

WHITE LODGE

No. 68 SILVER STREET, LB ENFIELD

*A Brief Report on the Construction and Evolution of this Building and
Discussion on Areas Affected by Current LBC Application*

by

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ENGLISH HERITAGE

WHITE LODGE, 68, Silver Street, LB Enfield.

I visited this site on Friday 1st November (pm), following your request for a quick assessment, in response to the current listed building consent application, of the potential impact of the current proposals for the above building.

I note the discussion points raised, in connection with this application, in a letter drafted by the architect and your concern, and specifically address these issues. I have examined the proposal drawings and discuss these in relation to the above.

Inspection was limited to those areas of the building that were accessible outside of surgery hours. This involved mainly a visual inspection of internal and external surfaces. No areas were opened up for examination.

BACKGROUND

The building is currently used as a Doctor's surgery and has been so used since 1901. There is a need to upgrade the building to meet the requirements of the Fire Officer and generally improve circulation and disabled access. The current proposal involves the removal of extant C.20th fire screens from the main C.19th central staircase on two floors and the incorporation of two new fire escape staircases, serving the upper parts of this building and alterations to the north of the building involving the loss of extant fabric.

THE BUILDING

The building is a complicated structure which consists of two main ranges of different periods of construction, now roughly forming a double-pile plan. The earliest range, facing Silver Street, is a timber-framed and weatherboarded structure of two bays and two storeys with attic accommodation and a basement and dates to the mid C.17th. The larger rear range is constructed in brick and also of two storeys, with attic accommodation and basement and was added during the early C.19th.

The main front range has the form of a lobby-entry house with a central lobby, sometimes known as the central chimney-stack plan and almost universally adopted for farmhouses during the seventeenth century. It retains the entrance at the centre of the front lateral wall leading into a unusually large lobby, formed between the two main rooms, the former hall and parlour. The circulation has been altered by the removal of the original staircase - probably to the west of the stack - and the cutting through of the main axial stack to form a direct link to the rear of the property. With the exception of the staircase, the original 2-room plan form remains intact on all floors. The large projecting splayed porch at the front of this building and serving two floors, would appear stylistically to be of the C.18th and for this date is an unusual survival.

The single bay to the north was added later during the C.17th and was originally of one storey and from the size of the surviving brick range, appears to have been used as a Kitchen. It was raised another storey possibly during the late C.18th or early C.19th when the extant weatherboarding was applied. Surviving 'coursed' lime render within the attic space here suggests the external fabric to the whole structure previously took this form.

The newel staircase to the rear of this range, serving all floors, appears to be a secondary stair added during the C.18th and may be enclosed by framing from this period which was incorporated within the early C.19th rear extension. The corridor fronting this staircase and forming a continuous link between both ranges, appears to be an extension of whatever C.18th arrangement existed prior to the early C.19th construction.

The rear early C.19th range, with the exception of later additional partitioning, is complete and retains most of its original joinery and fittings.

PROPOSALS

The main entrance to this building (not currently used for the surgery), through the C.18th porch, retains much of its original joinery and fixtures. The existing threshold appears to be Bath stone and although worn, is almost certainly repairable. I believe the use of a removable ramp has been agreed for disabled access.

The panelling within the inner lobby of the main entrance, appears to be quite late with planted bolection mouldings. However, the pedimented doorcases that allow access to the waiting area and consulting room appear to be of a different period and are somewhat unusual. Their broken pediments, although rather crude, are essentially C.18th and would have been designed to sit atop a Corinthian doorcase. Any evidence for this has been lost and they are peculiarly supported on console brackets. Stylistically it would appear that the majority of this panelling is early C.19th with possibly re-used C.18th features.

The ceiling centre and decorated frieze date from the mid C.18th and are possibly of the same period as the porch itself. They are good and complete examples.

The proposal to install a fire escape to the south of this building will inevitably disturb a good deal of the extant historic fabric. Its proposed route passes through C.18th and early C.19th construction which is currently hidden from view and so no observations could be made. The proposed staircase path runs along the 'corridor' area between the two main ranges which may have surviving elements from the earliest known phase of construction C.17th, particularly in the ceiling area above the ground floor Waiting Area.

The proposed staircase also appears to cut through the upper framing of the doorway on the main south wall of the ground floor Waiting Area. The architrave surrounding this door, its frame and the door itself are of one period and possibly date to the late C.18th or early C.19th. It may have been a circulation improvement incorporated within the building during the early C.19th construction of the later range.

