

CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARIES

INTRODUCTION

The preparation of this report provided a useful opportunity in which to reassess the conservation area boundaries. It is not surprising that, in the fifteen years which have elapsed since this conservation area was originally designated (1969), changes to both individual buildings and whole terraces have occurred. It was therefore important to assess not only whether the area should be extended to incorporate further buildings and streets, but also whether, through redevelopment or cumulative alteration, certain parts of the conservation area were no longer worthy of inclusion.

SOUTHERN BOUNDARY

Along its entire southern edge, Royal Hospital shares a common boundary with Thames Conservation Area, and so no additional designations are possible.

EASTERN BOUNDARY

The boundary runs northwards along Chelsea Bridge Road, which forms a natural divide as it also coincides with the eastern edge of the Ranelagh Gardens and the Borough boundary. At Royal Hospital Road, the boundary of the conservation area runs westward excluding the mansion blocks to the north which stylistically belong to the Sloane Street/Hans Town development.

The mansion block in Franklins Row (Numbers 1-49 Burton Court) although of similar style is more ornamental and elaborate, and as it forms a valuable adjunct to the square it is important that it is included as part of the conservation area. The later block of flats in

Franklins Row (Numbers 50-85 Burton Court) is also included because of its important location overlooking Burton's Court.

The boundary returns eastwards and northwards to encompass the Duke of York's Headquarters, which forms a definite boundary to the conservation area in this north-eastern corner.

NORTHERN BOUNDARY

The boundary runs along the centre of the King's Road as far as Cheltenham Terrace, after which it excludes the redevelopment blocks and King's Road frontages as far as Number 55 King's Road.

The public house on the north west corner of Royal Avenue underwent a remarkable transformation, inside and out, in the mid 1960's and was rechristened 'The Drug Store'. Although stylistically an important part of the short-lived 'swinging London' fashion which concentrated on the King's Road and a few other parts of the capital, it proved a wholly unacceptable neighbour to Royal Avenue. The interior was soon restyled with more popular mediocrity, but the exterior quickly showed how tawdry and insubstantial the style was. The site is now included within the conservation area due to its importance to the local scene, and a photographic record has been made for history's sake as the exterior and interior have now been totally refurbished.

Numbers 55-65 King's Road, which form part of the Wellington Square composition, are already included within the conservation area. Between Numbers 49 (The Drug Store) and 55 are two early-mid Victorian buildings of a similar scale to Numbers 55-65 with



'The Drug Store' (Number 49 King's Road)



Numbers 55-65 (odd) King's Road

recently well refurbished upper floors. The boundary has been further extended to incorporate these two buildings. (Numbers 51 and 53).

Further along the King's Road, the only other buildings considered to be of merit and therefore already included within the conservation area are Numbers 69a on the west corner of Smith Street and which shares the street's character, the attractive pub — The Chelsea Potter — on the corner of Radnor Walk, and the block on the corner of Flood Street (Numbers 131-141) which currently houses the Chelsea Antiques Market.

The question of including further properties on the King's Road frontage has been considered in the King's Road Character Study, and with the exception of the Drug Store building and the two adjoining buildings, there appeared no reason to modify the recommendations therein.

WESTERN BOUNDARY

The boundary returns south along Flood Street. The western side of the street consists of redevelopment sites of little merit until the Remembrance Hall which being an attractive contrast to its neighbours is included. South of Alpha Place is an LEB building with plans approved for its redevelopment. The adjacent group of buildings including the Rosetti Studios is incorporated.

The boundary then turns into Christchurch Street, via Robinson Street, and includes Christchurch School, but excludes the Cheyne Court mansion blocks. Although the facades of these buildings in Flood Street are well maintained and of some merit, the offensively boring rear elevations seem to rule out their designation as part of the conservation area.

The boundary then runs west along the Royal Hospital Road to its junction with the Embankment.

CONCLUSION

As a result of this study the boundaries of the conservation area remain largely unaltered. The only additions to the area are Numbers 49, 51 and 53 King's Road. The inclusion of these three buildings was approved by the Town Planning Committee on 8th May, 1984.

Although given careful consideration, no individual buildings or streets have been excluded, for although some might be thought to be of less interest than most of the buildings and streets in the conservation area, their removal would create complex boundaries and would detract from the homogeneity of the area.



Numbers 131-141 (odd) King's Road



DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to examine the planning and listed building consent applications received in the Royal Hospital area over the last ten years — 1974 to 1983 — in order to provide an indication of any pressures for development which are currently or have recently been significant. This exercise is necessary so that the proposals made within this statement can then take account of these pressures and their possible impact on the area.

