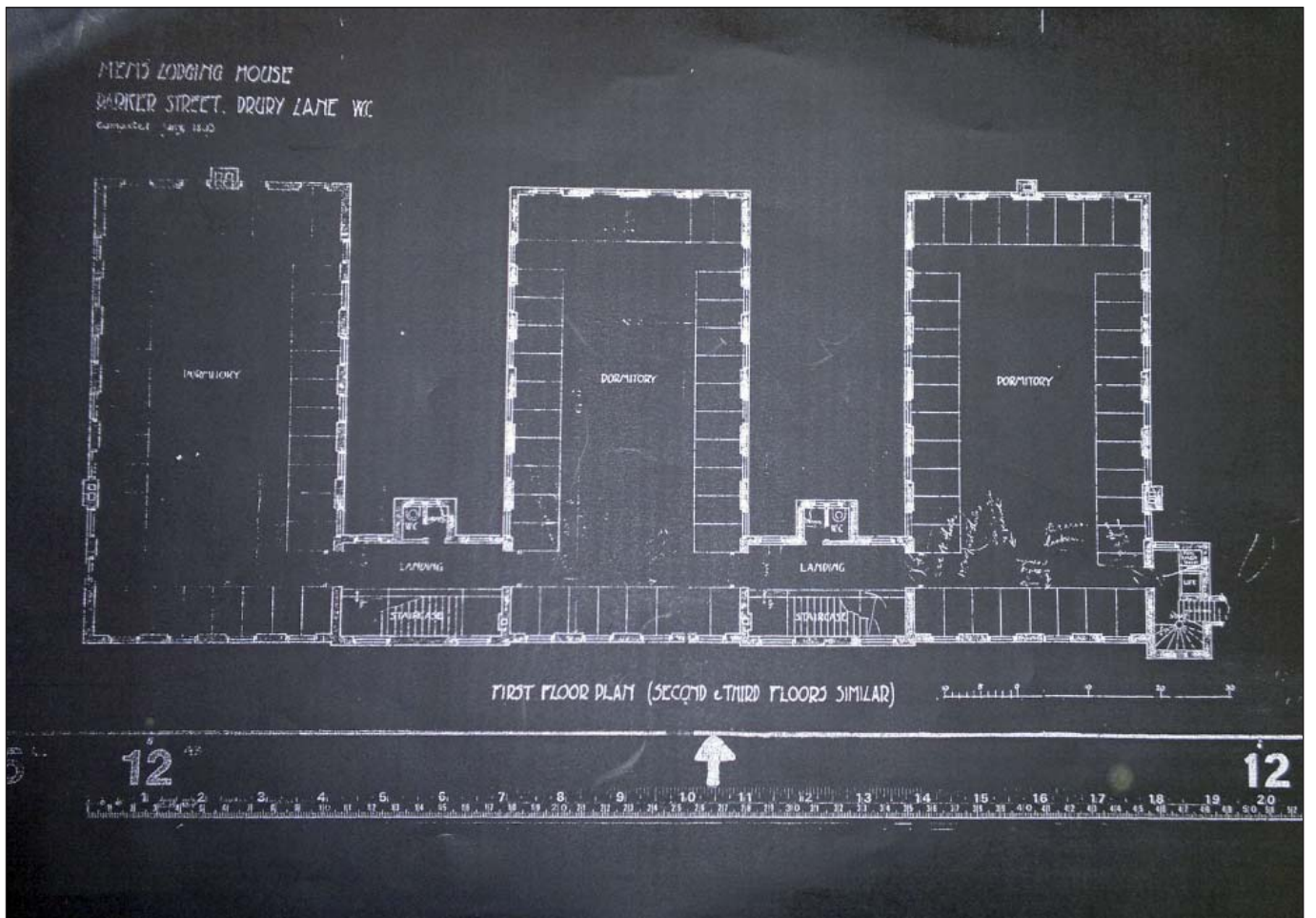
4. LCC map of Shelton Street Area (LMA)



5. Competition drawings for Parker House 1890 (The Builder)



6. Parker Street House 1895 (LMA)



7b. First floor plan 1893 (LMA)



