

The “Lillie Enclave” Fulham

Within a quarter mile radius of Lillie Bridge, by West Brompton station is

A microcosm of the Industrial Revolution - A part of London’s forgotten heritage

The enclave runs from Lillie Bridge along Lillie Road to North End Road and includes Empress (formerly Richmond) Place to the north and Seagrave Road, SW6 to the south.

The roads were named by the *Fulham Board of Works* in 1867

Between the **Grade 1** Listed Brompton Cemetery in **RBKC** and its Conservation area in Earl’s Court and the **Grade 2** Listed Hermitage Cottages in **H&F** lies an astonishing industrial and vernacular area of heritage that **English Heritage** deems *ripe for obliteration*. See for example, COIL:

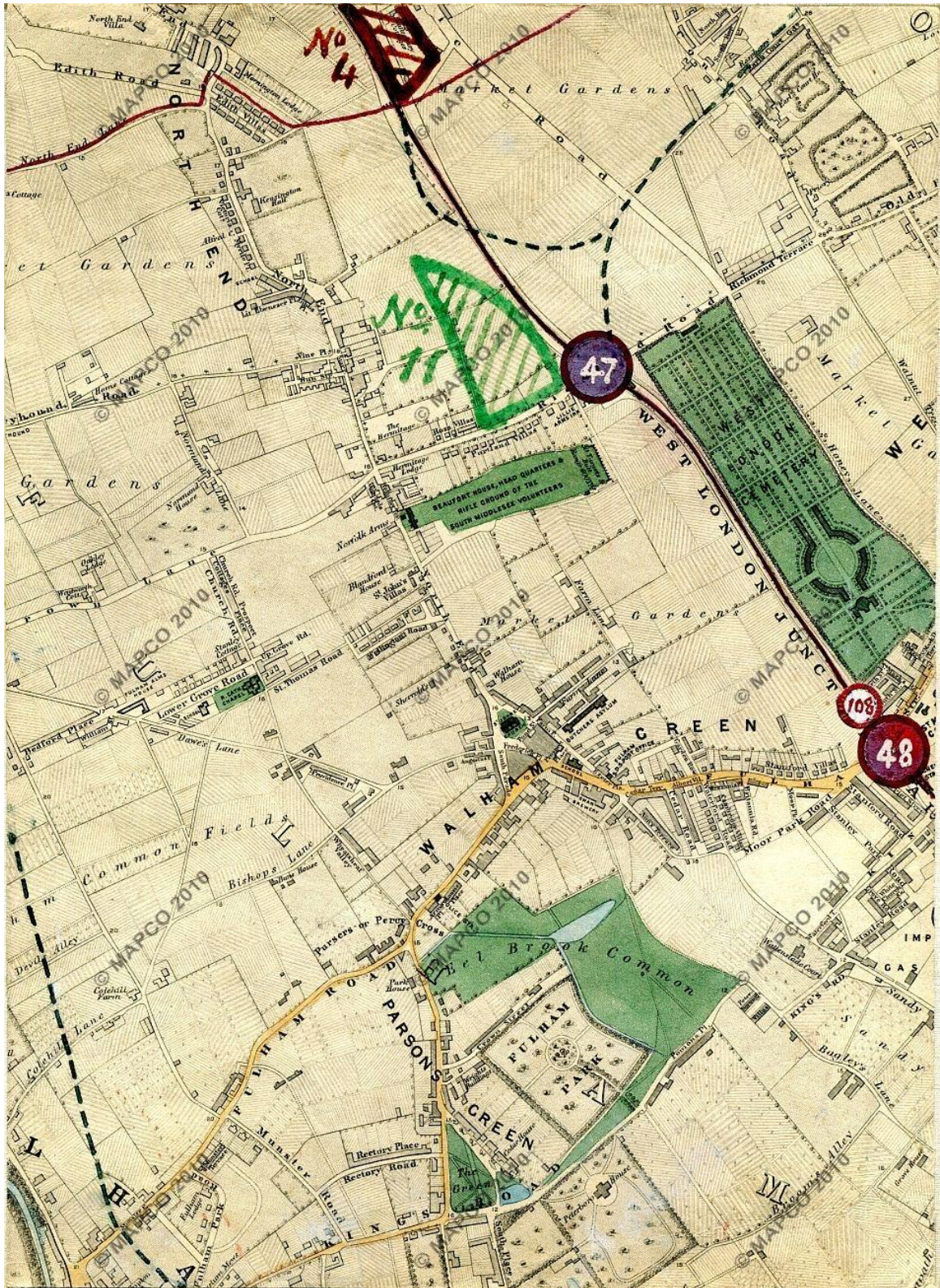
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1439963>.