The residential block on the north side of Tedworth Square is the only major redevelopment scheme which has been completed in the area over the last ten years (finished 1981). The smaller housing schemes in Shawfield Street and Flood Street were constructed during the 1960s and early 1970s. There are however a number of key sites both within and adjoining the conservation area now awaiting redevelopment. Most of the changes within the area over the last ten years have been due to alterations to existing buildings or small developments only, but the cumulative effect of these alterations will have as significant an impact on the area in the long term as one or two major developments.

THE TABLES

The tables of planning applications are largely self-explanatory. The records of applications over the last ten years were examined and all applications were categorised under thirteen headings. (They do not correspond to official use classes or development classes). The general heading 'Other' includes applications of an individual nature for which no similar applications were received, for example an application for the erection of a flagpole in Tite Street.

Where an application involved more than one type of

development — for example, change of use and rear extension — it is shown under both headings. Further, many new developments follow two or three alternative applications of which only one proposal will be built, or an acceptable modified application may follow one or more refusals of permission. The tables therefore show applications received, not developments built, and they are thus not a factual analysis of actual development but an indication of pressure for development. In addition it must be remembered that many alterations which may have a significant impact on the individual property as well as on the street remain outside planning control — planning approval in the form of listed building consent, for example, is required for elevational and internal changes to a single family dwelling house only if the building is listed. (See Development and The Law, pages 7–8 .)

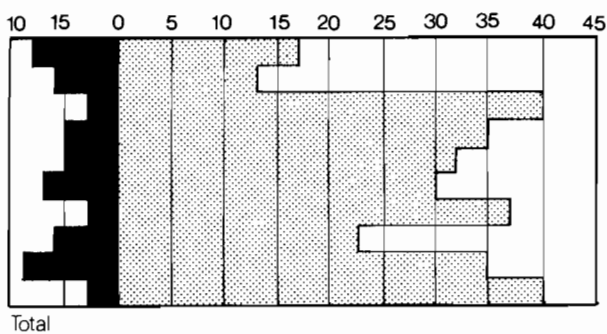
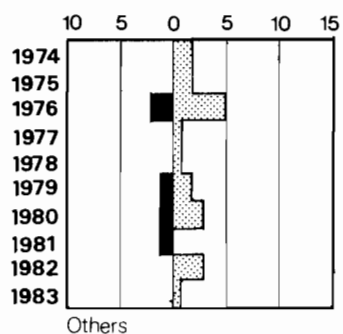
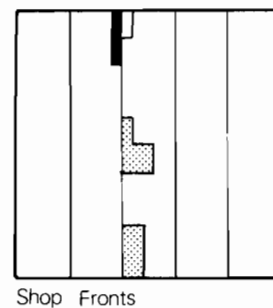
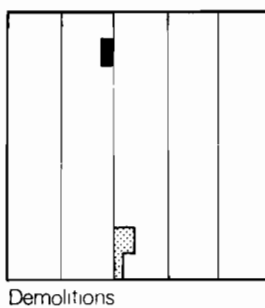
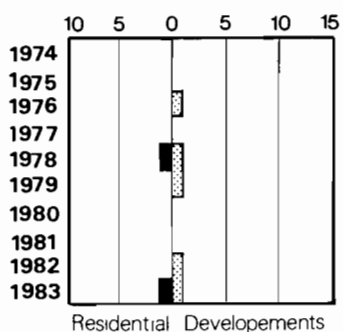
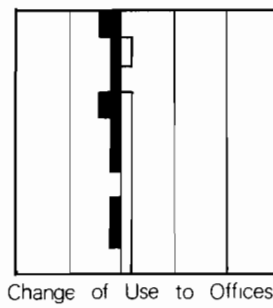
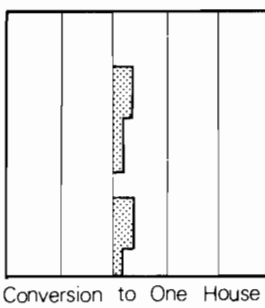
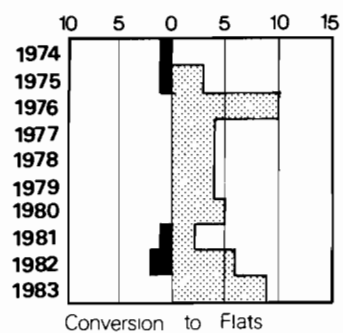
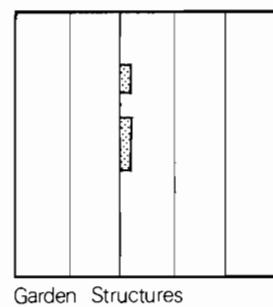
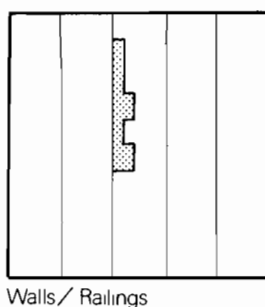
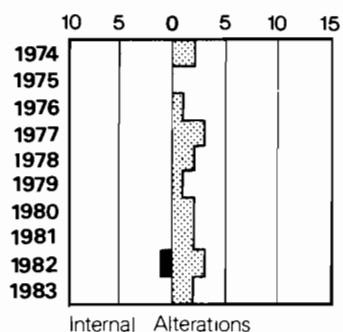
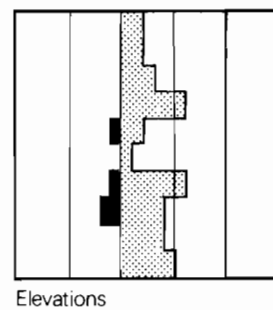
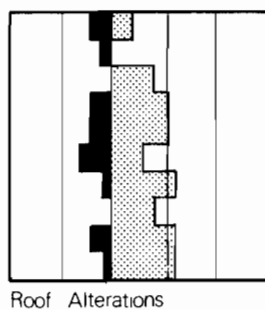
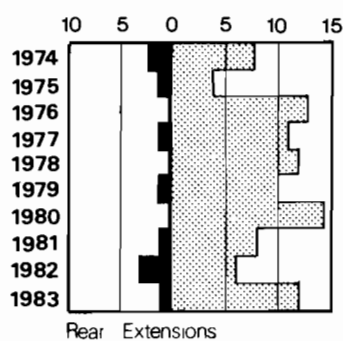
ANALYSIS OF APPLICATIONS

