

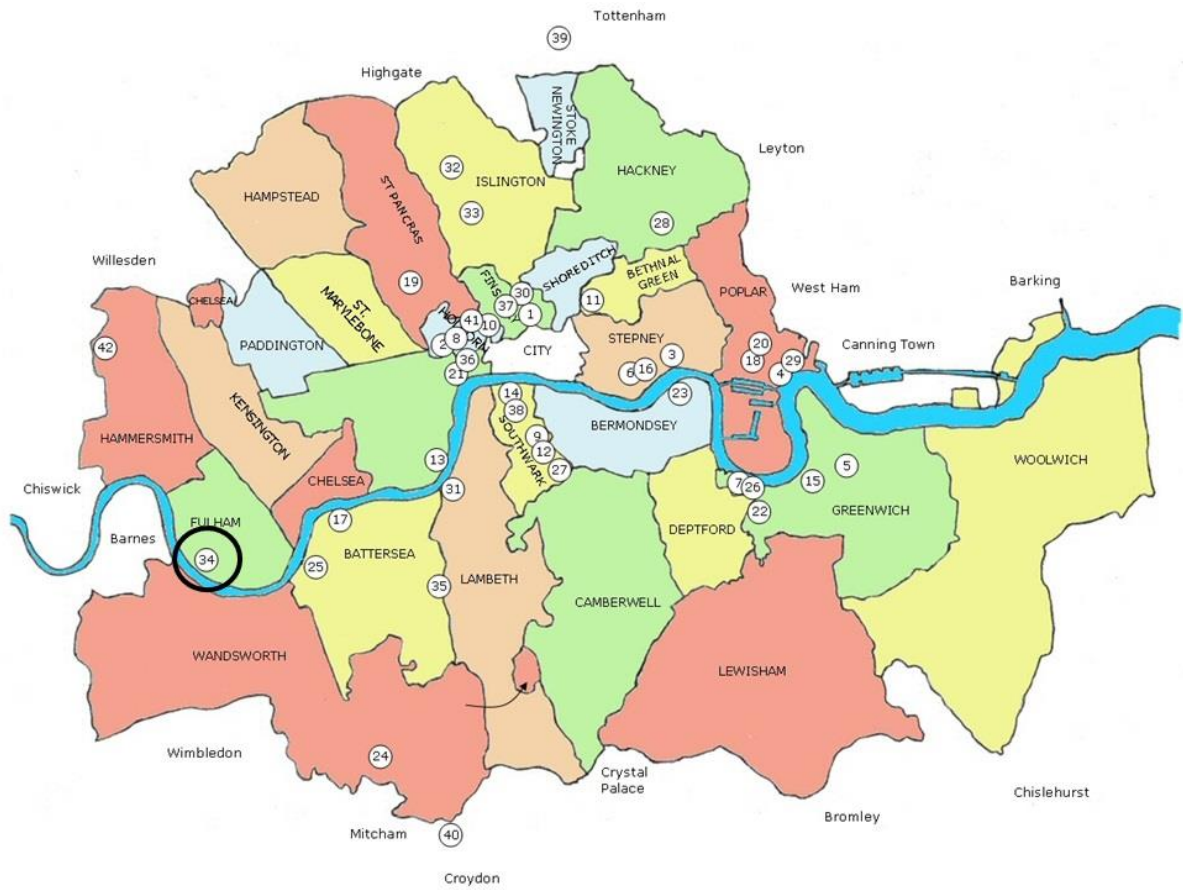
**Housing the Workers**

**Early London County Council Housing  
1889-1914**

**Martin Stilwell  
August 2015**

**Part 3 - the schemes in detail**

**34 - Fulham Palace Road**



# Fulham Palace Rd and Fulham High St widening scheme, Chelsea

## Bearcroft Buildings, New Kings Road, 1906

Another development forced on the Housing Committee by LCC civil engineering works was Bearcroft Buildings which was opened in September 1906 to house those displaced by the widening of Fulham Palace Road and High Street Fulham to improve the tram routes.

