



10A SOUTH GROVE
HIGHGATE
LONDON
N6 6BS

Review of candidate for local listing

Submitted by: Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee and The Highgate Society

1. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE STRUCTURE

Address : Highgate Branch Library, 1 Shepherds Hill, N6

Type of structure : detached purpose built Library

Approximate age : 130

Survey Area : Highgate

Included on current local list : Yes ☒

No ☐

2. DESCRIPTION

Size, layout, street scene or relationship to landscape : The reproduction of a postcard on page 16 of 'Highgate Library - A Century of Service' has the caption: *"This 1911 picture postcard of Shepherds Hill shows how the library blends in with the neighbouring Edwardian style houses erected by the Freehold and Leasehold Investment Company". (See Photos under 8.)*

The building continues to be residential in character, in scale with the houses built at the same time in Shepherds Hill. The bold semi-circular decorative arch over the entrance resembles other properties, the complex roof forms and half-timbering. These characteristics and design approach is distinctly different from the Stroud Green Library of one year earlier which aims to be seen as a Council endeavour. The difference in the case of Highgate Library might have come from the terms of the sale of the land on very favourable terms from the Freehold and Leasehold Investment Company. The Reading Room of the Stroud Green Library, even though a distinct compositional element, forms part of the overall design scheme and contributes to the street scene. In the case of the Highgate Library the Reading Room is positioned across the back of the building, presumably because it would not be of a residential character. This position presents daylighting problems for the Reading Room so clerestory windows were used on the two long sides. The timber trusses are therefore exposed internally to good effect.

Materials and architectural features : Red brick with rubbed voussoirs and keystones.

Arts & Crafts carve floral motifs in scroll over entrance which is bold and asymmetrical with wide semi-circular arch and carved brick tablet 'PUBLIC LIBRARY' above the projecting brick cornice and band course in red brick at first floor level. '1902' carved into keystone. The radii of voussoirs is replicated in glass panels in a semi-circle inside the arch, a detail found in internal screens at Alexandra Palace. Bold octagonal turret on southern corner with octagonal clay tiled roof and lead ball and finial on top. Slightly projecting centre flat-fronted bay. Corner turret and flat bay at first floor level faced in 'black & white' black timber with white render panels in a more Edwardian manner. Roof clay tiled. Moderately decorated chimneys.

Condition : Good

History/Associations : Hornsey Councillor Henry Burt personally pressed for and funded ballots for Hornsey main and branch Libraries. Whilst not over-enthusiastic, Sir Francis Cory-Wright who lived in Athlone House on Hampstead Lane bought books for the libraries. Both were much involved in local matters. Henry Burt instigated the campaign to save Queens Wood.

"Cory-Wright was deeply involved in local affairs in Highgate. He appears in the 1906 publication London Leaders. He campaigned to save Churchyard Bottom Wood for the public and saw it renamed as Queen's Wood, still a valued local amenity in Muswell Hill Road. He was one of the principal donors to the campaign to secure Alexandra Palace for the benefit of the people of North London after the disastrous fire shortly after its opening, supporting the work of Henry Burt." (Source: Dr. S. Rose and G. Waldman: Statement of Case to Athlone House Appeal 2015). Interestingly there are close architectural similarities between the front door to the library and glazed screens and doors at Alexandra Palace possibly a result of the close interest of Henry Burt and Sir Francis Cory-Wright in several local projects including Hornsey Libraries, Queen's Wood and Alexandra Palace.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion on the updated list :

Yes ☒

No ☐

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

Interest : ☒

Historical : ☒

Architectural : ☒

Community : ☒

Aesthetic: : ☐

Details of interest :

See above and below

Significance :

The first Public Libraries Act was introduced in 1850. It only allowed for capital expenditure for building libraries but not for buying books,

'In 1892, Parliament therefore passed a supplementary Act which gave all urban Councils the authority to raise a special rate for building and maintaining public libraries. In 1894 this authority was extended downwards to rural parish level.... A spate of library building followed.

'Henry Burt, a very active Councillor from 1892 -1901,.... at his own expense, printed and distributed 1800 leaflets (with a reply card) in five wards. He promised to supply books and pay for the auditing of accounts. 1400 people were in favour but this was not enough to persuade Council members so Burt then provided them with financial sureties against any action by the District Auditor and they finally agreed to ballot the whole of Hornsey. Out of 8,296 voters, 2,620 voted AYE and 1,238 NAY. With this mandate, Hornsey adopted the provisions of the Public Libraries Acts in 1896. ('Highgate Library - A Century of Service' copyright Highgate Library Action Group 2003, published by Hornsey Historical Society)

'The Chairman of the Council, C.F. Cory-Wright, did not think that libraries were needed in the district at the time but as a gesture of goodwill he offered to donate one thousand volumes if a library should be established.'

(A Brief History of Stroud Green Library.

