



City of Westminster

Cabinet Member Report

Decision Maker:	Cabinet Member for Place Shaping and Planning
Date:	21 June 2018
Classification:	For General release
Title:	Commemorative Green Plaque for the site of the Paddington Town Hall, at the junction of Hermitage Street and Harrow Road, W2
Wards Affected:	Hyde Park
Key Decision:	No
Financial Summary:	The Green Plaque Scheme depends on sponsorship. Sponsorship has been secured for this plaque from the WCC Economy team.
Report of:	Strategic Director, Built Environment

1. Executive Summary

Paddington was a civil parish that became a metropolitan borough in 1900. In 1965 the three boroughs of Westminster, Paddington and St. Marylebone amalgamated to form the City of Westminster but only the former town hall of Paddington has since been lost. The listed former Marylebone Town Hall now known as the Council House, Marylebone Road, is still used for Council meetings and as the register office, while the former Westminster Town Hall (the historic Caxton Hall) is now made up of apartments and offices.

2. Recommendations

That the nomination for a Westminster Green Plaque to commemorate the site of Paddington's demolished Town Hall at the Enterprise Space, Paddington Exchange, Hermitage Street, W2, be approved in full.

3. Reasons for decision

There is an opportunity to commemorate the establishment of this local government building and its place in the history of the City of Westminster, close to its original location, by the installation of a Westminster Green Plaque on the northern elevation of Westminster's latest Enterprise Space facility in the Paddington Exchange development in Hermitage Street, W2.

4. Policy Context

The commemorative Green Plaques scheme complements a number of Council strategies: to improve the legibility and understanding of Westminster's heritage and social history; to provide information for Westminster's visitors; to provide imaginative and accessible educational tools to raise awareness and understanding of local areas, particularly for young people; and to celebrate the richness and diversity of Westminster's former residents.

5. Background

5.1 The Civil Parish of Paddington

5.1.1 Paddington was an ancient parish in the county of Middlesex, governed in the 19th century by an administrative vestry.

5.1.2 In 1845, with the growth of population, the 18th century St Mary's Church on Paddington Green was replaced as the Paddington Parish Church by St. James's in Sussex Gardens. Part of the land immediately west of St Mary's, which had been purchased from the Paddington Estate as an extension to the burial ground in 1843, was taken instead for a new vestry hall. It was designed by James Lockyer in the classical style and dates from 1853. The building was two-storeyed with projecting pedimented wings connected by a Tuscan colonnade forming a porch, the front was faced with white brick, the colonnade was of Portland stone, and other details were of Portland cement.

5.2 Vestry Hall Politics

5.2.1 A metropolitan vestry was elected under the Metropolis Local Management Act 1855, with one member elected to the Metropolitan Board of Works (MBW). Parish government was left to the vestry, consisting of the vicar, churchwardens, overseers and 72 vestrymen, one third of whom were to retire every year. Under the Act, any parish that exceeded 2,000 ratepayers was to be divided into wards; as such the incorporated vestry of Paddington was divided into four wards for the election of vestrymen.

- 5.2.2 Paddington Vestry was unusual in its readiness to raise bank loans, whether for new churches or, in the 1850s, for road and sewage works. In other respects it had been a traditionalist body, having already opposed Hobhouses's Act for factory reform it continued to protect local interests against the G.W.R. Co. and the Grand Junction Canal Co., particularly over rate assessments, rights of way, and pollution. It complained of inadequate policing and of the M.B.W.'s extravagance, and it opposed Bills for tramways through Bayswater and for equalisation of the rates and spending on lodging houses or baths for working men.
- 5.2.3 By the 1870s Paddington Vestry had gained a reputation for progressive policies, exemplified in spending on a public laundry and baths and on street improvements. The Vestry, many of whom were local shop owners, were often in dispute with William Whiteley over his expansion and rebuilding plans. They were accused of penalising the richest residents (Whiteley's best customers) through rate assessments. He supported a ratepayers association during the Vestry elections but achieved only partial success. Further struggles took place into the 1880's as Whiteley continued to build.
- 5.2.4 Under the London Government Act 1888, two members represented Paddington North and two represented Paddington South on the new London County Council. There were still 72 vestrymen elected by four wards in 1890, with finance, works, sanitary, legal, assessment, and electric lighting committees, besides a burial board and commissioners for public baths. From 1895, as the population increased, there were six wards: Harrow Road, Maida Vale, Church, Westbourne, Lancaster Gate and Hyde Park.

5.3 The Metropolitan Borough of Paddington

- 5.3.1 The parish, which had been included in the area of responsibility of the Metropolitan Board of Works in 1855, became a metropolitan borough in 1900, following the London Government Act of 1899, which effectively replaced the parish vestry with a borough council. The 1853 Vestry Hall was enlarged in 1900 to become the town hall, and again in 1920. The additions included an eastern projection in the original style and an entrance canopy. Panels in the outer hall were unveiled as a war memorial in 1924.
- 5.3.2 The area of the Paddington Metropolitan Borough covered 1,357 acres located to the west of Edgware Road and Maida Vale, and north of Bayswater Road. To the south, it bordered the Metropolitan Borough of Westminster and to the east, the Metropolitan Borough of St Marylebone. It was divided into eight wards for elections: Church, Harrow Road, Hyde Park, Lancaster Gate East, Lancaster Gate West, Maida Vale, Queen's Park and Westbourne.