A total of just over 350 applications were received for the Royal Hospital area over the ten year period, giving an average of about 35 applications per year. The low number suggests that there is little pressure for substantial change in the area, and this is to be expected given the residential nature of an area notable for its historical character.

The majority of applications were received, not surprisingly, for rear extensions (109) followed by roof alterations (52) and conversions to flats (55). Applications for conversions to flats are often related to proposals for extensions and elevational changes. It is interesting to note that the trend to convert individual dwelling houses into self-contained flats now appears to have gone full cycle, with a not insignificant number of applications being received to convert flats to a single house and bedsitting rooms to one larger flat.

CHART OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

1974 - 1983



KEY

Approvals

Refusal

Two categories of development where the rate of refusal is significant are changes of use to offices (60%) and roof alterations (26%). The first category is to be expected, given that the area is primarily residential and the Council is stringent in resisting the encroachment of office uses into residential areas (note the section on Appeals). The rate of refusals for roof extensions serves to emphasise the difficult problem of achieving an acceptable roof alteration without spoiling the appearance of the individual property or unacceptably disturbing the skyline of the street.

SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF APPLICATIONS

There was no street within the conservation area which was totally exempt from change over the ten year period. The nineteen properties along the King's Road which fall within the Royal Hospital area received the highest level of applications (30). This high number is perhaps not surprising given the commercial nature of the street: in addition nine proposals related to one particular development which was finally determined by appeal (see Appeals section).

St. Leonard's Terrace followed with almost one application per dwelling, probably reflecting the fact that the majority of buildings in the street are listed, and that listed building consent is therefore required for most alterations.

Christchurch Street, Radnor Walk, Smith Street, Smith Terrace and Wellington Square all received approximately 0.5 applications per property. This rate was higher than average and may be due either to the fact that the street contains a large proportion of listed buildings (for example, Wellington Square) or that the buildings are small (for example, Smith Terrace) and there may therefore be a greater desire to extend them.

Walpole Street is of interest for its very low level of applications — only nine were received for the thirty three properties which fall within the conservation area.

The applications were on the whole widely distributed by type but some concentrations of certain forms of development were in evidence:

Rear Extensions. These were predominant in Christchurch Street (16 approvals) Radnor Walk (14 approvals) and St. Leonard's Terrace (10 approvals).

Roof Alterations. The majority of applications in this category were received from Shawfield Street (6 approvals: 1 refusal), Smith Terrace (5 approvals: 2 refusals) and Radnor Walk (4 approvals: 2 refusals).