(Former HQ of Piccadilly Line)

The area has significantly contributed to:

- Rail and motor Transport
- Building crafts
- Engineering
- Rail, automotive and aero industries
- Brewing and distilling
- Art
- Sport, Trade exhibitions and mass entertainment
- Health services
- Green corridor

Draft London Plan Consultation: ref. Chapter 7 Heritage - Neglect & Destruction
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Stanford's 1864 Library map: The Lillie Enclave is south and west of point "47"

Movers and Shakers

Here are some of the people and companies who left their mark on just *three* streets laid out by *Sir John Lillie* in the old County of Middlesex on the border of Fulham and Kensington parishes

Samuel Foote (1722-1777), Cornishman dramatist, actor, theatre manager lived in 'The Hermitage'. He was associated with the Haymarket Theatre.

Francesco Bartolozzi (1727-1815) RA, a prolific Florentine engraver spent 40 years of his life in London, living in the "Lillie Enclave".

James Gunter (1731-1819), landowner, confectioner, builder of timber footbridge over Counter's Creek circa **1760**, precursor of Fowler's **Lillie Bridge**.

Lord Kensington, William Edwardes (1777-1855) MP for Haverford West, landowner, instigator of the *Kensington Canal*, **1822**.

Robert Gunter (1783-1852)* son of James, builder of the first brick and stone bridge over the creek/canal (1826) – still visible from plat. 4 W. Brompton station.

Benjamin Rawlinson Faulkner (1787-1849), colonial official and society portrait painter lived in Hermitage Cottages, Lillie Road.

Sir John Scott Lillie (1790-1868)* JP Peninsular War veteran, inventor and entrepreneur, Hermitage Villa resident and owner. He laid out Lillie Road, Empress Place and Seagrave Road on his land, built the **North End brewery** (1832) and **the Lillie Arms** public house in front (1835), renamed "Lily Langtry". He was a shareholder in the Hammersmith Bridge Co. and the Kensington Canal Co.

Miss Gosling (c.1835) business woman. According to Charles Féret, she first ran Lillie's North End brewery.

William Cutbush (c 1824) Lord Kensington's surveyor and 'engineer' of the *Kensington Canal*, basin and wharves, subsequently dismissed from the project.

Sir John Rennie (1794-1874) engineer consultant to the failing *Kensington Canal Co*. He gave a more realistic assessment of the costs.

Robert Stephenson (1803-1859) engineer became consultant to the building of the railway line along the *Kensington Canal*, **1844**.

* Buried in Brompton Cemetery

Gilbert Abbott à Beckett (1811-1856) humourist and journalist who exposed the canal/rail project to 10 years of derision in the *Punch* magazine, gaining it the soubriquet, '*Punch's Railway*'.

John Elger (1802-1888) Master builder and development speculator, associated with Grosvenor Square, Rutland Gate, Ennismore Gardens etc. owned the land west of Lillie Bridge .

John Young (1797-1877) Suffolk man, architect and City of London surveyor, was the author in 1859 of the new **Cancer Hospital** in Fulham Road, later the Royal Marsden. He developed Lillie's short road along the canal and now railway in 1863, and built a street of 18 small terraced houses as 'Richmond Place' (later, **Empress Place**), with retail outlets onto Lillie Road, with his *trademark brick ornamentation using Suffolk stone and terracotta bricks*, He followed this up with 15 substantial terraces (1865-6) on the north side of Lillie Road (locally listed), up to the Hermitage cottages (Grade II Listed).

Sir John Fowler (1817-1898)*, Yorkshire man, civil engineer, creator of world's first underground railway, the Metropolitan, known for the **Forth Rail Bridge** in Scotland – a UNESCO World Heritage site – re-built Lillie's bridge over the West London Line in **1860** and designed West Brompton station (Grade II listed) "in the middle of fields" in **1866**, next to Brompton Cemetery (**1839**), Grade I listed).