(c) www.workhouses.org.uk

8. Cubicles c1900 (workhouse.org)

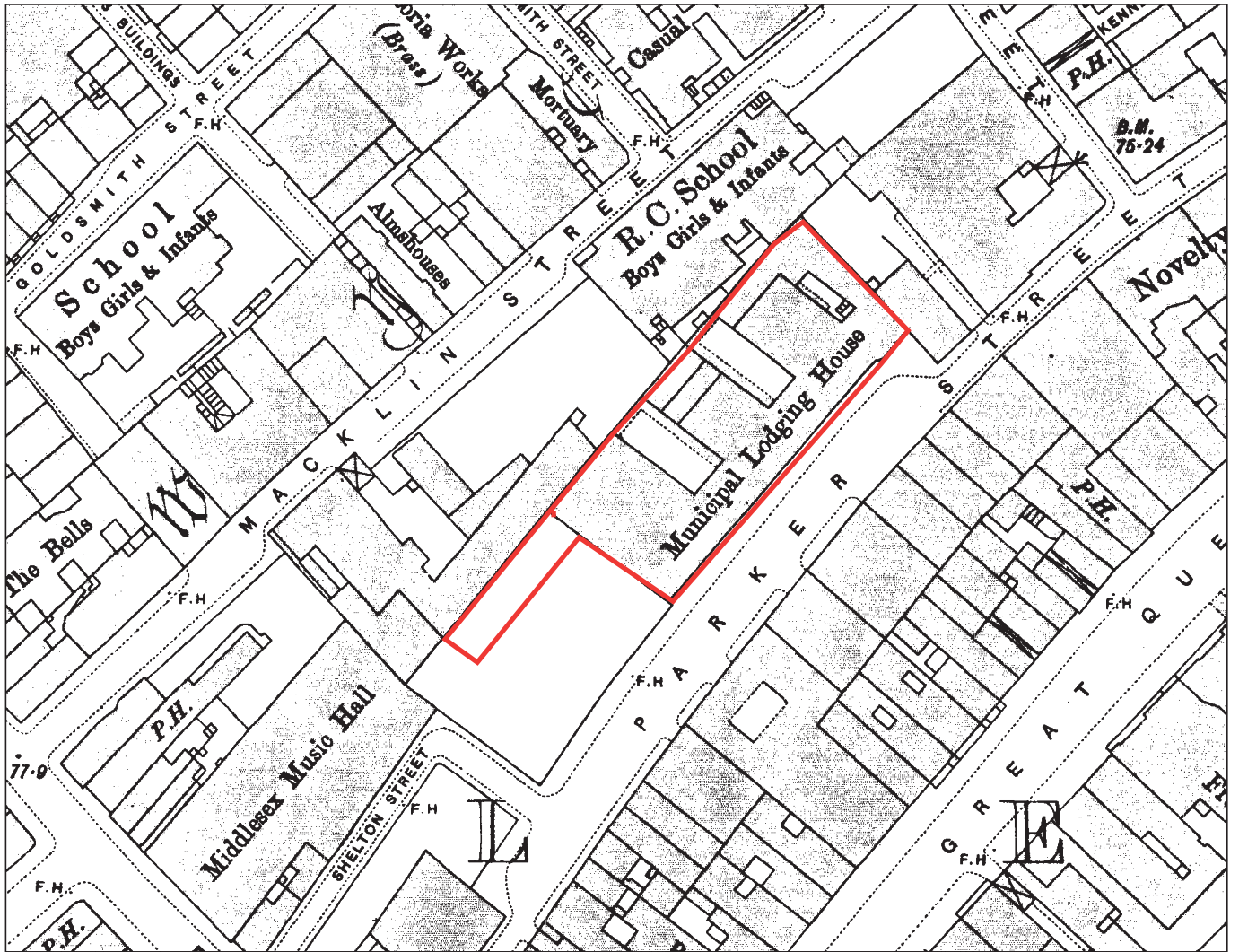


(c) www.workhouses.org

9. Dayroom c1900 (workhouse.org)



10. Dining Room c1900 (workhouse.org)



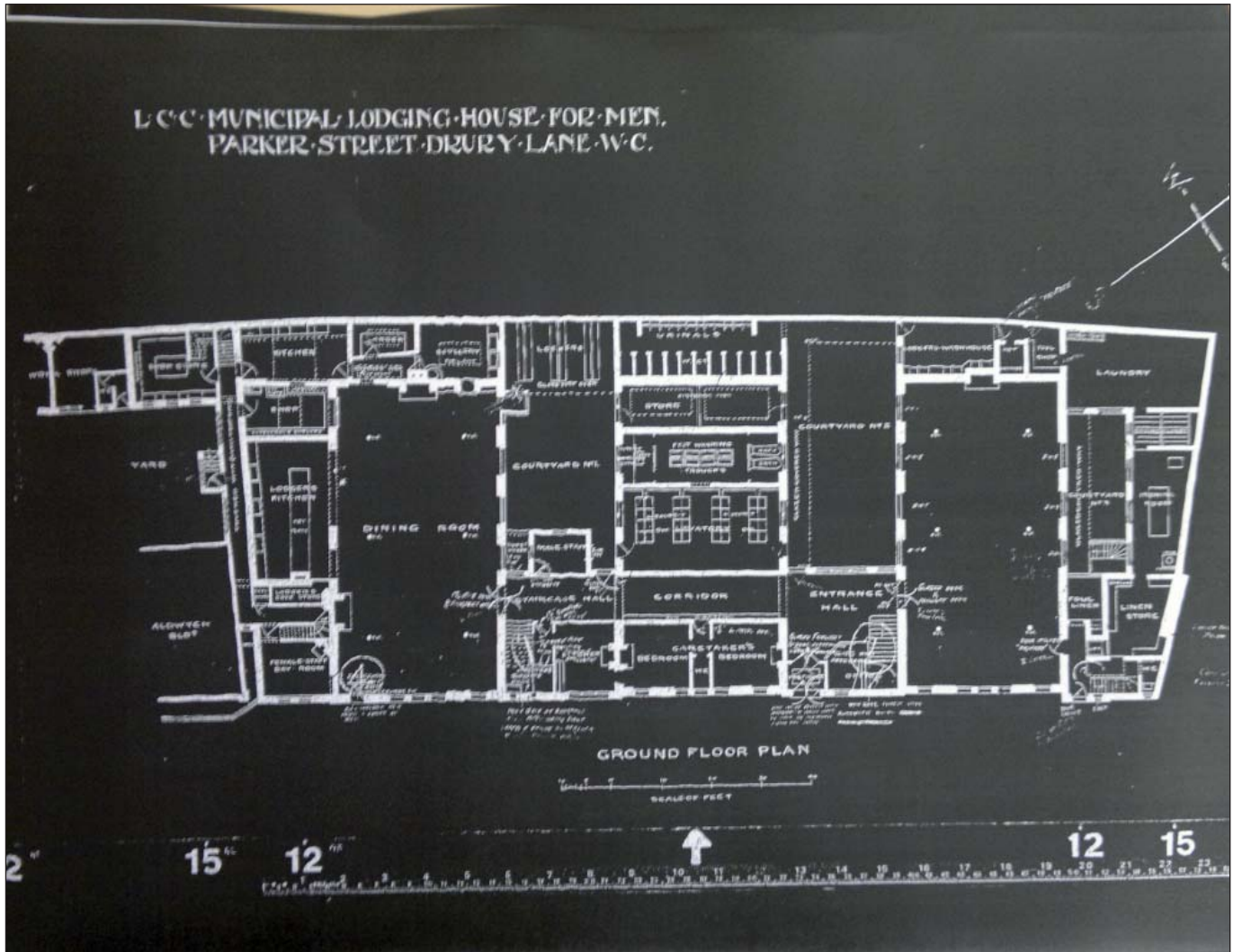
11. Ordnance Survey map 1895 (LMA)



