

CF 1 Role of Tertiary Education and Cultural Facilities in Redington Frogna

History

Sub Area Three on the north west corner of the Redington Frogna Conservation Area has a history as a tertiary education and cultural hub. At its heart was Westfield College, which formed part of the University of London from 1882 to 1989. Dedicated to women's education, it occupied a large site spanning both sides of Kidderpore Avenue, as a teaching campus with on-site student accommodation¹ and the important College chapel.

The college was originally intended for both Christian spiritual and educational progress. The campus became co-educational in 1964. Residences developed in 2016-19 on the former campus are in retained Listed buildings named after former luminaries, mostly women for and by whom the college was established.

The college was founded in and funded from 1882 by Ann Dudin Brown (1822-1917) daughter of a wealthy family; Constance Maynard (1849–1935) was the first woman Cambridge graduate in philosophy and the first Mistress of the new college.

Caroline Skeel was born and educated in Hampstead and became professor of history at Westfield College. She is remembered for her pioneering work in Welsh social and economic history and the library at Westfield which she had run and its successor named after her in 1971. She had bequeathed a large sum to the college in 1951.

Rosalind Franklin (1920-58) was a Cambridge graduate chemist and expert crystallographer whose work at Kings College was instrumental in promoting the monumental revelation of DNA. She was said to have been recommended for the Nobel Prize alongside Wilkins Crick and Watson in 1962 but the prize is not available posthumously.

Baron Cameron of Balhousie, principal of Kings College from 1980-85, was a distinguished airman defence services staff chief and government adviser.

¹ Castle Adamant by Janet Sondheimer, published by the College in 1983

Students at the Former Westfield College



Source: www.aim25.ac.uk

Internal Courtyard July 2014, Originally for Students



In 1989 Westfield College merged with Queen Mary College, to form Queen Mary and Westfield College, and sold half of its campus to King's College London (KCL) for occupation from 1992. In 1995 Queen Mary and Westfield College merged with St Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College and the London Hospital Medical College to form the School of Medicine and Dentistry. Part of the then science park on the south side of Kidderpore Avenue was sold for the development of a block of flats with underground car parking named Westfield. The remainder was sold to KCL. KCL owned and used Kidderpore Hall and all buildings on the north side of Kidderpore Avenue, stretching from Queen Mother's Hall to Lord Cameron and Rosalind Franklin Halls, adjacent to Croft Way. Buildings owned on the southern side of the site included 19-23 Kidderpore Avenue, the new Skeel Library, and 312-324 Finchley Road ².

Until June 2009, KCL continued to occupy many of the buildings that formed the Westfield College campus. These included Old House, Maynard Wing, Dudin Brown Wing, Chapman Wing, Orchard I & II, Kidderpore Hall and the Queen Mother's Hall. The Library remained unused. ³

From about 2010, KCL no longer required most buildings on the **south side** of Kidderpore Avenue. These were sold off for residential development to Barratt London. The buildings included in that sale, and their previous uses by KCL, were:

- i. 19 Kidderpore Avenue, which was let to Hampstead School of Art
- ii. 21 and 23 Kidderpore Avenue, used for administration and as offices
- iii. New Skeel Library, used as examination centre until 2001, then left unoccupied
- iv. 312-324 Finchley Road, utilised for various academic departments and offices.

The remaining buildings on the south side of Kidderpore Avenue were a group of 1970s student housing blocks at 27-43 Kidderpore Avenue and 2-4 Platts Lane. These were emptied in 2015 and purchased by Barratt London to extend its residential scheme. Demolition of these blocks took place in 2015.

In May 2014, King's College disposed of the entire **north side** campus to Mount Anvil for the development of 156 flats and houses. The site included the Borough Grade II Site of Interest for Nature Conservation CaB1109, which was to be excavated for an underground car park.

² Queen Mary University of London Archives: <http://archives-catalogue.library.qmul.ac.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=WFD%2F12>

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Kidderpore Hall (also known as “Old House”)

Community Use of the King’s College Site from 1992 to 2015/16

This is the oldest building on the campus, acquired for Westfield college by Ann Dudin Brown. From 1993 until 2005 it was let as a whole to Spiro Institute succeeded by London Jewish Cultural Centre (LJCC) and used for lectures for adult education, according to evidence obtained by Redington Frognal Association⁴. St Margaret’s School also used the site⁵.

From 2005, when LJCC moved out to its new building, Kidderpore Hall became disused. Hampstead School of Art tried to lease it, also to keep the building in community use, but KCL was unwilling to grant a secure lease because of the possible campus disposal plans. The school came to Redington Frognal from a stay in what is now the Camden Arts Centre and continued to be housed at 19-21 Kidderpore Avenue until summer 2016, prior to the move to new purpose-built premises on the south site, opening on 9 September 2016. Its small café is now a useful local resource.

Kidderpore Hall (The White House), July 2014



In March 2015, Redington Frognal Neighbourhood Forum applied to the London Borough of Camden for Kidderpore Hall and the Borough Grade II Site of Interest for Nature Conservation CaB1109 to be designated as Assets of Community Value. Both applications were rejected.