Access to the attic floor of the main C.17th front range was provided possibly during the C.18th and may have been associated with the installation of the newel stair and other improvements to the building during this period. The extant small flight, which is proposed to be moved to allow accommodation of the new fire escape stair, although an awkward arrangement, is almost certainly of this date. It appears to have been cut into the original C.17th roof construction and although this area was not available for inspection, the proposal to move this flight will almost certainly disturb elements of the C.17th roof fabric. The

balusters protecting the landing area date stylistically from the late C.17th and have been re-used here.

The large opening currently spanning the extant reception area was clearly a former double-door opening. Paired hinge scars are evident on both vertical jambs. The architrave surrounding this opening on the staff side is identical in profile to that which survives around the door and window openings within this former principal room. The door and window frames however, have been embellished with a secondary moulding which there is no apparent evidence for around the opening over the reception. There is no sign of disturbance here and it is quite clear that the door opening, frame and architraves are original and date from the early C.19th.

The small cupboard located on the ground floor, newel staircase area would appear to be of the same period as the staircase itself. Certainly the ironmongery would suggest an C.18th date. The proposed insertion of door D135 may cut through C.18th fabric and should be carefully examined.

The existing storage area to the north of the building appears to be the surviving elements of the former stables which extended east and were demolished during road widening to Silver Street. The weatherboarding of the external east wall is integrated with and covers a brick stack. This may be the remains of a flue from a fireplace that originally provided heat to a section of the stable block. Any evidence for a fireplace must survive on the covered east side which is not currently exposed.

The extant partition to the east of the present Kitchen here (adjacent to D127 on architects plans) appears to be modern. However, it main contain earlier elements which should be investigated prior to any removal.

The construction of a new foundation to support the proposed east wall to the new 'health care visitors' area may damage underground features such as culverts which are believed to exist in this area.

I believe the issue concerning the removal of a number of doors has now been resolved, however, with the exception of door D217, all identified doors and frames would appear to be in their original locations.

The proposal to remove the extant fire-screens from the main staircase on both floors will inevitably disturb the fabric to which they are currently secured. Timber roll-mouldings appear to have been placed around the former openings and the corridor ceilings part-vaulted to allow ceiling continuation between ranges. These features appear to date from the early C.19th construction of the rear range.

This brief report is simply an outline appraisal of various elements of this building which has clearly undergone a number of changes. It is based on observations made during a visit of only a few hours. It is clear that there is a need for further research to be undertaken, which will involve investigation and detailed analysis of the fabric, especially in the area of the proposed south fire escape. This research will inevitably lead to the resolution of some of the

outstanding problems of interpretation and should aid and advance our general understanding of this structure beyond that already known.

I am afraid I have to disagree with the architects statement that this building is of 'relatively modest architectural note'. It is indeed an important survival within this area of London and one of the few relatively complete survivals of C.17th timber-framed buildings within the whole of Greater London. It also forms part of an historic streetscape which includes buildings of the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th centuries within the Enfield Town Conservation Area. It was included on the statutory list as early as 1951, when its historic and architectural importance was duly recognised.