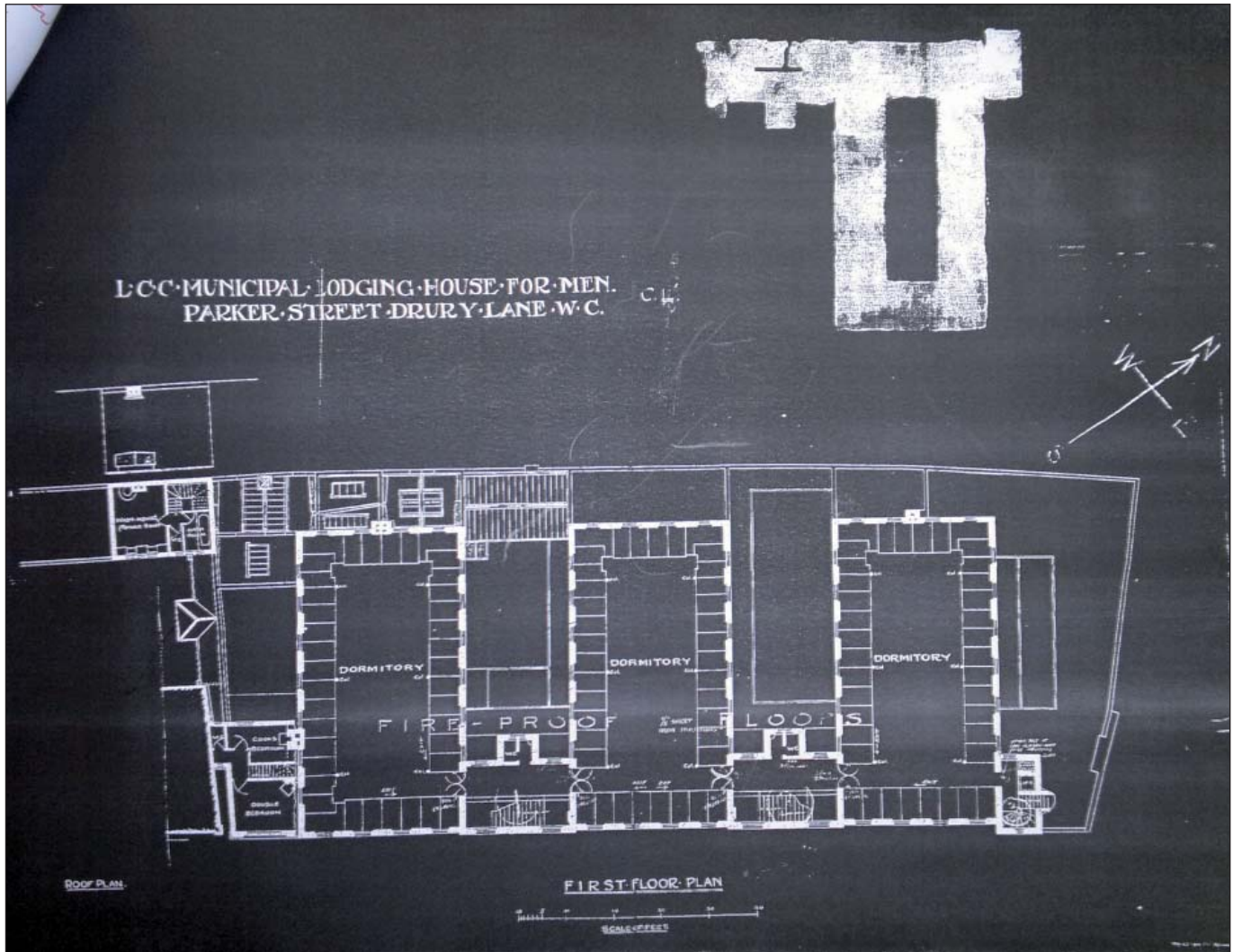
12. Aldwych Buildings & Parker Street House 1907 (LMA)



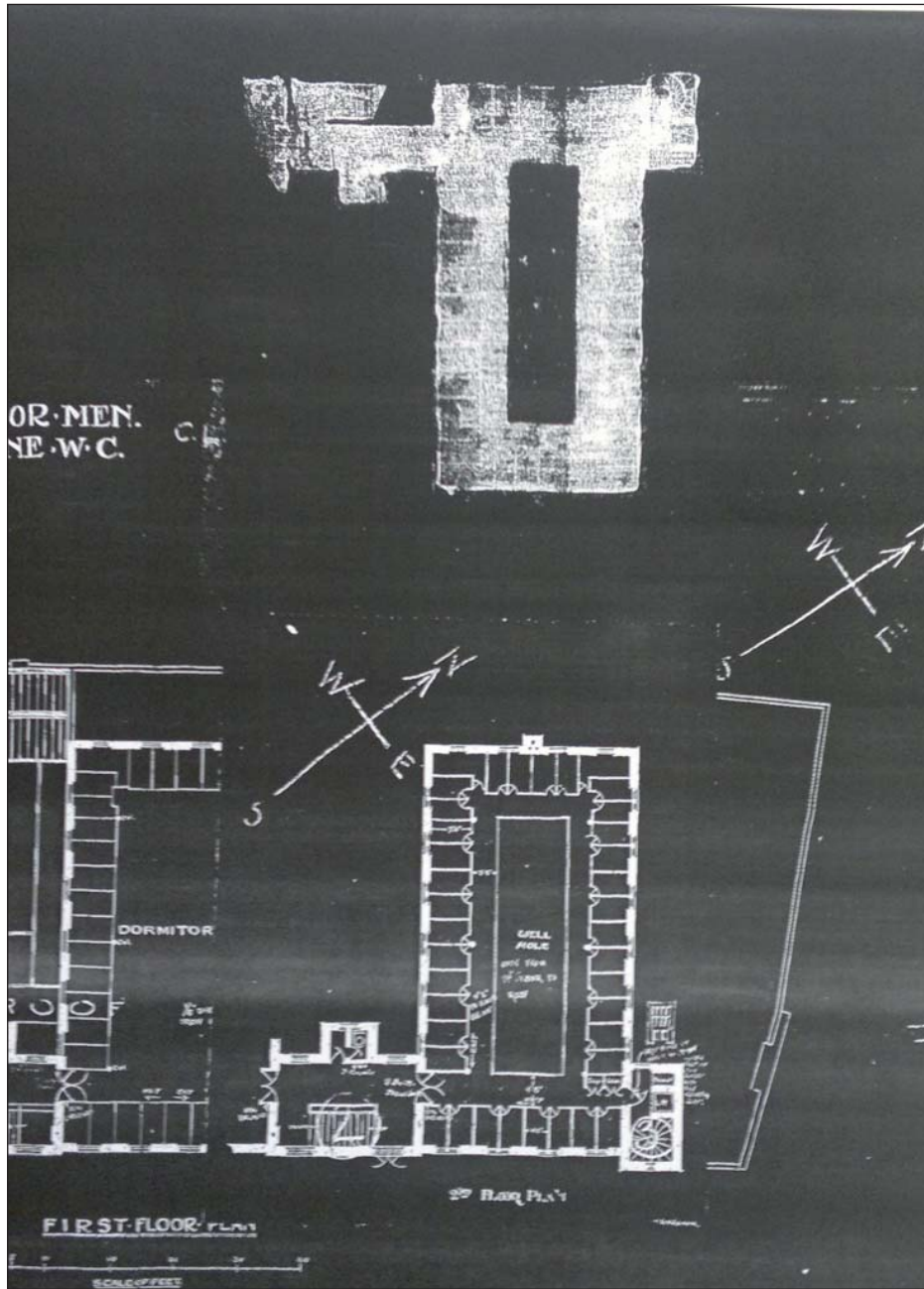
13. Aldwych Workshops with Parker Street House behind 1907 (LMA)