With the exception of St. Leonard's Terrace, it is interesting to note those streets with a higher number of applications for rear extensions and roof alterations. The

properties these streets contain are small, resulting in pressure to meet present day requirements (compare the 2 storeys of the original properties in Smith Terrace with the 4 storeys and basement of the houses in Walpole Street).

Conversion to Flats. These applications were concentrated in Redburn Street (9 approvals), Redesdale Street (9 approvals) and Flood Street (8 approvals). Whilst elsewhere the conversion of a property into flats often involved extension of the property, this was rarely the case in the applications received for these streets.

Offices. The King's Road, an existing commercial street, predictably leads the number of applications received in this category with 2 approvals and 5 refusals. The only other street to receive more than one application in this category was Smith Street (1 approval: 3 refusals). These applications were concentrated at the King's Road end of Smith Street: likewise the other office applications received were for properties located close to the King's Road.

CONCLUSION

Given the residential and historical character of the Royal Hospital area, it is not surprising to learn that the pressure for development in the area as a whole is low. The properties along the King's Road are subject to continual pressures for change, but there has been an unrelenting resistance to the spread of commercial uses into the area from the King's Road. The main forms of development prevalent in the area are due to alterations to existing buildings, primarily rear extensions and roof alterations but caution needs to be exercised to ensure that future changes do not detract from but rather add to the attractiveness of the area.

APPEALS

determined between 1974-1983

against the refusal of planning permission for the erection of an additional storey and rear extension at 19 Smith Terrace.

Appeal DISMISSED on the grounds that the additional storey would have a detrimental effect on the appearance and character of the house and street, and so on the Conservation Area — May 1974.

against the refusal of planning permission for the change of use to offices of 1st and 2nd floor of 8 Smith Street in conjunction with the existing ground and basement floor offices.

Appeal DISMISSED on the grounds that there was no reason to justify the exception to existing policies which state that office use is unacceptable in residential areas — November 1977.

against the refusal of planning permission to use the basement of 2 Smith Street as a self-contained flat.

Appeal ALLOWED on the grounds that the development would not affect unduly the character of Smith Street, nor result in a significant loss of family type living accommodation which would remain on the ground and upper floors – December 1978.

against the refusal of planning permission for the erection of an additional storey to provide four flats at Whitelands House, Cheltenham Terrace.

Appeal DISMISSED on the grounds that the development would result in a reduction in environmental standards – September 1979.

against the refusal of planning permission for the erection of a new annexe and covered way to the rear of 4 Smith Street.

Appeal DISMISSED on the grounds that the development would result in an unacceptable reduction in the open area of private garden available to the house – May 1980.

against the refusal of planning permission for the retention of, and **against** the subsequent enforcement notice for the removal of a trellis fence on the front parapet at 2 Paradise Walk.

Appeal ALLOWED and enforcement notice QUASHED. The Secretary of State upheld the Inspector's view that the erection of the trellis was akin to the erection of a balustrade (rather than a fence) and was therefore Permitted Development (that is, specific planning permission was not required) – January 1981.

against the refusal of planning permission for the erection of a four storey extension to existing offices at 35 Walpole Street.

Appeal DISMISSED on the grounds that there was no reason to justify the exception to existing policies which state that office use is unacceptable in residential areas – May 1981.

against the refusal of listed building consent for the insertion of an oriel window on the front elevation of 4 Chelsea Embankment.

Appeal DISMISSED on the grounds that the development would produce an unacceptable degree of imbalance in the pattern of fenestration. The oriel window would be aesthetically and stylistically inappropriate and detract significantly from the character of the building – December 1981.

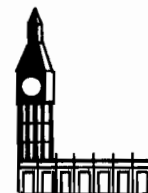
against the refusal of planning permission for an access to and formation of a proposed roof patio over family room at the rear of 18 Royal Avenue.

Appeal DISMISSED on the grounds that the proposed development would detract unduly from the privacy of nearby properties – February 1982.

against the refusal of planning permission and listed building consent for the erection of a first floor rear extension for office use at 61-63 King's Road, together

with the provision of two one-bedroom flats at second floor level at 61-65 King's Road.

Appeal ALLOWED on the grounds that the proposed office extension would be modest and used in conjunction with an existing authorised office use on the King's Road, a street which is clearly commercial in character. The loss of residential space would be nominal and outweighed by the gains of creating a healthy base for the company and ensured occupation of the listed buildings – November 1983.