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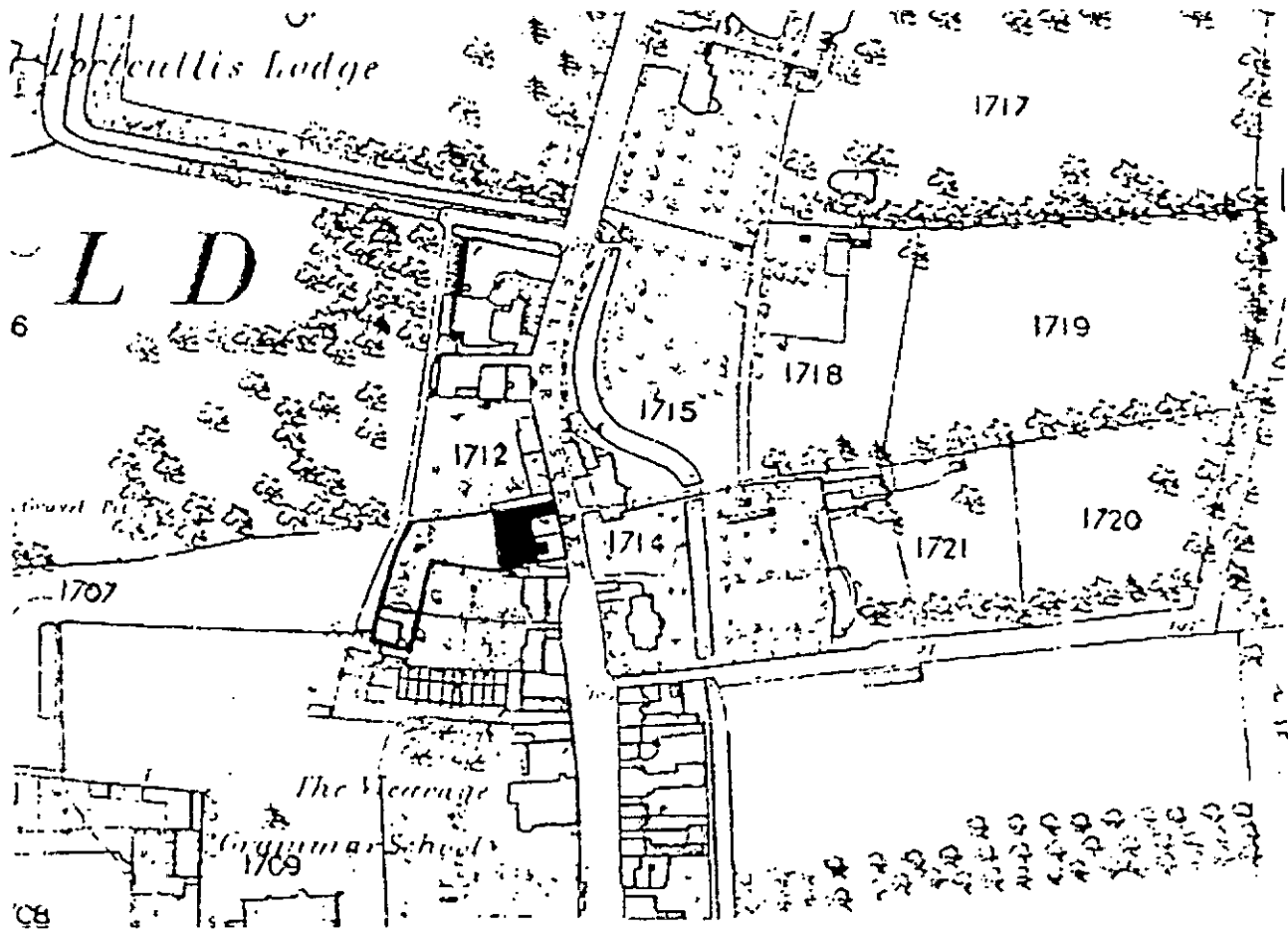