John Graham Chambers (1843-1883)* Welshman, Cambridge (rowing) blue, athlete and an early sports administrator, responsible for bringing sport to the **Lillie Bridge Grounds** in **1866** where the **1873 FA Cup** was played and later the scene for international wrestling, boxing, cycling, ballooning and athletics.

Edmonds & Co. (c.1840-1890) purveyors of glasshouses, hot water systems and horticultural factors ran their business from the south side of the bridge approach in Lillie Road. They closed as local market gardens gave way to industrial exploitation. They were replaced by electrical factors, Marsh Bros.

Henry Lovibond (c.1840-1910) a brewer from Clerkenwell acquired in **1867** 'The Hermitage' villa and the remnants of its park on the corner of Lillie and North End Roads and built his **Cannon's brewery** there. It lasted till WWI when the premises were taken over by Airco for building **Dehavilland** aircraft from 1915.

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The Midland Railway Company established in **1868** its extensive goods and coal yard behind Cannon's brewery and Young's terrace in Richmond Road, later renamed Lillie Road.

WG Grace (1848-1915) physician and famed amateur cricketer played for the *Gentlemen of the South* and scored a century at the **Middlesex County Cricket Club** in **1871** while it occupied grounds at *Lillie Bridge* 1870-74.

The Metropolitan District Railway Co. opened its railway workshops and maintenance depot in **1872** since known as **Lillie Bridge Depot**, the historic rail traction and stabling depot about to be de-commissioned and destroyed

Corbett and McClymont, developers and builders of the **Gunter estate** in Kensington and Chelsea took over the *North End brewery* in Seagrave Road and installed there a state-of-the-art steam-operated timber works in 1872. The brewery complex then became **Vicker's gin distillery** until WWI. It was taken over in 1918 by **Sir Robert Burnett's** White Satin Gin distillery until 1966 when part of it became the **Spaghetti House** kitchens.

The Metropolitan Asylums Board acquired a 13 acre site at the bottom of Seagrave Road in **1877** to build a hospital and ambulance station. Expansion continued into the 1890s when it became the **Western Isolation Hospital**, admitting smallpox cases from all over West London. In the 20th c. it became a centre of excellence for treating polio. The NHS closed it in **1979**.

John Robinson Whitley (1843-1922) a Leeds entrepreneur, opened the 24 acre *Earl's Court Exhibition Grounds* in **1887**, with its entrance in Young's **Richmond Place**. His American exhibition and Wild West Show was followed by French and German shows.

Queen Victoria (1819-1901), in her Golden Jubilee Year, visited the American Show at the *Earl's Court Grounds* on **9th May 1887**, entering through **Richmond Place**, later renamed **Empress Place** in her honour.

The Prince of Wales (1841-1910) visited the *exhibition grounds* on several occasions with his entourage. The public House on the corner of **Richmond Place** was named in his honour. It is said that he had assignations with the actress, Lillie Langtry, in a house along Lillie Road, hence "the Lillie Arms" became 'the Lillie Langtry'.

The London Road Car Company opened its depot for horse-drawn buses in Seagrave Road in **1890**. It was one of the largest bus operators in the capital. When horses were finally retired in **1911**, it became a motorised operation. In the meantime, it was taken over by **the London Omnibus Company**, which eventually became part of **London Transport**.

Joseph Bickley (1835-1923) master plasterer of **62 Lillie Road** (Grade 2 Listed) specialising in the design of **rackets and indoor tennis courts**. His work survives at **Queen's Club, Hampton Court, Moreton Morrell** and **Canford**, Hayling Island, **Troon** and **New York**. He ran his business from Seagrave Road. His patented plaster formula became a mainstay of indoor courts and would withstand damp and condensation.

Imre Kiralfy (1845-1919) Hungarian showman and international impresario, rebuilt the 24 acre **Earl's Court** site in Mughal style for *the Great India exhibition*. Later he had the **Empress Hall** built by Collard behind *Richmond Place* and Lillie Road in **1894**, where he presented ice spectacles.

Charles Féret (1854-1921) Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, India Office official, editor of the **Fulham Chronicle**, resident of North End (West Ken) and author of the thousand page, 3 volume exhaustive local history, "*Fulham Old and New*", 1900.

Charles Yerkes (1837-1905) American financier and mass transit pioneer. He came to London at the tail end of his life in **1900** and reorganised much of London's underground system. His Piccadilly and Brompton Railway was the precursor of the **Piccadilly line** whose engineering HQ came to 13 Richmond Place (the present **16-18 Empress Place**) in **1907**.

