

Housing the Workers

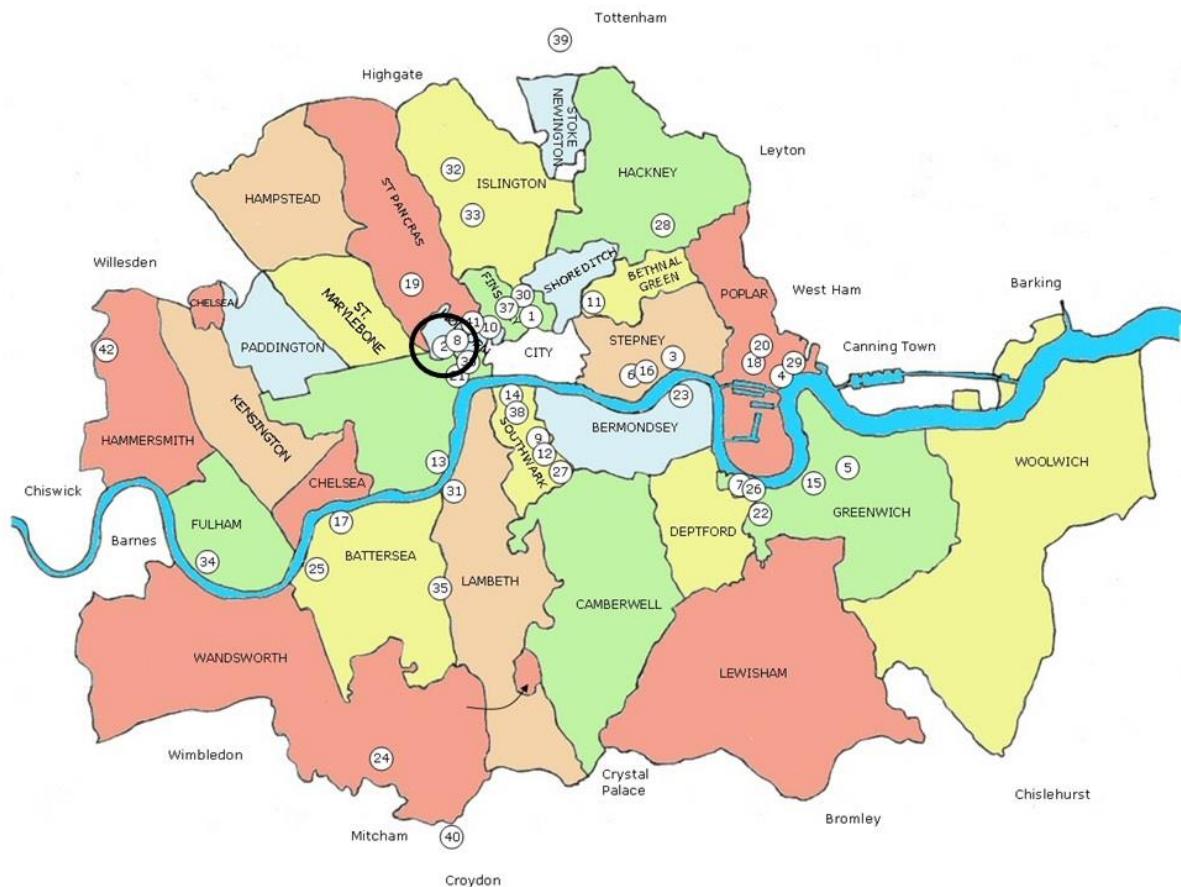
Early London County Council Housing

1889-1914

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Part 3 – the schemes in detail

2 – Shelton Street scheme
Phase 1 – Parker Street Lodging House



Shelton Street, Holborn scheme

Parker Street Lodging House opened 1893

Built under Part III of the 1890 Housing of the Working Classes Act

This lodging house was erected as part of the Shelton Street scheme but is described separately from the others to ensure that the costs and design are not confused with the block dwellings, which would have had a different justification applied before construction.

The Parker Street Municipal Lodging House, Drury Lane (its official name at the time of opening) was an important Council building in the middle of a run-down area with a high population density, and was built only for the occupation of men. There were some female lodging houses in London but, as one can imagine, these often became more than just 'lodging houses' for many of the women occupants. The Council did not feel the need to build women's lodging houses as their aim was to house the working man who was going to continue to enhance London's growth of finance and industry.

The scheme was carried out under Part III of the 1890 Act indicating that this was purely a commercial or philanthropic decision rather than to replace existing similar facilities. The design was the result of an invitation to external architects and was awarded to Messrs. Gibson and Russell. The erection was contracted to Messrs. Holloway Brothers, a company who were used for many schemes.

The resulting building was modest and functional. It had none of the flair and grandeur of the later Carrington House in Greenwich or Bruce House in nearby Holborn (both 1906). It catered for 324 men, a number which was allowed to count towards the re-housing numbers for the whole of the Shelton Street rehousing scheme.