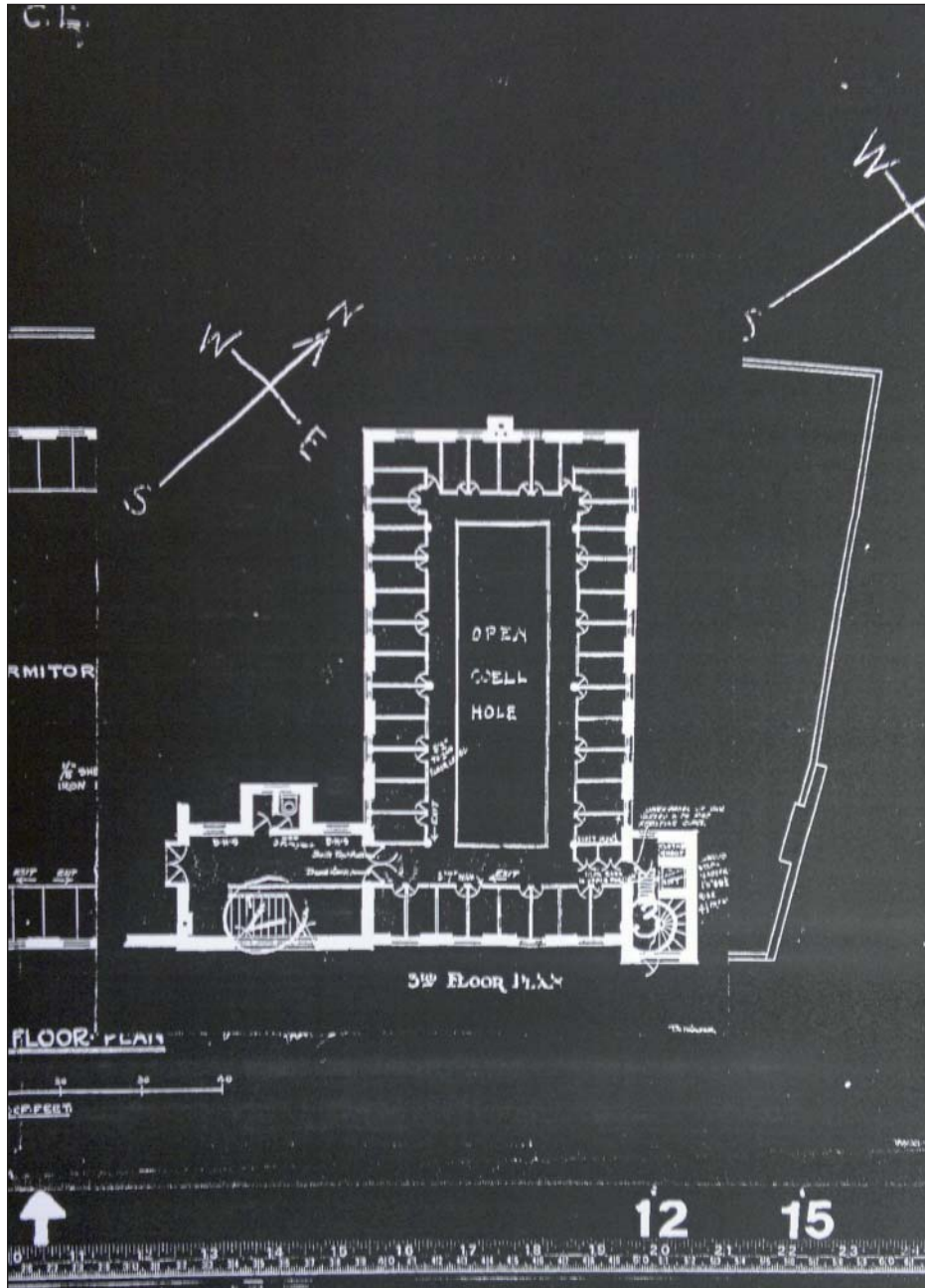
14a. Undated Plans c 1930 Ground Floor (Camden Local Studies)