5.3.3 The Coat of Arms was granted by the College of Arms on 5 April 1902, and was based on the former Paddington vestry seal. The seal featured crossed swords from the arms of the See of London passing through a mural crown (a symbol of local government). To these were added the wolves' heads and blue background from the arms of the first Mayor of the Borough, Sir John Aird. Sir John, who was M.P. for Paddington North, also donated the mayoral badge and chain. The old borough council's coat of arms can still to be seen on the local canal bridges.

5.4 The City of Westminster

5.4.1 The Metropolitan Borough of Paddington was abolished on 1 April 1965 under the London Government Act of 1963 and its former area merged with the Metropolitan Boroughs of Westminster to the south and St Marylebone to the east to form the present-day City of Westminster. The Paddington Town Hall had thus become redundant.

5.5 Demolition

5.5.1 In 1964 work began on a 3.5-mile (5.6 km) long elevated dual carriageway section of the A40 trunk road from Paddington to North Kensington. Known as the Westway it was constructed to relieve congestion at Shepherd's Bush caused by traffic from Western Avenue struggling to enter central London on roads of insufficient capacity. Westway opened in July 1970 as the A40 (M) motorway, linking up with the Marylebone flyover, which crossed the A5 Edgware Road. This road was to have formed part of a series of concentric motorways that would have ringed London, but the majority of schemes were cancelled in 1973. The road lost its motorway status in 2000 when responsibility for trunk roads in Greater London was transferred from the Highways Agency to the Greater London Authority.

5.5.2 This work required the widening and realignment of the ancient route known as the Harrow Road along the southern edge of Paddington Green. Many buildings at the junction of Harrow Road and Edgware Road, including the 100 year old Metropolitan Theatre of Varieties were replaced by the high security Paddington Green Police Station and the London Metropole Hotel. The redundant Paddington Town Hall, incorporating Lockyer's Vestry Hall, the old police station and houses of Dudley Grove were demolished to allow both the Westway and both carriageways of the new Harrow Road to pass closer to St. Mary's church.

- 5.5.3 When it was found that the vestry had paid no money for the site, the Church rather than Westminster City Council obtained compensation from the G.L.C. and spent the large sum on restoring St. Mary's Church. Restoration under Raymond Erith and Quinlan Terry was carried out in 1972-4. Bodies in the vaults were reburied more compactly and many original fittings were reinstated. The chief innovation was re-flooring in coloured marbles and in York and Portland stone. The body of the church was re-seated with new box pews, when the original panelling, font, pulpit, altar, and altar rails were restored. A new organ with an 18th-century tone was installed in 1978. The war memorial was moved to the parish church of St Stephen. The southern part of the churchyard was removed for the flyover, with exhumed bodies being re-interred in Mill Hill cemetery.
- 5.5.4 West of the church where St. Mary's has been cut off from the re-aligned Harrow Road, a neo-Georgian vestry hall was built, again by Erith and Terry. Containing an interesting trompe l'oeil feature, it stands slightly north of the site of the demolished town hall.

5.6 Nearby Plaques

- 5.6.1 Fixed to the side of the Marylebone Flyover a plaque commemorates the opening of the structure by Desmond Plummer, Leader of the GLC, in 1967.
- 5.6.2 Incorporated into the north elevation of the Paddington Exchange building is what is believed to be the oldest inscribed stone in Paddington. It was originally built into the chimney of the Paddington Alms Houses of 1714 – 1869. It was found lying in the grounds of the then Sarah Siddons School by the new headmaster of North Westminster Community School which succeeded the former in 1981. The school was subsequently closed in 2006.

5.7 Paddington Exchange

- 5.7.1 Paddington Exchange, the new residential scheme at North Wharf Gardens stands close to the site of the old town hall. It will accommodate, with financial assistance from the City Council, a new enterprise space. The ground and first floor's 16,265 sq. ft. facility will provide affordable, flexible, co-working space and business support for 400 entrepreneurs. Sixteen thousand people a year will receive training, networking and access to conferences delivered and hosted at the space. There will be a particular focus on disadvantaged residents.
- 5.7.2 This exciting new community facility from the City Council and its partners makes an ideal location for a new Green Plaque which commemorates this important link with Paddington's Civic History.

6. Financial Implications

The cost of the plaque, its installation, maintenance and Green Plaque Scheme administration costs will be borne by the Council's Economy Team.

7. Legal Implications

The property where the plaque is to be located is not listed, therefore a Listed Building Consent application is not required.

8. Consultation

The main leaseholder has been consulted and has given permission for the plaque to be installed. The commercial space leaseholder Simon Kirkham supports the nomination. Ward Members have been consulted and no objections have been raised.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact: Claire Appleby

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Location plan of Hermitage Street and Harrow Road junction showing proposed location of the Paddington Town Hall Green Plaque and its relationship with the original Vestry Hall site at 1:1250 scale

Appendix 2

Photo Montage showing proposed location of the Paddington Town Hall Green Plaque at the Harrow Road, Hermitage Street junction, W2.

Appendix 3

Wording and layout of proposed Paddington Town Hall Green Plaque

For completion by the **Cabinet Member for Place Shaping and Planning**

Declaration of Interest

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

Signed: _____ Date: _____

NAME: **Councillor Richard Beddoe** _____

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 for the site of the Paddington Town Hall, at the junction of Heritage Street and Harrow Road, W2.

Signed

Cabinet Member for Place Shaping and Planning

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.