DEVELOPMENT AND THE LAW

INTRODUCTION

The legal position regarding development and demolition in the conservation area is summarised below. The summary applies to all buildings whether or not listed, but excludes certain special cases, notably control of advertisements and development by various statutory bodies. The complete legislation is more involved and readers should refer to Circulars 23/77 and 12/81: produced by the Department of the Environment or enquire at the Planning Information Office at the Town Hall.

Development needing permission

In order to control development in the public interest, the law provides that planning permission is required (s.23(1) of the 1971 Town and Country Planning Act) for all "development". This is defined as "the carrying out of building, engineering or other operations in, on or over land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land" (s.22(1)).*

Specially excluded are (amongst others) works affecting only the interior of a building (although these may need listed building consent if the building is listed), or those which do not materially affect the external appearance of a building (e.g. routine maintenance). Also excluded is the use of any buildings or land attached to a dwelling house for any normal domestic purpose (s.22(2)(d)).

Apart from these specific exclusions, therefore, all development requires permission. This can be given in two ways; either by the Council in response to a specific application, or by the Secretary of State through the mechanism of "permitted development".

Permitted Development

Under the General Development Orders 1977-1981 (article 3), certain classes of development are deemed to be granted permission – for which there is therefore no need for any application to be made to the Council. The two classes most relevant to this conservation area as designated at 1st April, 1981 are as follows:*

Class 1: (applies to single family dwelling houses only):

1. *The enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a single family dwelling house, provided that:*

(a) *the volume of the house is not increased by more than one tenth or 50 cubic metres (1750 cu.ft.), whichever is greater; up to a maximum of 115 cu.m. (4136 cu.ft); and*

(b) *the highest part of the roof is not exceeded; and*

(c) *no part of the new work comes closer to the street than the front of the house did before the alteration; and*

(d) *no part of the extension with 2 m. of the site boundary is more than 4 m. in height; and*

(e) *the new work covers less than half of the total garden.*

2. *The erection of a porch, provided it is less than 2 sq.m. in area and 3 m. in height, and more than 2 m. from the back of the pavement.*

3. *The erection of a building in the garden (other than a house, garage more than 5 m. away from the house, stable, etc.), required for normal domestic purposes, provided no part of it is closer to a road than the house, is not more than 3 m. high (4 m. if it has a ridged roof), and does not lead to more than half of the area of the property not occupied by the original house being covered in buildings.*

4. *The construction of a hardstanding for vehicles.*

5. *The rection of an oil storage tank, not more than 3 m. high and containing not more than 3500 litres, provided it does not project in front of the house.*

Class II (which applies to all buildings):

1. *The erection of gates, fences, walls, etc., not more than 2 m. high — or 1 m. high fronting a highway.*

2. *The forming of a means of access to the street in connection with other "permitted development", except to classified roads.*

3. *The painting of the exterior of a building other than for advertisement;*

It should be noted that these "permitted development" rights can be taken away by conditions on previous planning permissions (article 3(2)). Also, "listed building consent" as opposed to planning permission, would normally be required for these types of development where the building is listed. Outside the conservation area less restrictive rules in respect of extensions apply.

Article 4 Directions

Under Article 4 of the General Development Order, the Council can repeal certain or all "permitted development rights", where it feels that even such relatively minor development would seriously harm the appearance of an area, subject to the agreement of the Secretary of State.

Article 4 Directions enable the Council to exercise control by being able to decide whether or not to grant permission for these types of development.