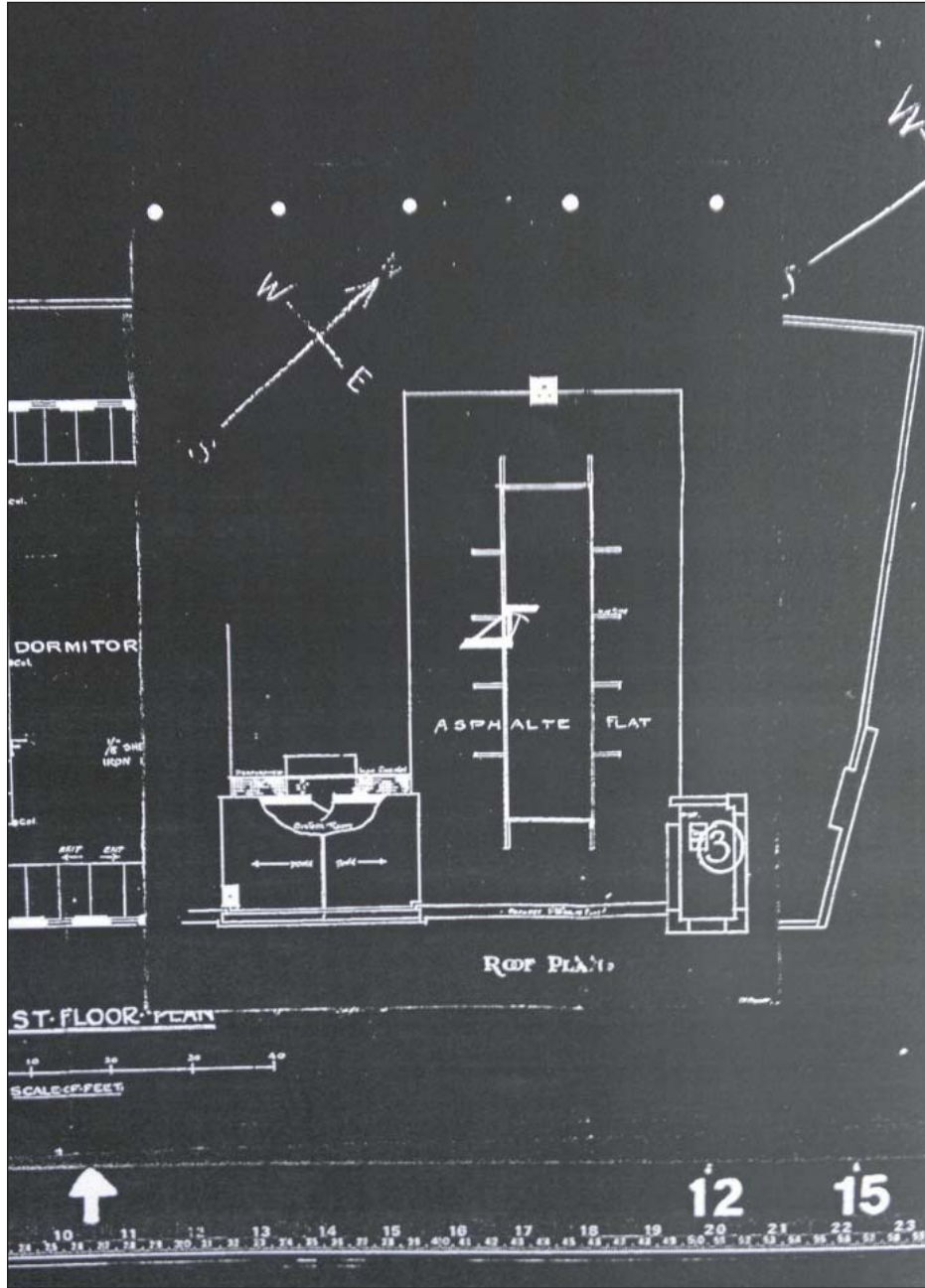
14b. Undated Plans c 1930 First Floor (Camden Local Studies)



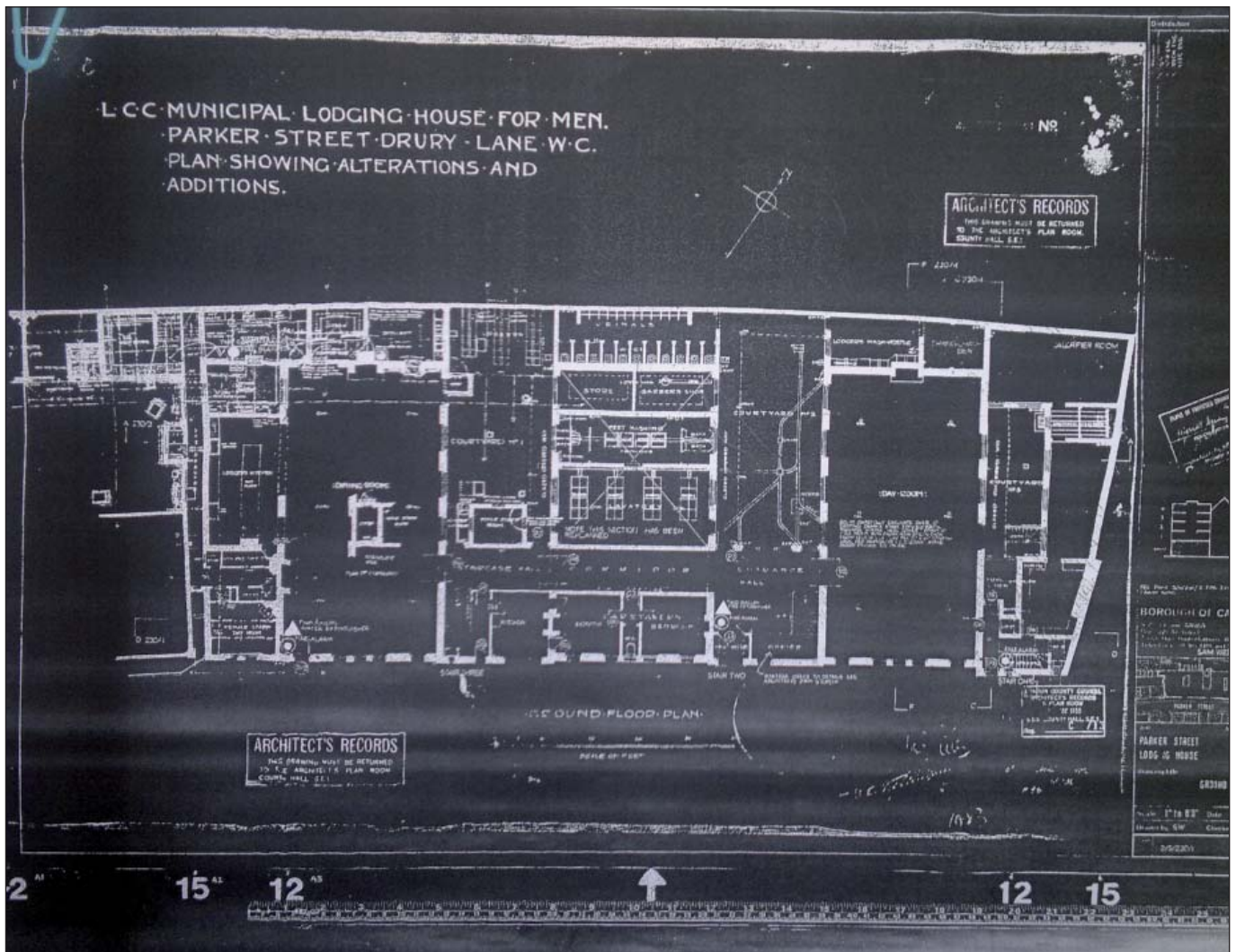
14c. Undated Plans c 1930 Second Floor (Camden Local Studies)