Fig. 1
1867 Ordnance Survey

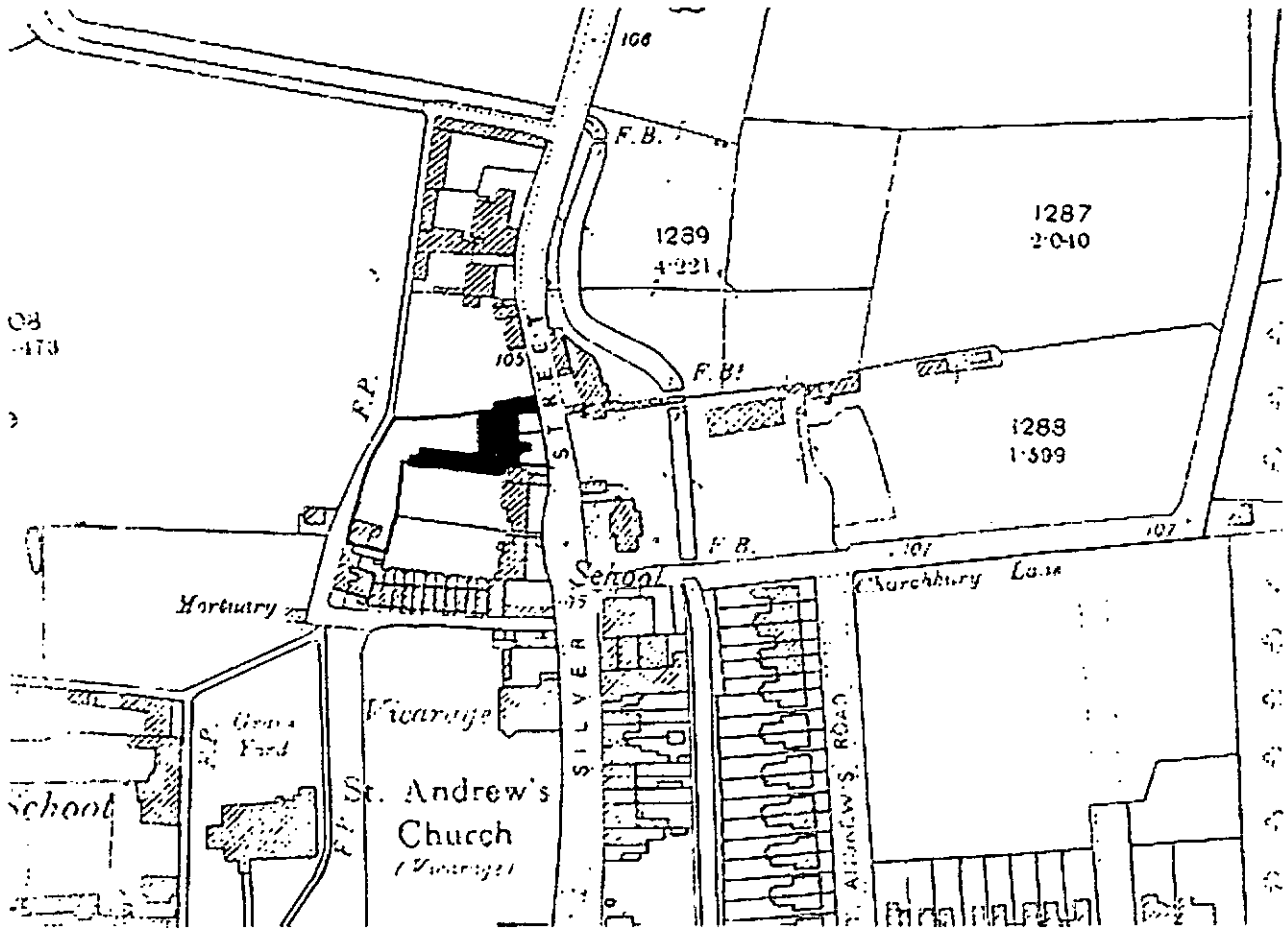


Fig.2
1896 Ordnance Survey

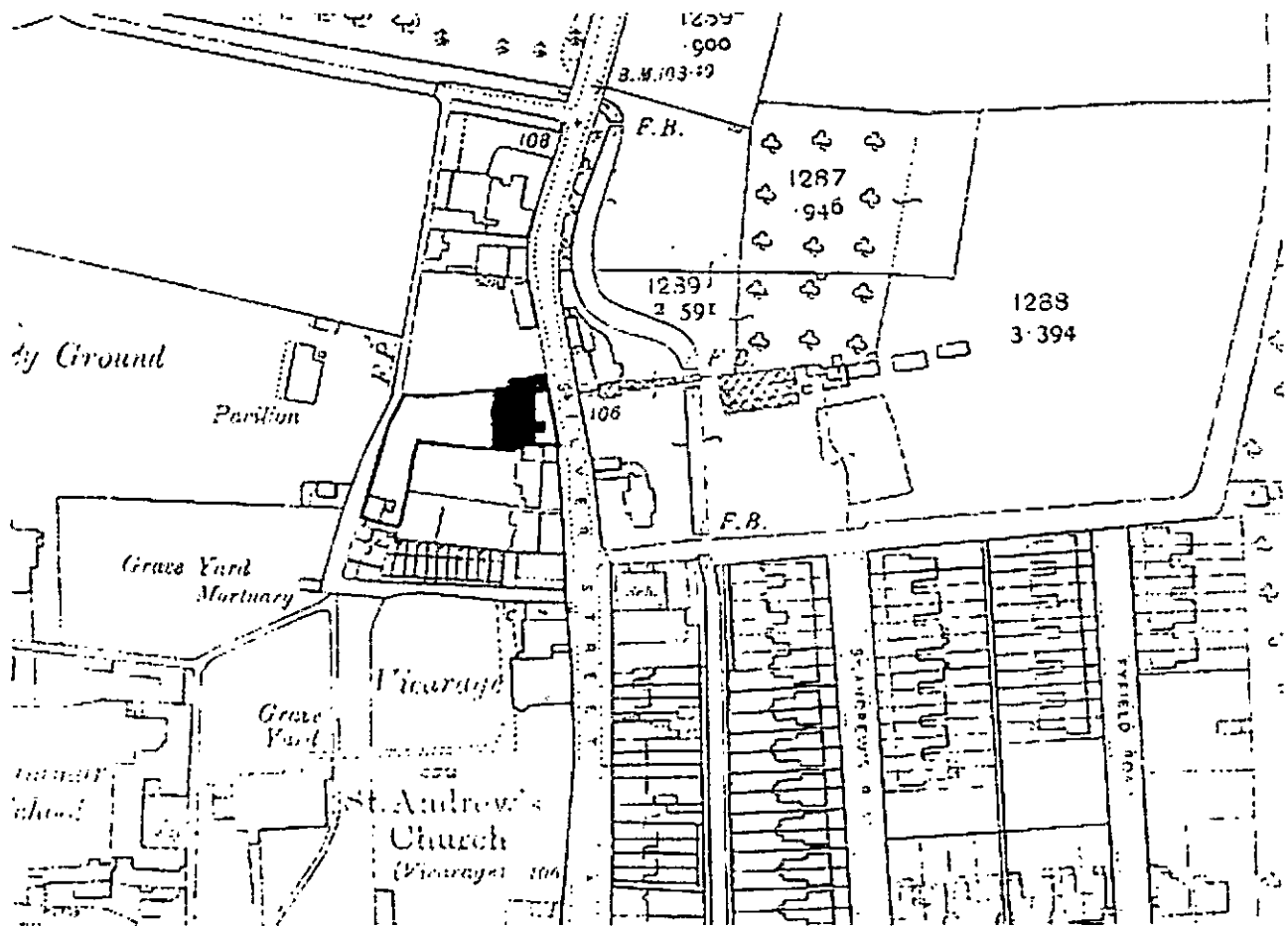


Fig.3
1913 Ordnance Survey

