

## A HISTORY OF GROVE ROAD AND THE CAMBRIAN COMMUNITY CENTRE.

The Cambrian Community Centre opened in 1989, and occupies a corner of a large site based around Grove Road, which once housed a workhouse, infirmary and hospital. This paper explores a brief history of this site.



Map of the present-day Grove Road Area

By 1768 Queen's Road was being described as a 'carriageway'. The road was called Black Horse Lane in the early nineteenth century presumably after the pub of that name at the road's junction with the present Sheen Road. In 1825 Queen's Road was also known as Muddy Lane, a common road name in those days, for obvious reasons!

In the 1841 Census Queen's Road was simply called the 'Road from Star and Garter leading to Marshgate! The road was known as Queen's Road by 1845 and was named after Queen Victoria.

The new purpose-built 2-storey Richmond Union Workhouse opened in Grove Road in April 1787. A plaque on the building declared it was 'Erected by the Munificence of His Majesty George the III for the use of the poor of Richmond and Kew'. An infirmary and an institution for 'mentally ill and disorderly persons' were

By 1886 the workhouse and infirmary contained contagious wards, an Irish ward (!), male vagrant wards, a chapel and a vestry, a laundry, a carpentry shed and a stone yard added later.

Grove Gardens Chapel in Richmond was built around 1875 from the design of Sir William Blomfield. He was Vice President of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1886 and was awarded the Institute's Gold medal in 1891.



Grove Gardens Chapel

The Chapel was built in the Revised Gothic style as the Anglican Chapel for Richmond's cemetery. The Chapel became empty in 1976 and was Listed Grade II in 1990

The Environment Trust for Richmond Upon Thames, took up the cause to restore this neglected but still attractive building. The Trust was awarded a 125 years lease from the Diocese of Southwark and the restoration work was funded by English Heritage, the National Heritage Lottery Fund and local donations. The restored and converted building was opened in September 1999. Today the building is primarily for school use.

In 1902 a new infirmary was built to the southwest of the workhouse. It consisted of two 3-storey blocks - one each for male and female patients. The buildings had 24 beds on each floor, with a separate 3-bedded ward, and were connected by walkways on each level. A 2-storey Nurses' Home and a one-storey lying-in ward were also linked to the main blocks. The ambulance house and mortuary were combined in a separate building. During WW1 the workhouse and infirmary became the Richmond Military Hospital.

The Old Workhouse Clock and Inscription (2012)





The Womens Yard at Richmond Workhouse  
Painting by Mr. F Ivimey, of Richmond Hill.] Obtained from [Local Studies Richmond](#).

**Spencer Frederick Gore** (26 May 1878 – 25 March 1914)<sup>[1]</sup> was a British painter of landscapes, music-hall scenes and interiors, usually with single figures.



[From a Window in Cambrian Road, Richmond 1913](#)

This painting shows the view from a top-floor window at the rear of 6 Cambrian Road, Richmond, where the Gore family relocated in 1913

On 1st July 1918, since by then the Hospital was treating mainly South African wounded, it merged with its neighbour, the [South African Hospital](#), which had been built in Richmond Park on the other side of the perimeter wall.

In 1929 the LCC took over the administration and the workhouse and infirmary were renamed the Richmond Institution. (1929 - 1955 at the latest)

In 1948 the Institution joined the NHS under the South West Metropolitan Regional Health Board. Its name was changed to Grove Road Hospital. It closed as a general hospital in 1974 during one of the many reorganizations of the NHS.

The site was then used as student accommodation for Kingston Polytechnic.

The site was converted to residential use by the [London and Quadrant Housing Association](#), who created 361 dwellings. The south part of the site is now public housing - Kingsmead - which opened in 1987. The northern part is a gated estate - King George Square - with apparently several preserved buildings.

Apart from the main building, little survives other than the former entrance lodge.

The Cambrian Community Centre was opened in 1989 as part of the Queens Road Estate development. The building was built by, and is owned by, the RPLC. It is located in the ground floor of Caplan Court at the junction of the Queens Road and Cambrian Road. Originally an association whose committee managed the community centre on behalf of the RPLC the constitution was amended in 1999 and the centre became a registered charity in June of that year, registration number: 1077016.



The former entrance lodge is situated by the gates of King George Square.





The main workhouse building with the inscription beneath the central cupola and clock is part of the King George Square development.

### **Kingsmead (below)**



The entrance to Kingsmead (left). One link to the distant past is the sign for the Workhouse gym (right).



**Fitzherbert House**

Fitzherbert House contains sheltered accommodation which, until 2009, was managed by the London and Quadrant Housing Trust. It is now the responsibility of the Richmond Council.

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**References:**

**This paper draws extensively from the following web sites, to which we are most grateful.**

<http://www.environmenttrust.co.uk/projects/historic-and-built-environment/3-grove-gardens-chapel.html>

<http://www.workhouses.org.uk/RichmondSurrey/>

<http://ezitis.myzen.co.uk/groveroad.html>

[http://www.tate.org.uk/art/images/work/N/N03/N03558\\_10.jpg](http://www.tate.org.uk/art/images/work/N/N03/N03558_10.jpg) (Spencer Gore picture)