14d. Undated Plans c 1930 Third Floor (Camden Local Studies)



14e. Undated Plans c 1930 Roof Plan (Camden Local Studies)



15. Ground Floor Plan 1953 (Camden Local Studies)



16. Dayroom 1962 (LMA)



17. Parker Street House 1975 (LMA)



18. Entrance 1975 (LMA)

3.0 ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING AND ITS LOCATION

3.1 The Streets

3.1.1 Parker Street

Parker Street is a side street off Kingsway. It is 17th century in origin but no buildings of this period survive. The street is lined with a rather incongruous mixture of modern buildings (particularly at the east end where there are two tall office blocks) and at the northwest end (The New London Theatre). Otherwise it has brick faced robust elevations of the 19th and 20th centuries, mostly of warehouse character if used as offices or originally built as flats and lodgings. Buildings are generally four to five storeys tall, but the modern office buildings at the east end are significantly taller and introduce a distinctly commercial character to the street.

Arguably the best building architecturally is Aldwych Buildings immediately to the west of Parker House; Aldwych buildings is a late 19th century block of flats in the Queen Anne style with decorative brick elevations. Its attention to detail contrasts with the similarly sized but much more workaday façade of Parker House whose brick frontage is flat and a little uninspired in comparison.

The street scene is animated at day time by active entrances into the various commercial and other premises, but finishes are poor: pavements have concrete slabs with granite kerbs, the street is finished in tired asphalt. Trees on the north pavement go some way to soften the street scene.

3.1.2 Parker Mews

Parker Mews is a short cul de sac off Parker Street and located to the west of Aldwych Buildings. It allows access to a car park building to the north of the New London Theatre. From Parker Mews there are oblique views onto Aldwych Workshops, and a view onto the west elevation of the west wing of Parker House. The workshops are gated. The finishes are modern patchy asphalt, and the environment is generally poor.

3.2 Parker House Externally

3.2.1 Front Elevation

Parker House has an asymmetrical and plain late-19th century front elevation which has seen some alteration over time; to the east the building was extended vertically, and there have been changes to the building's fenestration pattern and to other details.

The front elevation is faced in red brick at ground floor level and stock brick with red brick window dressings on the floors above. At third and fourth floor levels the window lintols are finished in cement and this is an inappropriate later alteration. Above the ground and second floors is a continuous cornice.

The building has a tall ground floor and three lower upper storeys; however, the easternmost bay is taller (a later addition) and rises to four storeys above ground. Beyond it to the east is a further slim and even taller bay which gives the building a

rather lopsided appearance.

The façade has four main bays, all rather flat and with alternating straight parapets and gabled elevations; the two gabled bays step forward very slightly. At the western end is an attached two storey structure in stock brick and red brick; the upper storey has a pitched roof and is a later addition but sympathetically executed.

The fenestration is in the form of horned sliding sash windows in the flat roofed bays, and casement windows in the gabled bays. The gabled bays feature rather squat windows at first and second floors (just two per floor) and a much wider opening at third floor level with four sashes. In each gable is a small opening with two sashes. The fenestration is original in places but a number of windows have been replaced in modern times. The taller ground floor windows have modern metal security grilles.

The western gabled bay houses the main entrance – this is a modern opening which originally housed a window. It has an inappropriate modern entrance screen. The eastern gabled bay houses an original entrance with an attractive Edwardian Baroque hood; the door is a later replacement.

There are a number of openings at ground floor level which have been altered; glazed, non-matching bricks below some windows indicate lost doors. The door joinery is generally of a modern date and of low quality.

3.2.2 Flank and Rear Elevations

The north facing elevations of the three wings could not be inspected as they are only visible from neighbouring buildings. Other elevations, as far as they were visible at the time of inspection from the building's roof and courtyards, are described below.

The flank elevations of the wings, and north elevations of the street wing, are constructed in stock brick, and are four storeys tall. The east wing has been rebuilt at third and fourth floor levels in recent times in non-matching pale brick and is one storey higher than the other wings. Fenestration is in the form of regularly spaced windows – those are a variety of original multi-paned sash windows, replacement timber sashes and replacement uPVC windows of various descriptions. The lintols are in painted concrete, the cills are concrete. There is a plethora of downpipes associated with modern bathrooms, and areas of poorly repointed brickwork. Flat parapets are crowned with modern metal railings to the roofs.

The most dominant addition at the rear are two large metal link bridges which connect the three wings at their northern end at first, second and third floor levels. Those are unsightly.

3.2.3 The Roof

The building has flat roofs that are finished in modern asphalt. The three bedroom wings have large modern roof lanterns, and dominant extract ducts. All roofs are surrounded by modern safety railings.

The two gable roofs which face the street have shallow, pitched roofs finished in a

mixture of historic and replacement roof tiles. The gables house utilities such as water tanks.

3.3 Parker House Internally

3.3.1 Introduction

Parker House has an E-shaped plan. It houses an interior of three bedroom wings with central atria that stretch into the building's courtyard to the north. The bedroom wings are accessed off a slim wing that is parallel to Parker Street and accommodates entrances and staircases. The bedroom wings have bedrooms at all levels above ground floor, and communal facilities and offices at ground level.

The interiors appear to have been constructed with concrete floorplates and concrete staircases. Since their construction they have been heavily reconfigured: the original sleeping cubicles have been lost, and the ground floor which originally housed large and open plan communal rooms has been heavily subdivided. The staircases have modern finishes and are in places rebuilt.