Those displaced numbered 215 and the Housing Committee was required to erect buildings for that number and the resulting building was for 220 people.

The Council had planned to develop the site since 1897 and were originally going to cut a new road through the original site. This plan was amended to place the new buildings on a small part of the site.

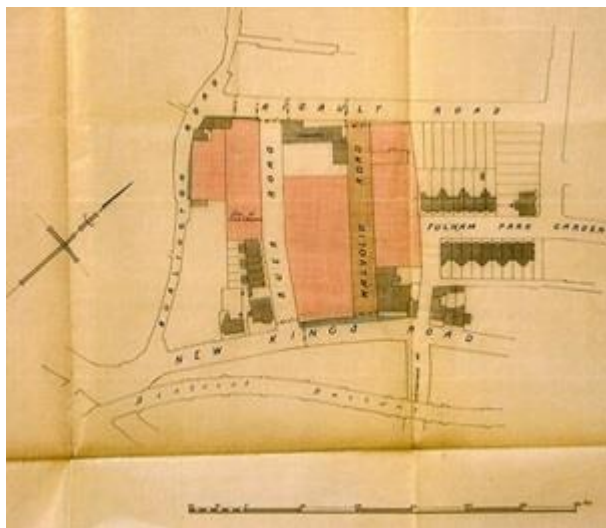


Fig. 1: Original plan for site in 1897 (LMA ref: GLC/AR/BR/22/012187)

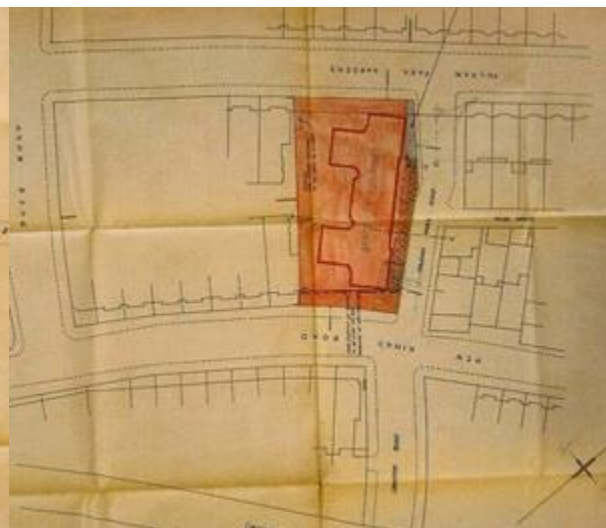


Fig. 2: Modified plan for site in 1905 (LMA ref: GLC/AR/BR/22/012187)



Fig. 3: Original plan for site from 1896 OS map



Fig. 4: Site as developed from 1916 OS map with Bearcroft Buildings circled

As can be seen from the plan in Fig. 5 below, the design of the building is quite clever as the two wings increase the available rooms whilst allowing light to reach all rooms. One feature that appears in this building for the first time in an LCC design is the bath, although it is situated in the scullery. The accommodation consisted of 10 tenements of two rooms and 30 of three rooms with the dimensions close to the 144 and 96 sq. ft. minimum for living and bedrooms.

The costs of the scheme were included in the road widening scheme and cannot be accurately extracted. However, with an almost vacant site the whole scheme would have been good value, and this is reflected in the fact that baths were included in the generous sculleries. A building being designed down to a cost would not have these features. The buildings were showing a good profit of 8.9% on the Council's 1913-14 accounts.