The Hon. Charles Rolls (1877-1910) aviator, opened his car coachworks in a disused roller skating rink, the **Lillie Hall** in Seagrave Road, 1902. Four years later he formed a partnership with **Frederick Royce** that became the world-renowned company, **Rolls Royce**.

Charles Howard Crane (1885-1952), American architect and prolific author of over 300 theatres and opera houses across the USA. He came to the UK during the *Depression* to continue working and designed the iconic **Earl's Court Exhibition Centre** in *Art Moderne* style. The building was completed in **1937** and finally dismantled by **Keltbray** in **2017**.

"Lillie Enclave" Structures of Note /...

“Lillie Enclave” Structures of Note

Already demolished:

- Hermitage Villa and grounds (early Georgian), Lillie Road
- Hermitage Lodge (early Georgian), Lillie Road
- North End Brewery (late Georgian), Lillie Road
- Lansdown Terrace (Palladian, 1850), 31- 63 Lillie Road (no.39 demolished 2000)
- Carmelite convent 1870, Lillie Road
- Marsh Bros, electrical (1850), 1-9 Lillie Road
- Beaufort House School (1900), Lillie Road (demolished due to falling rolls!)
- Lillie Bridge Sports Grounds 1866, Seagrave Road (arson in 1879)
- Lillie Hall, Seagrave Road
- Joseph Bickley’s Plaster Works, Seagrave Road
- Empress Hall 1894, Empress Approach, demolished 1960
- Victorian brick chimney stack behind 2 Seagrave Road **demolished 2016**
- **Earls Court 2** as part of the Exhibition complex demolished

At immediate risk:

- **2-26 Lillie Road** (COIL issued by HE!), this includes **John Young’s** 1863 retail outlets and 2 pubs: ***The Imperial Arms***, 8 Lillie Road and ***the Prince of Wales***, 12 Lillie Road
- **16 Lillie Road** is John Young’s Italianate Suffolk stone corner building that has served continuously as tearooms for 130 years except for 1920-21 when it was the ***Fulham and Putney Orthopaedic Clinic*** for WW I veterans, There is no plaque to commemorate this.

All these buildings were bought in very short order after **2014**, by developers, Capco Plc and internally “soft-stripped” before HE came to do their assessment, doubtless for a consideration. So what happened to the Victorian baker’s ovens?

- **Empress Place**, John Young’s entire vernacular street with charm. Why?
- **Lillie Bridge Depot** historic traction and engineering works: surely this is industrial archaeology and should be a **Transport Museum** as should **TFL’s Ashfield House** in West Kensington.
- Social Housing, 1-17 Lillie Road and Langtry Close, Seagrave Road (This is the site of the **Kensington Canal basin and port**). There is nothing there to commemorate this heritage.

Medium term risk:

- **West Brompton Station.** Rumours of covering it for retail purposes and pedestrian access to Chelsea FC's new stadium. This puts at risk the chalk railway verges where **biodiversity** abounds and it puts at risk the vestiges of Counter's Creek and hence the **Green Corridor**. What is this obsession with concreting over urban open green space?
- **1926 Kensington Canal Bridge and steps.** It is visible, just, from platform 4 at West Brompton Station.

Statutory and Local Listings:

Grade II Listed:

- **62-66 Lillie Road** (Georgian terrace) known as "Hermitage Cottages" built by Sir John Scott Lillie on the grounds of his Hermitage Villa in the **1820s**.

Locally Listed:

- **28-58 Lillie Road**, John Young's terracotta Mid-Victorian terrace, 1865-66. The LA badly missed a trick as this is the *continuation of the same development as Empress Place*.
- **The Lillie Langtry PH** (1832), Lillie Road
- **The Atlas PH**, Seagrave Road, a post-war reconstruction of the bombed Victorian original of 1869

"The Lillie Enclave" is an object lesson in *heritage obliteration*.

Partly it is due to an under-resourced local authority: it has scattered or given away swathes of the precious historic archives under its stewardship. Its conservation team is overworked and in a logjam. Some of the local historic societies are far more pre-occupied with Hammersmith than with tatty down-market Fulham.

Meanwhile, London was in the hands of a visionary grandiloquent mayor who could only see the grandest of schemes and none of the tiresome petty detail in his way.

Ends.