Whilst the general plan form at upper levels survives more or less as it was planned originally, the finishes and fittings do not, and very little remains of the late 19th century. The interior is utilitarian in the extreme and devoid of architectural interest.

3.3.2 The East Wing

This wing appears to have been largely rebuilt – it has a central lightwell between first and fourth floors and corridors around it, and those are divided off the lightwell with modern PVC screens. All fabric and finishes are renewed; there are modern floor finishes, modern metal balustrades, and modern flush doors into rooms. Partitions off the corridor are in painted modern blockwork. The roof has a clear storey with soft wood windows. The structure is painted concrete.

3.3.3 The Central Wing

This wing survives more intact; it has the same general layout as the east wing with a corridor around a lightwell, but retains what appears to be its original metal balustrade along with a timber cornice below the roof lantern. Door joinery, partitions to bedrooms and wall and floor finishes however are modern, and to the north is a three storey screen which presumably also was added later. Modern services include light fittings, signage and CCTV cameras.

3.3.4 The West Wing

This wing is similar to the central wing, with original balustrade to the corridor, but without the cornice. Other finishes and fittings have been renewed.

3.3.5 The West Annexe

This is a two-storey bay attached to the west bedroom wing. The upper storey dates to c1900 and was added after the building first opened. Internally this part of the

building has been appropriated as office space and has nothing of interest.

3.3.6 The Staircases

There are two main staircases which serve the bedrooms; those are built of reinforced concrete. The east staircase may have been rebuilt but certainly has been strengthened: it has large steel supports and a simple metal balustrade. The west staircase has a modern green rubber floor finish on the treads, and its balustrade has been boxed in in modern plywood (whether it survives within the boxing in is not clear). At the very east end is a tight, circular cast iron staircase which may have been inserted when the top storey was added; below it is a narrow utilitarian concrete stair.

3.3.7 The Bedrooms

There are two types of bedrooms at first floor level and above¹⁸; one of each has been inspected. The bedrooms are plain in the extreme, with modern fitted furniture, painted brick or concrete walls, modern door joinery and a mixture of original and replacement window joinery. There is nothing of architectural interest in those rooms.

3.4 Aldwych Workshops

This is a group of courtyard buildings to the rear of Aldwych Buildings. Its easternmost building is connected to Parker House via a single storey 19th century brick structure.

The easternmost building is two storeys tall, has a mono-pitched roof faced in modern slates and elevations faced in stock brick with red brick dressings. This building has the appearance of a dwelling house; it dates to the late 19th century and appears to survive with its exterior largely intact. The interior was inspected from the courtyard only – it houses modern office/ storage spaces, with its ground floor level oddly lower than that of the courtyard.

Attached to it and to its west are the former workshops; those are single storey structures which are two or three bays wide and have flat roofs which are finished in modern tiles and used as a terrace, complete with metal railings (possibly original). The buildings have not been inspected internally but appear to be used as storage rooms. They have original casement windows and flush doors between piers of stock brick. The westernmost unit is used as a bin store and has no fenestration but is open between brick piers.

3.5 Assessment

Parker House is a lodging house of the late 19th century that has a degree of historic interest but very little architectural significance. Whilst it is interesting as an early example of the London County Council's commitment to provide accommodation for men of poor means, its built manifestation is modest at best, and poorly altered. Its original, competition winning design was not executed, but what was built instead is

¹⁸ Information supplied by caretaker in October 2011

not an architectural success; in fact it may be best described as inoffensive on the street. The building is no more than functional: it provides a window to each bedroom, taller windows to the communal rooms, all set into unadorned brick elevations. Its contribution to the conservation area is, for this reason, limited. The building's rear elevations are mundane, and have seen changes that are all to its detriment. The rear elevations are not visible from any public viewpoint, and due to this fact, and due to their appearance, they are not significant and do not contribute to the conservation area. Internally the building has been altered considerably. It has lost its communal day room and dining hall, and all original sleeping cubicles. What survives are the bones of its layout, which resemble that of a prison. Finishes are plain and mostly renewed, and the interior is for this reason not significant.

Plan Form Assessment:

The architects were adopting the principle of the pavilion plan from the well-established ventilation principle used to design hospitals from the mid-19th century onwards. English Heritage's guidance on Health and Welfare Buildings' states that:

Ventilation remained the determining factor in hospital design until the twentieth century. This explains the popularity of the pavilion plan that separated functions and provided good light and ventilation... in its fully developed form it comprised ward wings, linked together at one end by corridors that connected the pavilions to centrally positioned services and administration buildings.

The pavilion plan was a basic, flexible plan used in many types of welfare buildings and could take the form of a C, an F, an E etc and be adapted and extended depending on the required capacity of the building. Hospital variants abounded and the pavilion design was commonplace after 1868, for example at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary (1872) and St Thomas' Hospital, Lambeth (1871). The pavilion plan was similarly commonly used for workhouse buildings after 1870.

At Parker House, the ventilation principle resulted in a typical variant of the pavilion plan with sleeping ranges projecting off a spinal, service corridor in an E plan formation. The finished building was considerably different from the competition-winning design as the plan form was not built in a C formation as originally intended.

Historic Interest:

Whilst the history of municipal lodging houses in London is interesting, and Parker House is an important part of that story as the first example of London County Council's commitment to provide accommodation for impoverished men, Parker House was never the best of its building type nor did fulfil its original aim to house the poorest men. Though a prototype of sorts, the hostel was never typically representative of charitably-run lodging houses and borrowed much of its design from workhouse and hospital buildings.

Aldwych Workshops is a group of secondary buildings in the courtyard of Aldwych Buildings which in turn is not part of the site. The former workshops are simple structures of the very late 19th century; they have been altered internally and to some extent on the exterior, and are publicly visible only obliquely from Parker Mews. The

workshops, and more particularly the two storey house to their east, have some modest charm, and their elevations therefore make a limited positive contribution to the conservation area.

4.0 DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROPOSALS

4.1 The Proposals Generally

The proposals intend to provide high-quality, modern, residential accommodation while retaining and enhancing the significance of the conservation area. The proposals are shown on PD+P Architects' drawings.

