



Cabinet Member Report

Decision Maker:	Cllr Paul Swaddle OBE, Cabinet Member for Finance and Smart City
Date:	4 February 2022
Classification:	For General Release
Title:	Commemorative Green Plaque for the Royal Dental Hospital and School at the Edwardian Hampshire Hotel, 31-36 Leicester Square, WC2H 7LH.
Wards Affected:	St James's
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

The Dental Hospital of London was founded by the Odontological Society of London and opened at 32 Soho Square on 1 December 1858. The London School of Dental Surgery opened the following year on 1 October 1859, bringing together clinical care and training for the first time.

The founding principle was to treat those who were vulnerable or previously unable to afford dental care whilst improving standards in dental surgery.

The establishment was supported by the Royal College of Surgeons and under the patronage of King Edward VII, became the Royal Dental Hospital of London and School of Dental Surgery in October 1901. In 1874, the hospital and school moved to larger premises in Leicester Square and expanded into a new building on an adjacent site in March 1901. It continued to treat patients and train dentists at this site until its merger with Guy's and St Thomas's led to the closure of the Leicester Square premises in 1985.

2. Recommendations

That the nomination for a Westminster Commemorative Green Plaque to the Royal Dental Hospital and School of Dental Surgery at the Edwardian Hampshire Hotel, 31-36 Leicester Square, WC2H 7LH, is approved.

3. Reasons for decision

The Dental Hospital of London, later to become the Royal Dental Hospital of London and School of Dental Surgery, was the first clinical training establishment for dentists, making it the oldest dental school in the UK.

4. Policy context

The Green Plaque 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. Background

The Medical Act of 1858 regulated qualifications in medicine and surgery and permitted the College of Surgeons to grant licences in dental surgery. On 1st December 1858, the Odontological Society opened the Dental Hospital of London at 32 Soho Square and the London School of Dental Surgery was established at the same address on 1st October 1859.

It was established to regulate and improve standards of dental care and provide free treatment for those who most needed it whilst the school of dental surgery provided formal education and training for students. The first student to enrol was 22-year-old William Frederick Forsyth who gained his Licence in Dental Surgery within a year.

The provision of dental treatment at a time when most hospitals only offered extractions made it a popular choice with 2,116 patients visiting in 1859. The first examinations were taken in March 1860 and 43 students were awarded a qualification.

Treadle operated drills were introduced but students were cautioned that their power was so great that the pulp cavity could be invaded before the operator was aware of it. In 1866 chloroform anaesthesia was introduced. Two years later, the hospital began to use nitrous oxide as an anaesthetic, producing the gas on site.

By 1874, the facilities in Soho were unable to cope with the high demand for treatment and the hospital moved to 40-41 Leicester Square. By 1880 almost 36,000 patients a year were treated and Sir Edwin Saunders donated an adjoining property, Tower House, to the hospital to help overcome the lack of space. Demand continued to increase and in 1886, the hospital treated 43,745 patients. The Hospital attempted to incorporate No. 42 Leicester Square, but difficulties with fire regulations delayed the extension until 1888.

In 1893, the hospital purchased 35, 35a and 36 Leicester Square, 22-23 Green Street and 1-5 Longs Court and placed a deposit on The Duke's Head at 37 St. Martin's Street. By 1896 other buildings in the block were acquired and the site was cleared for rebuilding.

The Royal Dental Hospital of London

The new hospital opened in March 1901 at 32 – 39 Leicester Square offering state-of-the-art facilities and equipment. The Journal of the British Dental Hospital said: 'Everything has been done to make the new hospital the finest possible. There is abundance of room, every department is well ventilated and comfortably heated, and the sanitary arrangements are all that could be desired.' King Edward VII became Patron in the same year when it was renamed the Royal Dental Hospital of London and School of Dental Surgery.

In 1911 the Royal Dental Hospital and School became part of the University of London to offer a University Degree in Dental Surgery as well as their own Licence in Dental Surgery. The hospital and school were at the forefront of new surgical and teaching methods including early experiments with dental x-rays.

The hospital and school remained open during the First World War when it admitted female students for the first time. The student intake had fallen from 45 per year to just 17 by 1915. The Hospital was used to treat army recruits and the wounded, and the War Office took over half the clinical accommodation.

Following the War, patient numbers increased with 59,292 treated in 1921 and a course for dental nurses was introduced in 1944.

Financial problems slowed down further progress and other hospitals began to overshadow the Royal Dental Hospital and School. During the Second World War, the hospital stayed open with skeleton staff whilst other dental hospitals shut or moved out of London.

In 1940, the building was damaged by a landmine which landed on Panton Street but was up and running within a week following essential repairs.

The NHS reorganisation

In 1948 the Hospital joined the NHS under the administration of St. George's Hospital Management Committee, part of the London (Teaching) Regional Hospital Board located at Hyde Park Corner. Due to increased demand for services the premises expanded once again. Dentistry was growing in popularity and the school offered postgraduate opportunities.

Plans to improve the interior of the hospital were approved in 1957 and the hospital and school were reorganised, with the school moving most of its non-clinical facilities into the newly acquired building in Orange Street, previously home to 'The Ciro Club'.

In 1974, following a major reorganisation of the NHS, the Hospital came under the control of the Wandsworth and East Merton (Teaching) District Health Authority, part of the South West Thames Regional Health Authority and in 1976, the pre-clinical departments of the school relocated to Tooting. St George's Hospital had however, by this time, decided that the dental services required in Tooting were not those that were offered by the Royal Dental Hospital.

In 1983 the school of dental surgery merged with the United Medical and Dental Schools of Guy's and St Thomas's Hospitals, and the Leicester Square premises closed in 1985.

In 2008 the former Royal Dental Hospital of London and School building was refurbished and is now home to the Edwardian Hampshire Hotel. The Ciro Club in Orange Street, which was designed in 1915 and had been leased to the Hospital from 1956 to 1985 for the school of dental surgery, has now been converted into administrative offices for the National Portrait Gallery.

6. Financial implications

The cost of production and installation will be covered by former students and staff of the Royal Dental Hospital and School as sponsors of the plaque.

7. Legal implications

Listed Building Consent is not required.

8. Consultation

Management of the Edwardian Hampshire Hotel has given permission for the plaque to be installed.

The nomination is supported by members of the independent Green Plaque panel chaired by Cllr Paul Swaddle.

If you have any queries about this report, please contact Claire Appleby on 07971 026 113 or cappleby@westminster.gov.uk.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Location plan showing 31 – 36 Leicester Square at 1:1250 scale.

Appendix 2

The proposed placement of the plaque on the Edwardian Hampshire Hotel in Leicester Square.

Appendix 3

Wording and layout of proposed plaque.

For completion by the **Cabinet Member for Finance and Smart City**

Declaration of Interest

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

Signed: _____ Date: _____

NAME: **Councillor Paul Swaddle** _____

State nature of interest if any

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(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 to The Royal Dental Hospital and School at the Edwardian Hampshire Hotel, 31-36 Leicester Square, WC2H 7LH .

Signed

Cabinet Member for Finance and Smart City

Date

If you have any additional comment 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:
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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 communications team will be made aware of the Green Plaque and unveiling ceremony.