Demolition

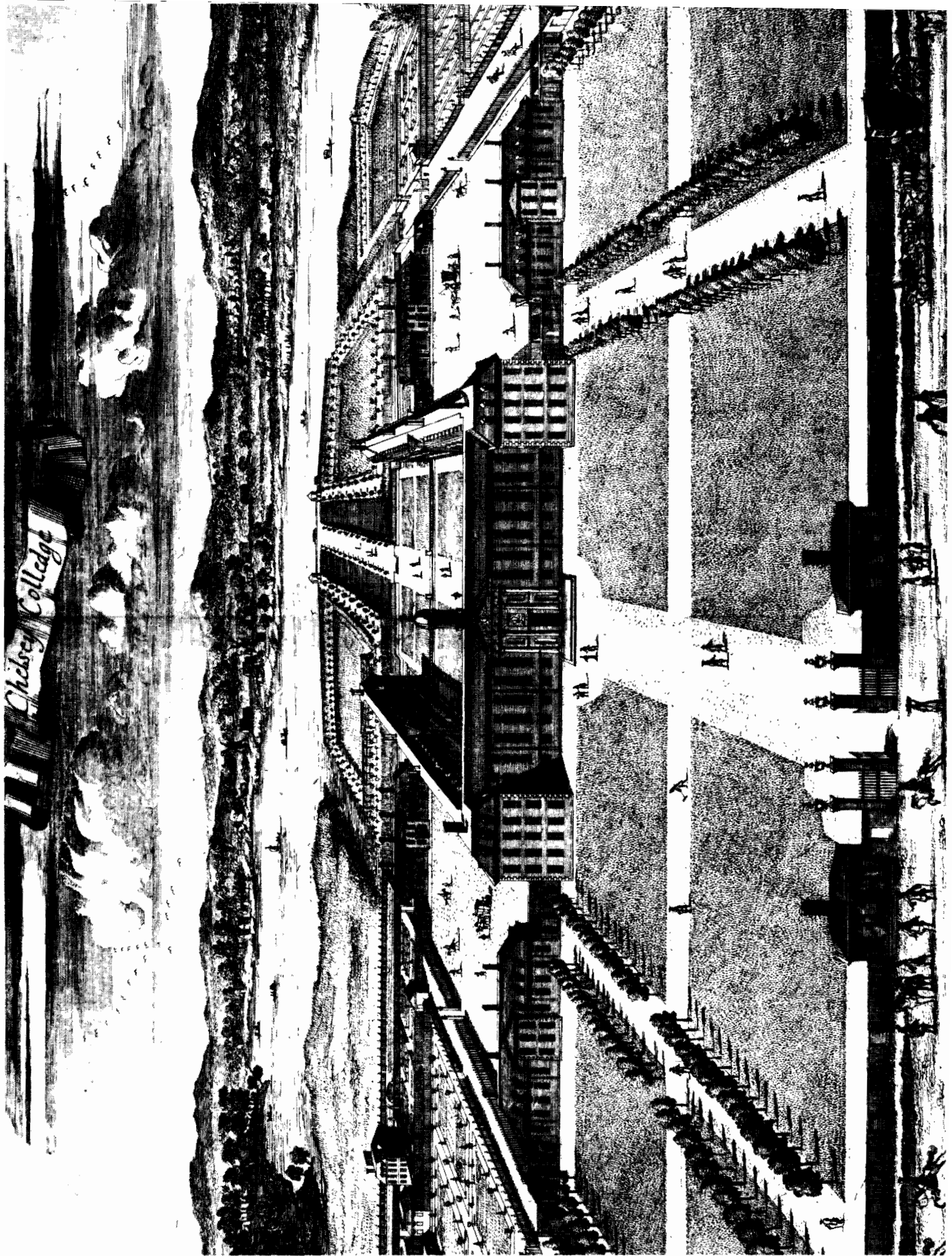
Under s.227A of the 1971 Act, listed building consent is required for the demolition, in whole or in part, of all buildings in any Conservation Area. However, by virtue of the Secretary of State's Direction at para.71 of Circular 23/77, consent is not required for the demolition of any building whose volume does not exceed 115 cu.m. or any part of such building; nor for the demolition of any building (or part) if to erect it would be permitted development under Class I or II (amongst others) of the General Development Orders (see above) — e.g. a small extension at the rear of a single family dwelling house, or a garden wall of under 2 m. high separating any properties.

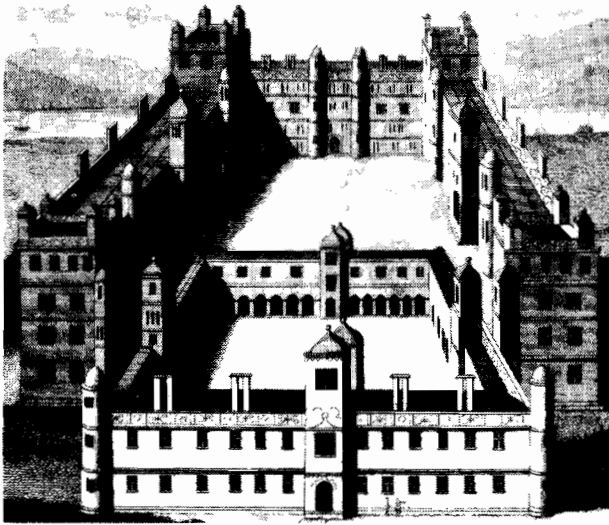
Although an Article 4 Direction can take away the automatic permission for certain types of development, it is perhaps surprising that it does not also have the effect of requiring consent for corresponding types of demolition. The Circular 23/77 exemptions from the need to obtain listed building consent therefore apply whether or not a Direction has been made. The Council has drawn the attention of the Department of the Environment to the unfortunate effect of this, but they were not sympathetic — feeling that local authority resources should not be used in such detailed control.