⁴ Redington Frognal Association, the umbrella body for street associations in the Redington Frognal Conservation Area, obtained evidence of the tertiary education and cultural use in the form of sworn affidavits provided by eleven former students and staff and a statement by the former principal of London Jewish Cultural Centre.

⁵ St. Margaret’s School planning objection 4.8.15 in relation to planning application 2015/3936/P

Skeel Hall

Skeel Hall is the 2-3 storey building which was Westfield's College Library, then a dining area. Until recently, it contained the main entrance for the KCL Campus administration, security staff and some upstairs offices and meeting rooms, including one which was regularly used by Redington Frognal Association for Committee meetings. KCL maintained and let out the hall to St Margaret's School for a number of years⁶ but never used it for its own purposes.

Skeel Hall, July 2014



So, changing priorities and demand, with KCL property management imperatives, led to the demise of this major facility, to be converted to private housing. The loss of the well-behaved and well-liked students was unfortunate and inspires a determination to promote all conceivable alternatives for community service and use.

Other Tertiary Education and Cultural Sites

Therefore, tertiary education and cultural sites within the Plan area now include the continuation of Hampstead's artistic tradition in Camden Arts Centre (CAC), originally the Hampstead Central Library of 1897, and Hampstead School of Art (HSoA). Musical activity in Craxton Studios, an international resource for music recording and concerts originating from the 1940s, and Florian Leonhard Fine Violins a world-class violin workshop and instrument authenticator, where musical soirées are held on occasion. These form the splendid basis of Redington Frognal's cultural heritage.

⁶ Statements by staff and former pupils

Craxton Studios Concert Hall



<http://www.craxtonstudios.org.uk>

Sheku Kanneh-Mason of the Chineke Foundation Rehearsing at Florian Leonhard, March 2016



[Sheku at Florian Leonhard](#)

Camden Arts Centre and HSoA charity-status histories are linked in the the Hampstead Artists' Council, started in 1946 in Hampstead Hill Gardens by UNESCO Councillor, Richard Carline, and fellow artist, Fred Uhlman, specifically to support local artists. Some of them became members of the Royal Academy and exhibited at the Tate Gallery. HAC moved to Burgh House in the 1950s and exhibited there until 2006, moving to CAC. It ran Heath Street open air exhibitions from 1949-1983, and exhibited across the UK and world-wide. It exhibited in the Royal Free hospital in a valuable display in the main entrance corridor contributing to RFH charitable trust, now unconscionably dispersed. HAC lives on as re-incorporated with HSoA. Both institutions serve the local and wider communities.

Camden Arts Centre, at the corner of Arkwright Road and Finchley Road, was formed by HAC's move to the building and opened with the support of Alan Bowness, art historian and later Director of the Tate Gallery and Gerald Issman then Ham & High editor.

Camden Arts Centre hosts an internationally-acclaimed programme of exhibitions, residencies, artists' projects and public events. These are aimed at families, schools and colleges and young people. Such activities, together with the popular café with free wifi, and garden, should ensure the venue's continuation as a high-quality community facility. Good spaces are available for groups' hire and its central location is important for local people as for visitors. At time of writing, CAC was facing the need soon to renew its lease on the site owned by Camden. It therefore becomes an important focus of Redington Frogna's aim to retain existing facilities and CAC was proposed to Camden as a Secured Asset of Community Value designation, seeking its acquisition for community use in perpetuity.

**Camden Arts Centre Exterior
Arkwright Road**



Finchley Road



Indoor Café



Garden and Outdoor Café



Exhibition, 2012



For further information see <https://www.camdenartscentre.org/>

Hampstead School of Art grew out of HAC and CAC, operated from 19 Kidderpore Avenue, now enjoying its own new building in Penrose Gardens. This was a small locational step, but a great leap psychologically for the school and the Redington Frognal area, securing the artistic thread. Each week it serves hundreds of students of all ages. Redington Frognal Association had argued for retention of this particular facility threatened with loss in the early 2000s and it was supported by Barratt London developing the KCL south campus. The school was formed in the 1950s, “under the aegis of the HAC to establish a centre of artistic excellence, with Hampstead’s rich artistic tradition reaching back to John Constable and George Romney.” HAC chairman Jeanette Jackson and sculptor Henry Moore were instrumental in establishing its art school, which today provides as HSoA a range of art classes for all ages across the community. The HAC used a room at the School once a month for artists to submit their work for its exhibitions. Hampstead School of Art also exhibit and sell work by their members in the new gallery and online, and it manages an important outreach programme 'Drawn Together'.

New Hampstead School of Art and Café



Workshop at HSoA



For further information see <https://www.hampstead-school-of-art.org/community.html>

Health and Fitness

Croft Way in Sub Area Three is home to the West Heath Lawn Tennis Club. This has been operational on the site since 1902 and comprises three grass courts and two all-weather courts and a small clubhouse with changing facilities. Members are drawn from within a five-mile radius and include about 200 children from local schools.

A more recently established facility, but of equal importance, is the UCS Active gym in Frognal, which offers an indoor gym, swimming pool, group exercise classes and outdoor tennis. UCS offers its facilities for community meetings from time to time on request.

Acknowledgements

[Queen Mary, University of London Archives](#)