© John Hinshelwood, December 2000 (amended July 2010))

'The Council planned four libraries - a Central Library in Tottenham Lane (built 1899) and three branch libraries at Stroud Green (built 1901), Highgate (built 1902) and Muswell Hill (not built until 1931). Finding a site for Highgate Library took some time, due to the high cost of building land.....£1000....At last, in July 1899, the Freehold and Leasehold Investment Company, the owners of the Priory Estate, sold the Council a site...for £500. ('Highgate Library - A Century of Service' copyright Highgate Library Action Group 2003, published by Hornsey Historical Society)

'The council's own engineer and surveyor, Edwin James Lovegrove, drew up plans for all the new libraries. The designs were of sufficient interest to be featured in a special supplement on Hornsey's Libraries in The Surveyor & Municipal County Engineer of 1900.' **(A Brief History of Stroud Green Library.** © John Hinshelwood, December 2000 (amended July 2010))

'He recommended that the Highgate Library should be built in red brick with 'oak facing and roughcast work....the general style being in keeping with the private houses to be erected on the adjoining sites.....Lovegrove involved himself in every detail.....of the project....He also designed the furniture and fittings in the same style as those he had already designed for the Stroud Green Library....The garden was 'tastefully laid out and planted with rhododendrons' by G. Griffin of the Middle Lane Recreation Ground' ('Highgate Library - A Century of Service' copyright Highgate Library Action Group 2003, published by Hornsey Historical Society)

John Hinshelwood regarding Stroud Green Library records: *'Above the library room and hall a second storey provided a flat for the librarian comprising of a sitting room, kitchen, scullery, two bedrooms, bath and w.c.'* The plans illustrated on p.10 of 'Highgate Library - A Century of Service' show a similar flat upstairs with an octagonal turret on the corner of the Drawing Room.

'Highgate Library was officially opened on the afternoon of Saturday 16 June 1902. Some 3,750 invitations were sent out to ratepayers in Highgate, Muswell Hill, and Crouch End. That 2,200 people attended says a great deal for the importance with which local people viewed the occasion. In declaring the library open, Edward White (Chairman of the Library Committee) commented on the exertions of Henry Burt....he also thanked Mr. Lovegrove...and said the committee was greatly indebted to Messrs Cory-Wright and Henry Burt for the gift of books.' ('Highgate Library - A Century of Service' copyright Highgate Library Action Group 2003, published by Hornsey Historical Society)

Rarity : x Representativeness : x

Integrity : x Age:

Innovative or influential :

Details of significance :

One of only two branch libraries built in Hornsey. Association with Stroud Green Library (see proposed local listing review by Stroud Green Conservation Advisory Committee). Associations with local history. Built as part of the residential street scene in the then recently laid out Shepherds Hill.

5. ADDITIONAL MATERIALS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Additional material :

Please summarise any additional research or materials you have consulted that support the recommendations. Please provide links for online material. All reviews should be accompanied by at least one up-to-date photograph. Please attach JPEG or other image files to your email and insert an image in the space below :

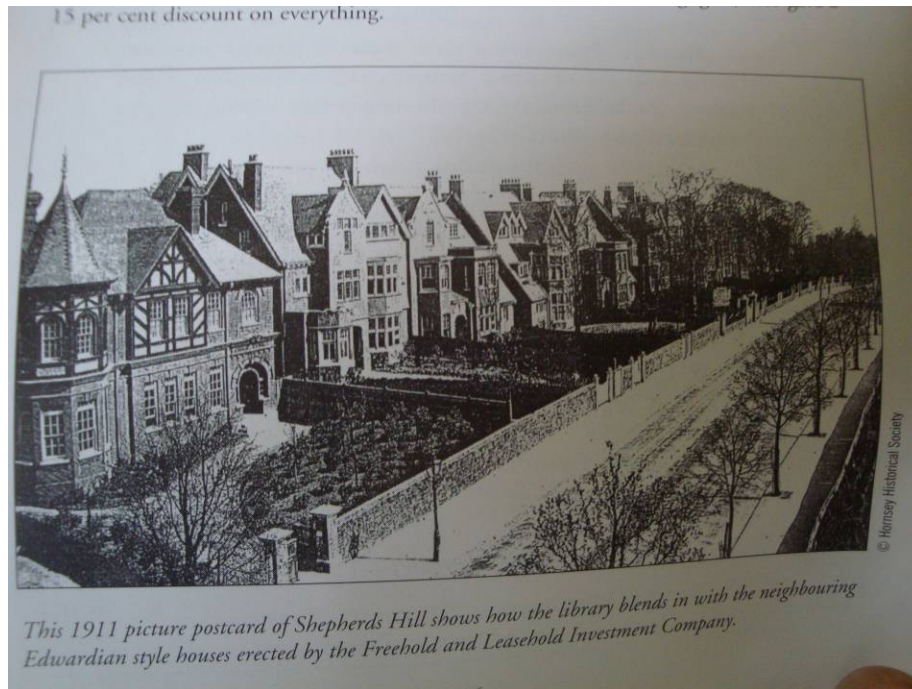


Photo of postcard from Highgate Scientific and Literary Institution Album No. 4 ca 3



Photo October 2016



Photo October 2016. Houses built at the same time as the Library



Photo October 2016. Houses built at the same time as the Library



Photo October 2016. Houses built at the same time as the Library



Side elevation of Library from Capital Ring



Reading Room from Library garden



Highgate Library Reading Room roof (1902). Daylight available on only two sides so clerestory windows used on the long sides



Stroud Green Reading Room for comparison (1901) Stroud Green Library Reading Room roof (1901). Note generous daylight on three sides