Compensation

Compensation may be payable in certain cases by the Council if planning permission is refused, and the refusal is upheld at appeal, for a proposal involving an increase to a building of up to one tenth of its original floorspace existing at 1.7.1948 (or, in the case of a single family dwelling house, 50 cu.m. if greater), under s.169 of the 1971 Act.

Where an Article 4 Direction is in operation Compensation may also be payable by the Council under ss.164 and 165 of the 1971 Act, if it can be proved that a refusal of permission for development which would otherwise have been "permitted" results in a loss or depreciation in the value of the land.





HISTORY

EARLY TIMES

Five hundred years ago, the area around the Royal Hospital was an unprepossessing stretch of wind-swept fields and water meadows. The only human habitation was perhaps a few farm labourers' hovels or fishermen's sheds near the river. The pebble shelf or "Chesilsey" on the strand of the Thames gave this truly rural parish its name. To the north, a local farm track was all that marked where the King's Road is today, so that such access as might be required to the area was best attempted via the river. Later, highway communication was from Westbourne Toll Bridge near the undrained marshes where Belgravia is today, along Paradise Row (now Royal Hospital Road) and thence back to the river. Chelsea began to attract development in the sixteenth century when Sir Thomas More built his house upstream from the area now occupied by the Royal Hospital. By the time of Elizabeth I, concern about the unconstrained spread of London westward led to a law which attempted to prohibit further expansion. Chelsea was still in the heart of the country, but would increasingly be seen as a convenient location for out-of-town houses for the gentry and nobility.

THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

The religious controversies at the beginning of the seventeenth century were argued fiercely and with great seriousness. King James I was second to none in the earnest importance he attached to such matters. Matthew Sutcliffe, Dean of Exeter, therefore found a sympathetic ear when he proposed a theological college for training clergy to deal competently with the many issues of the day. The King held land at Chelsea through a manor which had once belonged to Westminster Abbey. This had passed to the Crown at the Dissolution.

King James gave a plot of land from this Chelsea manor near the river, and granted timber from Windsor Forest. He laid the foundation stone on May, 8th 1609.

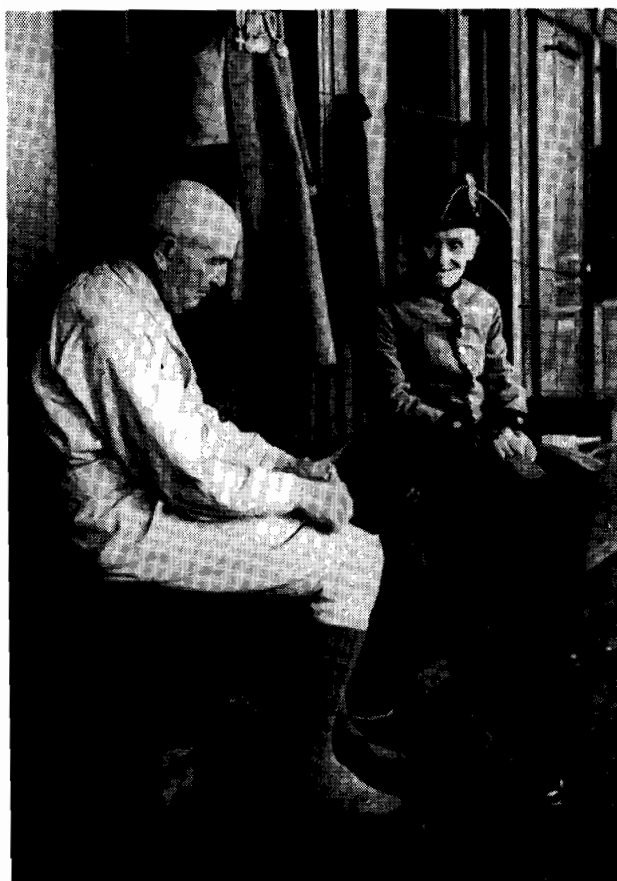
Despite such influential patronage, the College always lacked both real resources and wide support. By the time of Cromwell's Commonwealth, the building was used as a prison, and was clearly in a poor state. After the Restoration the old college building was occupied in 1667 by the newly-founded Royal Society who quickly found it a burden financially and unsuitable for their needs. By 1681, the Society had sold the land and building back to the Crown for £1,300.