The scheme would see demolition of the less interesting fabric on the site and its replacement with a new development with the aim of maximizing the site's potential while helping to secure the long-term future of the significant elements of the historic building. The new construction would largely be in a contemporary style that references traditional building forms and the character of the conservation area.

4.1.1 The Proposals for Parker House

The proposals would see the retention of the street elevation of Parker House and part of the flank walls and the demolition of all of the structures behind.

On the roof, the gables and water tower would be replaced to match the existing; this would allow the building works behind the retained façade to take place. The chimneys and structural bars would be retained or replaced on a like for like basis as necessary. The parapet and copings would be raised using traditional materials to better balance the proportions of the street elevation.

On the south corner above the parapet two options have been submitted for consideration. From a heritage perspective, Option 1 is considered preferable to Option 2. In Option 1, the distinction between the existing flank wall brickwork and the new copper clad roof extension is clearly and rightly delineated, whereas in Option 2, the extension of the brickwork above the parapet in a style that has no precedent in the original building confuses the distinction between new and old and has no heritage value.

On the street elevation, the brick and stonework would be cleaned, repaired and re-pointed as necessary. The sash windows would all be replaced with double glazed frames to match the style of the existing ones; this would improve the thermal efficiency of the building. The smaller window openings would be enlarged to match the larger window openings on the elevation in order to meet daylight requirements. A two-storey extension would be constructed above the existing single storey bay on the north end of the building to match the existing elevation.

At street level, the large, arched window would be returned to its original form. The original, main entrance would be returned to use and a new, more appropriately designed door installed and its adjacent window would be remodeled into a smaller window with a timber, service door below. The existing door opening to the north end of the elevation would be remodeled into a window opening, while a new, more appropriate door would also be installed in the door opening to the south end of the elevation. The modern security grills would be removed from all the window openings and plastic downpipes and hoppers would be replaced with cast iron ones of a more appropriate, historic design.

Internally, the retained elevation would be insulated to improve its thermal performance, and the new building would be constructed with floor levels similar to the existing levels.

4.1.2 The Proposals for Aldwych Workshops

The existing workshops would be rebuilt in a similar architectural style to their current form but using better quality stock bricks. The two storey 'house' would be extended by a bay to the north. The windows would all be double glazed casements to match the existing style, new doors of a more appropriate design would be installed and the pitch roof would be tiled in slate to match the existing. The flat roof above the workshops would be landscaped as a terrace with pavers and planters.

4.2 Implications of the Proposals

The proposals would result in the removal and re-building of almost all built structures except the Parker House street elevation and part of the flank walls.

The implications of this are that all of the lower quality and the more prosaic fabric of the building would be lost and replaced by new structures, which would relate to the existing fenestration pattern.

The proposals would see the retention, repair and restoration of the significant, historic fabric which makes a positive contribution to the conservation area. The gabled roofs of Parker house would be rebuilt to match existing and the remodelling of some windows on the street elevation would match the other larger openings and read as a continuous part of the elevation. The reinstatement of the prominent arched window would improve the appearance of the street elevation, as would the upgrading of all the windows, doors, downpipes and hoppers.

It might be argued that internally the building's plan form is of interest, and to a degree it is, but as the research has shown, the E-plan layout was a typical variant on the pavilion plan form often used in Victorian hospitals and workhouses. The building has also lost its communal day room and dining hall and all original sleeping cubicles and finishes. For these reasons, the interior is not significant.

4.3 Justification of the Proposals

Paragraph 129 of the NPPF advises that when considering the impact of a proposal, the particular nature of the significance of the asset should be taken into account and assessed to avoid or minimise conflict between conservation of the asset and the proposal.

Where a proposal would affect a non-designated heritage asset such as Parker House, then a balanced judgment must be made weighing the scale of any harm or loss against the significance of the asset (para. 135).

The significance of Parker House is chiefly derived from its historic interest as a lodging house and the contribution that its street elevation makes to the streetscape and the conservation area as a whole. The Aldwych workshops are of limited significance and make a very modest contribution to the conservation area. Internally,

nothing of significance remains in either building.

Therefore, while the proposals may at first seem rather radical alterations to make, upon closer inspection, 'façade retention' is a sensible and pragmatic method of achieving high quality residential space while ensuring the protection of the most significant element on the site – the Parker House street elevation – in the long-term. This elevation will undergo some minor alterations, but it would also be repaired, its windows and doors upgraded, and inappropriate grills and downpipes removed. Consequently, the extent of the harm caused to the significance of the building and to the conservation area would be minimal.

The scheme would also result in the following benefits:

- The creation of high quality, viable residential units.
- The construction of a coherently and sensitively designed roof extension with better thermal performance and a green roof.
- The upgrading of the thermal performance of the building.
- The upgrading of all internal finishes and fittings.

In response to the NPPF policy on energy efficiency improvements, the replacement of the fenestration with matching double glazed frames, the internal insulation of the street elevation, the green roof and PV panels will all improve the viability and sustainability of the building.

4.4 Conclusion

Remembering that the NPPF makes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and taking into account that the proposed alterations would not diminish the significance of the building and would ensure a viable use for the building, thereby helping to secure its future in the long-term, it may be concluded that on balance the scheme includes sufficient public benefits to outweigh the minimal harm that might be caused, and should therefore, be acceptable in terms of the relevant planning policies and should be welcomed.

Appendix I

Sources and Bibliography

Primary Sources

Board of Works Report into Shelton Street Area 1884
LCC Minutes Housing Sub Committee 1889 - 93

Secondary Sources

Gee, E “Where shall she live?” in Living, Leisure and Law: Eight Building Types in England 1800-1941 ed. Brandwood, G. 2010

Riley, W. E & Gomme, L Survey of London v 5: St Giles in the Fields pt II 1914

Pevsner, N & Cherry, B. The Buildings of England London 4: North 1999

Pevsner, N & Cherry, B. The Buildings of England London 6: Westminster 2003

Stuart Gray, A. Edwardian Architecture: A Biographical Dictionary 1986

The Builder June 1891

The Builder Jan 1893

Personal Communication

Dr Rebecca Preston, Research Fellow, At Home in the Institution project, The Department of History, Royal Holloway, University of London: telephone interview in October 2011