



City of Westminster

Cabinet Member Report

Decision Maker:	Cabinet Member for Sports, Culture and Community
Date:	
Classification:	For general release
Title:	Commemorative Green Plaque for Westminster Hospital at 8 Dean Ryle Street, SW1P 4DA
Wards Affected:	Vincent Square
Key Decision:	No
Financial Summary:	The Green Plaque Scheme is funded by sponsorship, which has been secured for this plaque
Report of:	Richie Gibson, Head of City Promotions, Events and Filming

1. Executive summary

Westminster Hospital was founded as a charity in 1719, the first of a new wave of voluntary hospitals established in London in the 18th century. After several moves, it re-opened at St John's Gardens, Horseferry Road in 1938 and in 1993 it became Chelsea and Westminster Hospital on Fulham Road.

2. Recommendation

That the nomination for a commemorative Green Plaque for Westminster Hospital is approved.

3. Reasons for decision

Westminster Hospital was the first of the voluntary hospitals in London, funded entirely by public subscriptions and gifts. The green plaque commemorates the establishment of this important institution as well as the founders and medical staff who worked and trained at the hospital through both World Wars.

A thanksgiving service to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the founding of Westminster Hospital was held at Westminster Abbey in May this year.

4. Policy context

The Green Plaques scheme aims to highlight and improve awareness of Westminster's diverse cultural heritage and social history, provide information for visitors and to create a sense of pride in neighbourhoods.

5. The history of Westminster Hospital

5.1 The first infirmary

In 1716 four friends met at St Dunstan's Coffee House on Fleet Street to discuss how to develop a hospital for the sick and poor of Westminster. They were Henry Hoare, a banker; William Wogan, a writer; Robert Witham, a wine merchant and the Reverend Patrick Cockburn. Westminster at this time was one of the most impoverished places in London, a marshland without roads or sanitation under the constant threat of flooding from the Thames. Henry reported he had £10 in his hands with which the group decided to assist sick prisoners in London jails.

In 1719 the group met again and rented a small private house in Petty France for £22 a year. They set up a charitable society for 'relieving the sick and needy at the Public Infirmary in Westminster.' Despite objections from residents who were concerned about infectious diseases and vagrants, the infirmary opened in 1720 with 10 beds.

To attract financial support, subscribers who donated one guinea a year were invited to become hospital governors, a practice that would be developed to fund much of the voluntary hospital system. It was the first voluntary hospital and the third hospital in London after St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas's.

Many admissions were for infectious diseases such as malaria and typhoid due to the riverside position of Westminster. Patients were able to rest and were given regular meals as well as three pints of beer a day instead of the filthy Thames water.

5.2 Eighteenth century expansion

In 1724, the infirmary moved to larger premises on Chappell Street to accommodate 31 beds and became known as Broadway Infirmary. In 1733 simmering disagreements between the governors and medical staff came to a head over disagreements about the site of a proposed new hospital. This led to a mass exodus of the medical staff, who later set up St. Georges Hospital on Hyde Park Corner, now located in Tooting, south London.

The infirmary continued with the remaining governors and moved to a new site at Buckingham Gate in 1735 where it was known as the Westminster Infirmary for the Sick and Infirm. The range of surgical procedures increased and with the opening of Westminster Bridge in 1750 an early day accident and emergency room was formed for patients involved in road accidents.

By 1757 there were 98 beds. The Infirmary expanded rapidly by converting buildings and purchasing neighbouring properties. By 1760 the infirmary was known as the Westminster Hospital.

The nineteenth century in Broad Sanctuary

Conditions at the hospital deteriorated and in 1831 a new site at Broad Sanctuary, opposite Westminster Abbey, was acquired from the Treasury and a new spacious hospital was built. It opened in 1834 at a cost of £40,000 and accommodated 200 patients but insanitary conditions caused by plumbing problems caused an outbreak of erysipelas, an acute streptococcal infection of the skin.

Patients were admitted by order from a governor except in cases of an accident, when they were received without recommendation at all hours of the day and night. It was the first subscription hospital in London and was incorporated in 1836. The Duchess of Kent was Vice Patroness, a position later held by Queen Victoria on her accession in 1837.

The hospital had many distinguished medical students and staff including Hale Thompson who performed the first operation under general anaesthetic in 1847 at the hospital. Physician John Snow, a pioneer in the field of anaesthetics who discovered that the 1854 cholera epidemic was waterborne, did a one-year clinical practice at the hospital.

Although by 1875, serious consideration had been given to rebuilding the hospital at Millbank, by 1878 the number of patients annually at Broad Sanctuary was 20,000. Eventually, in 1895, the original and outmoded building was extensively rebuilt and a clinical laboratory was opened by Lord Lister in 1899.

Twentieth century improvements

Conditions continued to deteriorate into the twentieth century and an appeal was launched for funds for a major refurbishment which took place in 1924. Although great improvements were made including a new out patients department, specialist units, new staff accommodation and a hot water system, they proved to be temporary as the site could not contain a large modern hospital.