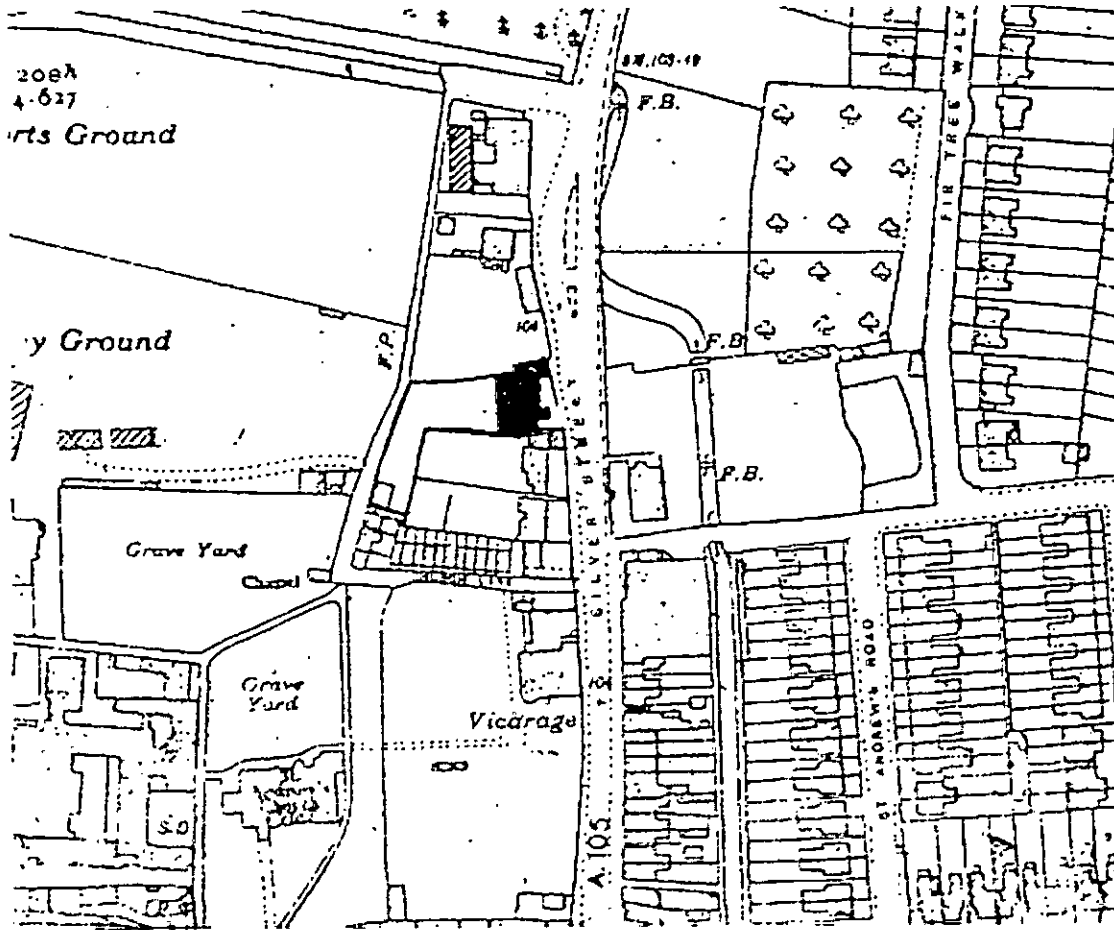


Fig. 4
 1953 Ordnance Survey



Fig.5
Main front elevation to Silver Street 1965



Fig.6
Main front elevation to Silver Street 1998