

CLIFTON - MONTPELIER - POWIS  
COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

3 Vernon Terrace,  
Brighton,  
East Sussex  
BN1 3JG

Heritage Protection Operations Department  
Room 202,  
English Heritage,  
23 Savile Row,  
London  
W1S 2ET

15th July 2005

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Property: Royal Alexandra Hospital for Sick Children**

57 Dyke Road,  
Brighton, East Sussex  
BN1 3JN

**Owner: Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust**

Royal Sussex County Hospital,  
Eastern Road,  
Brighton, East Sussex  
BN2 5BE

I write to you on behalf of our community organisation, the Clifton-Montpelier-Powis Community Alliance, to request that you consider the above property for listed building status. Time is of the essence as there is a concern that the Brighton and Sussex University NHS Trust, which is required to maximise its return from the sale of the site when it vacates the hospital next year, may decide to offer a clean plot so that developers may have a free hand. We are advised that the building is certainly capable of being preserved and adapted for other uses.

The background to this elegant and historic property is both varied and fascinating. The Royal Alexandra Hospital was designed in Queen Anne style by the noted architect Thomas Lainson. The construction of the three storey building, in red brick with terracotta decoration, started in 1880. Thomas Lainson an architect of several fine buildings in the Brighton and Hove area, including the (listed) Middle Street Synagogue built in the Byzantine style, the Romanesque Church in Bristol Road, and the charming building which now houses the Hove Museum and Art Gallery. The hospital was formally opened to great public excitement and celebration on 21st July 1881 by the Prince and Princess of Wales. It was at that time that Princess Alexandra, the Princess of Wales, agreed that the hospital could take her name. This is a tradition which has continued throughout its life and the present Princess Alexandra has been its patron since 1954. Every extension has been opened by a major member of the Royal Family, including the Duke and Duchess of York in 1928 and Princess Elizabeth in 1945, 8 years before her coronation. It also enjoyed Royal patronage from Edward VII from 1910, which was extended after his death by King George V and Queen Mary.

The Royal Alexandra Hospital is situated in Dyke Road, near the top of Clifton Hill at the heart of Brighton - and the Clifton Hill Conservation Area - where it has formed an important and historic landmark, with its decorative venting turrets marking the skyline on the hill where once a windmill stood.

It is a fine example of a late Victorian public building for which the architect, obviously under Ruskin's influence, chose design elements from the Flemish Early Renaissance and English Queen Anne to create a building on Clifton Hill for the public health. In doing so he represented the transition from High Victorian, through Arts and Crafts to the twentieth century with a wide-windowed and comparatively airy structure clad in terracotta brick. This is an important building, not only for its street presence, but also to maintain the historical continuity of public architecture in this city to which many prominent architects have contributed since the arrival of the Prince Regent.

As Brighton and Hove City Council's Conservation Area Character Statement says (see <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1134562> under Clifton Hill Conservation Area)

***'...the hospital is an important part of Brighton life and a well known local landmark....It also provides some garden space on the junction with Clifton Hill which contributes to the character of this part of the conservation area.'***

The grounds also include several important trees with individual preservation orders attached.

Whilst the later additions and extensions may have limited historical or architectural value, Thomas Lainson's original building is clearly worthy of protection. We, and other concerned organisations and conservationists city-wide, would urge you to take whatever measures are necessary to protect and help us preserve this important and historic landmark. To assist in your appraisal we shall shortly send you details of the hospital's opening from newspapers of the time, along with original and recent photographs of the building itself, and a map of the site. We are also in the process of obtaining the original architect's drawings which we shall forward to you in due course.

Should you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on (01273) 727090, or by email at [tony.davenport@cmpca.org.uk](mailto:tony.davenport@cmpca.org.uk) and I shall be only too happy to assist.

Yours faithfully,

Tony Davenport