These old hospital buildings survived until they were destroyed by fire in 1950 and the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre now occupies the site.

A new site was purchased at St John's Gardens on Horseferry Road and the President of the Hospital, the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VIII, laid the foundation stone in 1935.

The Queen Mary Nurses' Home offering 250 beds was the first building to be completed and was opened by Queen Mary in 1939. On 20th April 1939 King George VI accompanied by HM Queen Elizabeth declared the hospital open, shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War.

The hospital became a casualty clearing station and major accident unit during the war. The central location of Westminster Hospital was a great worry for everyone working there and being treated as a patient during the war. The hospital was struck by bombs twice in 1940 and by a land mine exploding nearby in 1941, but the hospital and its dedicated staff continued to operate throughout the conflict.

5.5 National Health Service

With the launch of the National Health Service in 1948, Westminster Hospital was placed in a new Westminster Group of Hospitals, which included the Gordon Hospital, the Westminster Children's Hospital and the All Saints Hospital. In 1950 Queen Mary's Hospital, Roehampton, joined the group bringing the total number of beds available to 1,090.

Later improvements in the 1960s included a new Nurse's Home in Vincent Square, opened by HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and a new hospital wing linked by a multi storey bridge. This contained professorial departments for medicine, surgery, chemical pathology and anaesthesia, and a unit for obstetrics and gynaecology. In 1990 the Westminster Hospital had 403 beds.

5.6 Closure

In 1993 Westminster Hospital closed and re-opened in the same year as the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital in a new purpose-built building on the old St. Stephen's Hospital site on the Fulham Road. The Westminster Hospital building, with its main entrance in Dean Ryle Street, has now been converted by Clementine Investments into flats now re-named as Westminster Green. The original elevations of the Hospital having been retained.

A service of thanksgiving to celebrate the 300th anniversary of Westminster Hospital was held at Westminster Abbey on Thursday 23rd May 2019. The service Former and current staff, patients, volunteers, supporters, MPs and other NHS dignitaries and the service was conducted by the Dean of Westminster, the Very Reverend Dr John Hall.

At the start of the service, the Westminster Hospital banner, the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust banner and a bowl of oranges were processed through the Abbey and placed on the High Altar. The oranges were symbolic of John Kelly, Westminster Hospital's first in-patient, who was cured of scurvy in 1720.

6. Financial implications

The cost of production, installation and administration will be covered by the sponsor, CW+, the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital charity and the alumni of Westminster Hospital Medical School. There is no cost to Westminster City Council.

7. Legal implications

The former Westminster Hospital building, now Westminster Green, is not listed, therefore Listed Building Consent application is not required.

8. Consultation

The building owners, Westminster Green Management Company Ltd support the nomination and have granted permission for the plaque to be installed. Ward Members have been consulted and no objections have been raised.

If you have any queries about this report, please contact Claire Appleby on 020 7641 3388 or cappleby@westminster.gov.uk.

Report author: Chris Stanton
Telephone: 020 8763 2044
Email: seebee.stanton@virgin.net

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Location plan of Westminster Green, site of Westminster Hospital from 1938 to 1993 at 8 Dean Ryle Street.

Appendix 2

Photo montage showing proposed location of the Westminster Hospital Green Plaque close to the entrance of Westminster Green.

Appendix 3

Wording and layout of the proposed Green Plaque.

For completion by the **Cabinet Member for Sports, Culture & Community**

Declaration of Interest

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: _____ Date: _____

NAME: **Councillor Iain Bott**

State nature of interest if any

.....

(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled **Commemorative Green Plaque for Westminster Hospital at 8 Dean Ryle Street, SW1P 4DA**

Signed

Cabinet Member for Sports, Culture & Community

Date

If you have any additional comments which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment:

.....

.....

If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Strategic Director Finance and Performance and, if there are resources implications, the Strategic Director of Resources (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Policy and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.

Other Implications

1. Resources Implications

1.1 There are no resources implications arising from this report

2. Business Plan Implications

2.1 There are no Business Plan implications arising from this report

3. Risk Management Implications

3.1 There are no risk management implications arising from this report

4. Health and Wellbeing Impact Assessment including Health and Safety Implications

4.1 There are no health and safety and wellbeing issues arising from this report

5. Crime and Disorder Implications

5.1 There are no crime and disorder issues arising from this report

6. Impact on the Environment

6.1 There are no environmental issues arising from this report

7. Equalities Implications

7.1 There are no equality issues arising from this report

8. Staffing Implications

8.1 There are no staffing issues arising from this report

9. Human Rights Implications

9.1 There are no issues relating to responsibilities under the Human Rights Act 1998 arising from this report

10. Energy Measure Implications

10.1 There are no energy measure issues arising from this report

11. Communications Implications

11.1 The council's media team will be informed of the proposed Green Plaque should it be approved