THE ROYAL HOSPITAL

Cromwell's Model Army had been England's first force of regulars. When this was disbanded, there was little or no provision for the welfare of retired or maimed ex-soldiers. The idea of a hospital for the sick and needy goes back to medieval monastic traditions and had already been revived in Paris with royal patronage at the Hotel des Invalides.

In Ireland, part of Phoenix Park in Dublin was used as a site for a Royal Hospital to shelter old soldiers of the Irish Army. The foundation stone was laid by James, first Duke of Ormonde, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1680, for a building designed by Sir William Robinson, Surveyor General of Ireland.

All this must have partly inspired Sir Stephen Fox, first Paymaster General of the Army, who met with John Evelyn to discuss the founding of a hospital for the "relief and reception of 4 companies, namely 400 men, to be as in a college or monastery". Tradition has it that Nell Gwyn urged King Charles II to found such a



Chelsea Pensioners

hospital but the greivous condition of many ex-soldiers at the time must have been sufficient incentive. Sir Stephen Fox, John Evelyn and the architect, Sir Christopher Wren obtained the King's approval for the scheme in 1681.

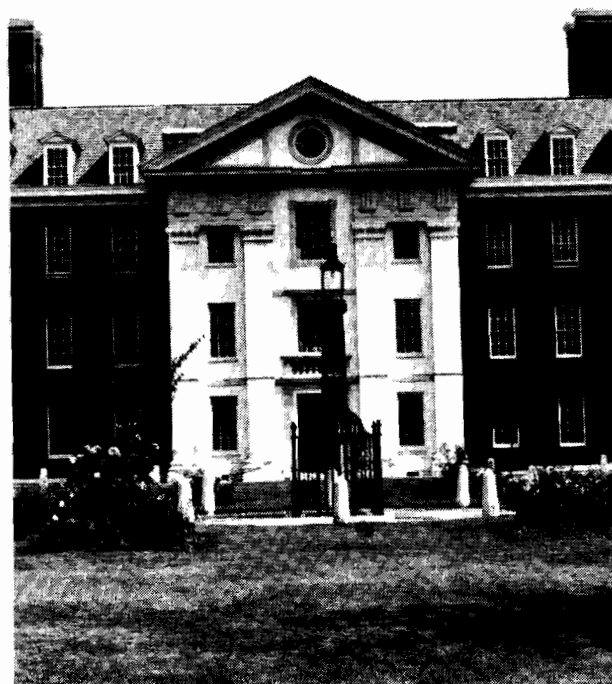
The resulting building is the architectural centre piece of the area and one of Sir Christopher Wren's most satisfying works designed in an almost domestic red brick scale punctuated by portland stone classical baroque splendour. The main block of Wren's building has an east-west axis with a three storey central feature for the entrance vestibule hall and chapel. The south elevation looking down to the river (originally, it must be remembered, without the embankment) is flanked by lower wings that contain the pensioners' wards.

To the north, Wren envisaged a processional way cutting through to Kensington Palace, but it was only completed as far as the King's Road. Originally the Avenue was gravelled with a grass verge, and planted with horse chestnut trees and hedges. There were wooden fences bordering it, and walls and gates enclosed either end. A ladder stile at each end of the Avenue was first mentioned in 1748, and as these were painted white, the Avenue, which had previously been called Chestnut Walk, became known as 'White Stiles'. The horse chestnuts were replaced by lime and plane trees and the grass verges gravelled probably when the eastern terrace was laid out in the 1840s. At the same time the gates and

fences were replaced by railings.

The name Royal Avenue was used in place of White Stiles by 1875. The simple gravelled walk has been retained to this day, despite post-war suggestions to enclose the space and provide a central garden. Royal Avenue was closed to the King's Road in 1970 and the pavement extended as can be seen today.

Extensive accounts of the buildings and history of the Royal Hospital can be found in a number of published works [see Bibliography].



Wellhead in south-western courtyard of The Royal Hospital

CHELSEA PHYSIC GARDEN

To the west of Swan Walk surrounded by a high old brick wall that imparts an air of fairy tale mystery is the Chelsea Physic or Botanical Garden. The land was leased to the Society of Apothecaries in 1673 initially as a site for their state Barge House. The Barge House project was soon abandoned in favour of using the land and clean air of Chelsea for a medicinal botanical garden. Sir Hans Sloane bought the manor of Chelsea in 1722 and presented the property to the Apothecaries for a peppercorn rent which is still paid to Sloane's heirs, the Cadogan Estate.

The Physic Garden very soon became a repository for rare and new strains of plants from all over the world with the emphasis being on useful rather than pure horticultural species.