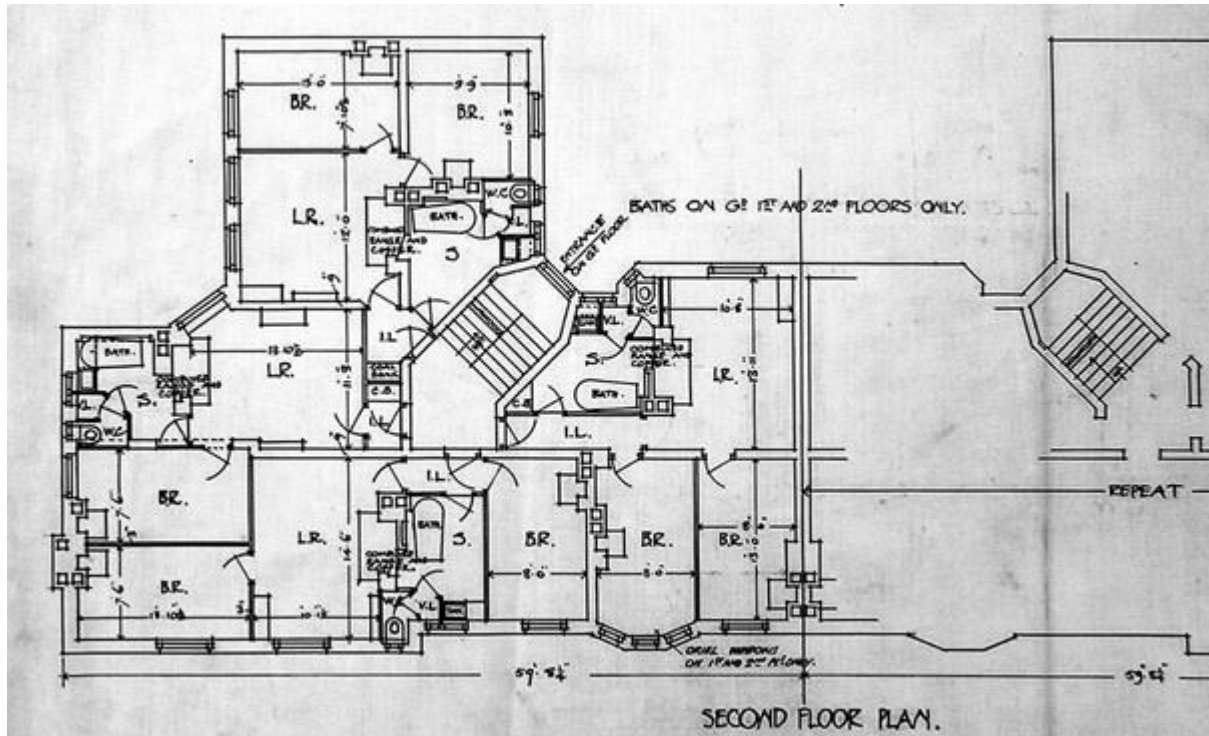


Fig. 5: Bearcroft Buildings floor plan (LMA ref: LCC/AR/HS/03/057)

The buildings show little fine architectural detailing apart from very impressive chimney stacks. As with most Council buildings around this time the top storey is in the mansard roof.



Fig. 6: Bearcroft Buildings front view (LMA ref: SC/PHL/02/0766)



Fig. 7: Bearcroft Buildings rear view (LMA ref: SC/PHL/02/0766)

The 1911 census returns shows a building with more “white collar” workers than many blocks, but in keeping with a building in a non-industrial area and its proximity to quality housing in Chelsea. Of the 40 tenements, 6 are unoccupied, and 11 of the 36 occupied ones are headed by people not involved in manual labour or industry. The manual occupations are more of the artisan class and includes two LCC tram drivers. This quality of tenant is also reflected in the occupancy which is only 50% of the theoretical maximum of 220 people. Only one tenement is overcrowded, with 6 people in a 2-roomed tenement occupied by a coach builder from Cornwall although two occupants are recorded as visitors. Of the 34 occupied tenements, only 9 are headed by local born people and another 7 by other Londoners.

The building stands today. It looks in reasonable condition but the lack of walkways in the original design makes them look a bit oppressive. Reduction in the height of the chimneys has given the buildings a less grand look.



Fig. 8: Bearcroft House 2009



Fig. 9: Bearcroft House 2009