The location can be seen in the Shelton Street plan below as "SITE PROPOSED FOR MODEL LODGING HOUSE".

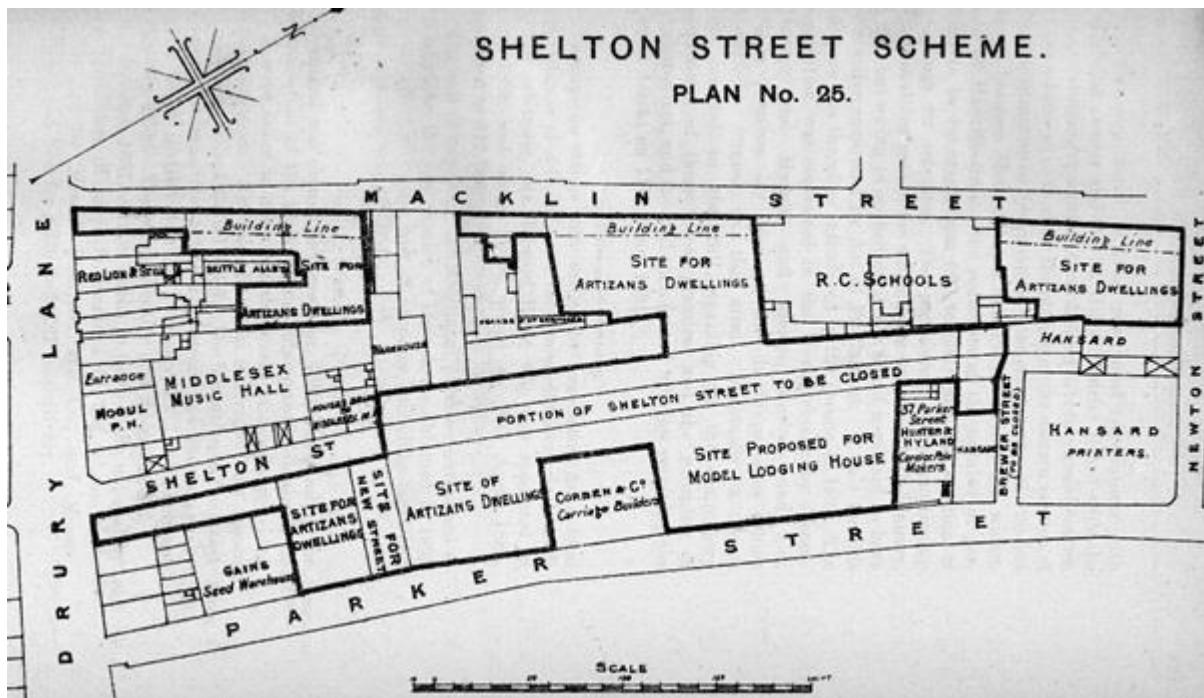


Fig. 1: Shelton Street site showing location of Lodging House

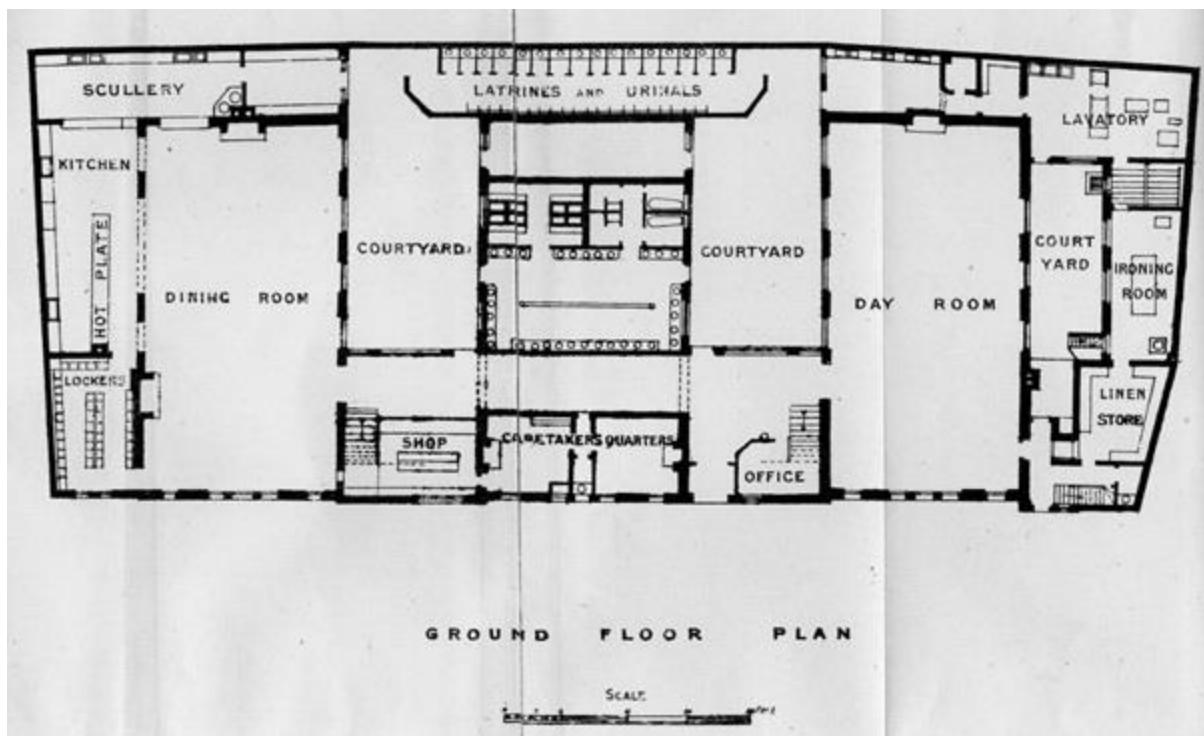


Fig. 2: Parker Street Lodging House, ground floor (LMA ref: LCC/AR/HS/03/059)

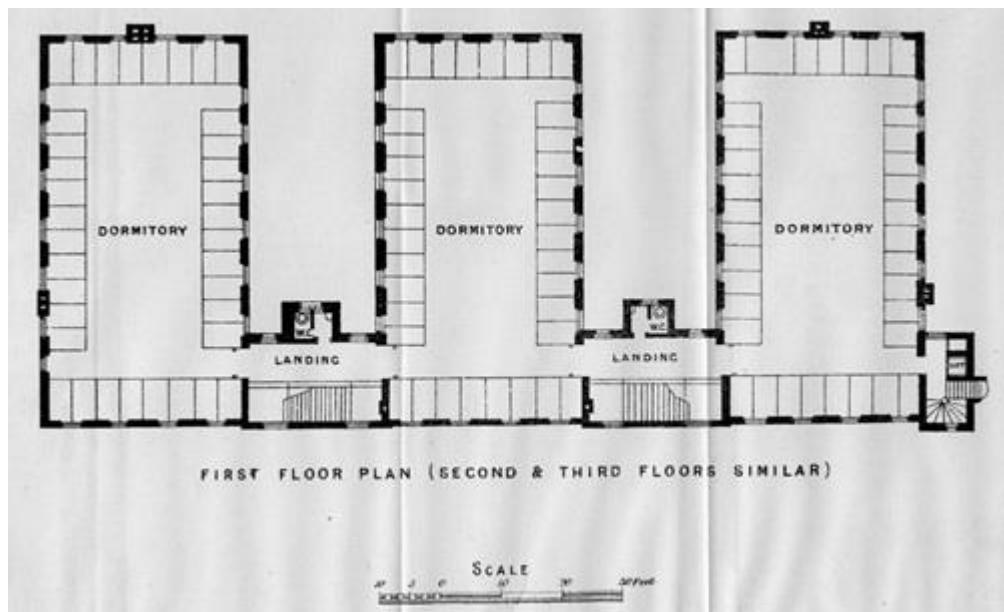


Fig. 3: Parker Street Lodging House, upper accommodation floors (LMA ref: LCC/AR/HS/03/059)

It is difficult to correlate the upper accommodation floor layout which seems perfectly square with the ground floor plan which matches the shape of the site as per Fig. 1 above. However, the left and right wings of the ground floor (containing kitchen/lockers and courtyard/store) are single storey and is clearer to see in the photograph in Fig. 4.



Fig. 4: Parker Street Lodging House (LMA ref: SC/PHL/02/0144)



Fig. 5: Parker Street Hostel (Camden Council), 2009

The cost of the scheme is difficult to establish because the cost of the land the building occupies was part of the whole Shelton Street scheme and cannot be separated. The Council themselves quote that the value of the land was £3,750. Taking that as a cost, and the £17,214 for the design and construction and £1,172 for equipping the building, this gives a total cost of £22,136. This equates to £68 per person for a planned occupancy of 324. The real cost of the site was likely to be considerably more than £3,750 as the whole Shelton Street site cost over £77,000 to purchase and Parker Street Lodging House occupies approximately 20% of the available land which would make its true value £15,400.

From the balance of accounts for 1913-14 below it can be seen that the Lodging House was running at a small profit of £110 which equates to 3.3%.

	Outgoings	Income	Profit
Balance of accounts, 1913-1914	£3,156	£3,266	£110 (3.3%)

The lodging house must have been a success from the beginning as the interior space was altered in 1901 to increase capacity from 324 to 345 persons at modest cost.

The 1901 census shows that there were 313 lodgers present that night. Included in this number are the expected manual workers, but also a large number of clerks. This probably indicates

the type of employment in this area which would be less of the industrial type than in nearby Clerkenwell.

The 1911 census is showing 346 residents with a wide variety of occupations and birth places very much in line with the 1901 census. This number indicates it was operating at maximum capacity. The residents were predominantly single, as expected, but a large number were in middle age. The oldest resident on that census day was 73, and a shoemaker.