

FOUNDATION OF THE GARDEN SUBURB SCHOOL

The original proposal for the provision of a school was made by the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust in a letter discussed by the Hendon Urban District Council Education Committee at its meeting on 28 May 1907. At this date the Education Committee was sub-divided into the Finance Committee, the Works and General Purposes Committee, the School Management Committee, and the School Attendance Committee. The minutes do not actually say why the Works and General Purposes Committee disliked the proposed site, although they did ask the Trust if they could provide a site nearer Golders Green and further from the Finchley boundary, and the Secretary to the Education Committee was asked in October 1907 to write to several property owners in the neighbourhood of the Finchley Road enquiring if they had a site suitable for an elementary school.

Of the sites offered, the one suggested by Messrs. Hinge in Wild Hatch Lane of 1 acre 3 roods and 11 poles for £1900 was considered most suitable and the Committee applied to the Board of Education for approval. In May 1908, however, the Board of Education wrote to the Education Committee enclosing a letter from the Architect to the Garden City and enquiring why they desired the site in Wild Hatch Lane which they would have to pay for, rather than the site offered free by the Garden City people. The answer is not recorded, but further information regarding the numbers and development of the Garden City was requested, and on 28 January 1909 the Committee reported that after the Board had compared the sites they had no alternative but to withhold their approval for the Temple Fortune site.

While a temporary school for infants at the Hampstead Garden Institute was approved (and Mrs. Barnett's request to include children of 8 and 9 years old was refused) what were to become very protracted negotiations with the Hampstead Garden Trust were begun regarding the conveyance of the permanent site for the new school. It was envisaged that the temporary school would only be in use for a few months, but in fact it remained in use for the next 4 years.

In December 1909 the Education Committee (in its Works and General Purposes capacity) agreed that six architects were to be invited to send in plans, and in April 1910 decided on the conditions for the competition. The Committee specified a building of two stories of three departments, two on the lower floor and one on the upper floor, and the accommodation to be for about 1000 children with manual and laundry centres exclusive to the central halls. Central halls were required for each department, with every classroom approached directly from the hall. There were to be cloak rooms with adequate numbers of pegs, lavatories, Head and Assistant Teacher rooms for each department, store rooms for each department, separate playsheds, offices, latrines for boys, girls, and infants, caretakers house, and playgrounds to be tarpaved on a properly prepared hard surface. One room in each department to accommodate 60 children, the other rooms to be arranged for

classes of 50.

On 10 May 1910, however, after a meeting with the Board of Education, the plans had to be altered in accordance with the Board's current thinking on buildings to have a two department school; namely a Junior Mixed on the ground floor for 500 children and a Senior Mixed department above for 500 children. One large store room and one Head and Assistant Teacher rooms would be required in each department.

Progress in the matter of the plans had to be deferred pending difficulties regarding the conveyance of the site being sorted out. The Garden Suburb Ratepayers Association actually wrote to the Committee complaining about the delay in erecting a permanent school in January 1911, and after further discussions on 24 January with the Trust agreement was achieved and the lease and agreement sent to the District Council for sealing. Plans for the new school were finally selected and in April 1911 submitted both to Mr. Unwin Architect to the Trust and to the Board of Education. Mr. Wilson was chosen as architect and was asked in June to build a single storey school (current thinking regarding school buildings had changed again) for three departments, boys, girls and infants, numbers to be arranged later, and to discuss with Mr. Unwin the position of buildings on the site.

In July 1911 Mr. Wilson submitted his plans to cater for 300 infants, 350 boys and 350 girls as suggested by the Board of Education. By September both Mr. Unwin and the Board of Education had approved them, and in October 1911 the Committee approved the creation of a girls department at the temporary school at the Institute pending the building of the new school. Also in October 1911 Messrs Waldram and Son of Hendon and 12 Buckingham St. W.C. were appointed Quantity Surveyors for the new school, and advertisements issued for building tenders. In December 1911 a first loan of £15,700 was sought from the District Council to cover the building costs.

Inevitably problems arose with costs being higher than estimates, and eventually Messrs. Moss and Son (Builders) were given the go ahead at a tender of £16,400. Further problems arose while the building was in progress throughout 1912, and the Education Committee minutes throughout the year are concerned with discussions over installing utilities, fittings, equipment and complaints of all kinds. In November they also dealt with the appointment of head teachers and a caretaker. The first appointees for head teachers were;
Boys; Mr A.Kramer (formerly of St. Mary's C. of E. School)
Girls; Miss M.A.Line (formerly of Bell Lane School)
Infants; Miss R.Choat (formerly of Algernon Road Council School)

In December 1912 it was decided to accept children between four and five years to attend the Infants department and in the same month Mr. F. Turvey was appointed caretaker.

Finally matters had progressed so far that at the meeting of 14 January 1913 it was decided that in spite of minor building works still in progress the new school would be officially opened on Friday 31 January 1913 at 7-30 p.m.

At the end of the first week of opening the Committee were happy to report that there were 114 boys, 140 girls and 177 infants present, and more were expected.

It is interesting to note that Mrs. Barnett still took an interest in the school, even though the site had been handed over to the Hendon Urban District Council. In April 1913 the Education Committee minutes record the Committee's acceptance with thanks of an offer from Mrs Barnett on behalf of the Trust for the use of the piece of land in front of the school for the purpose of school gardens at a peppercorn rent, and the offer by the Trust both to stock the border by the edge of the garden, and to have it kept in good order by their gardeners.

Joanna Corden