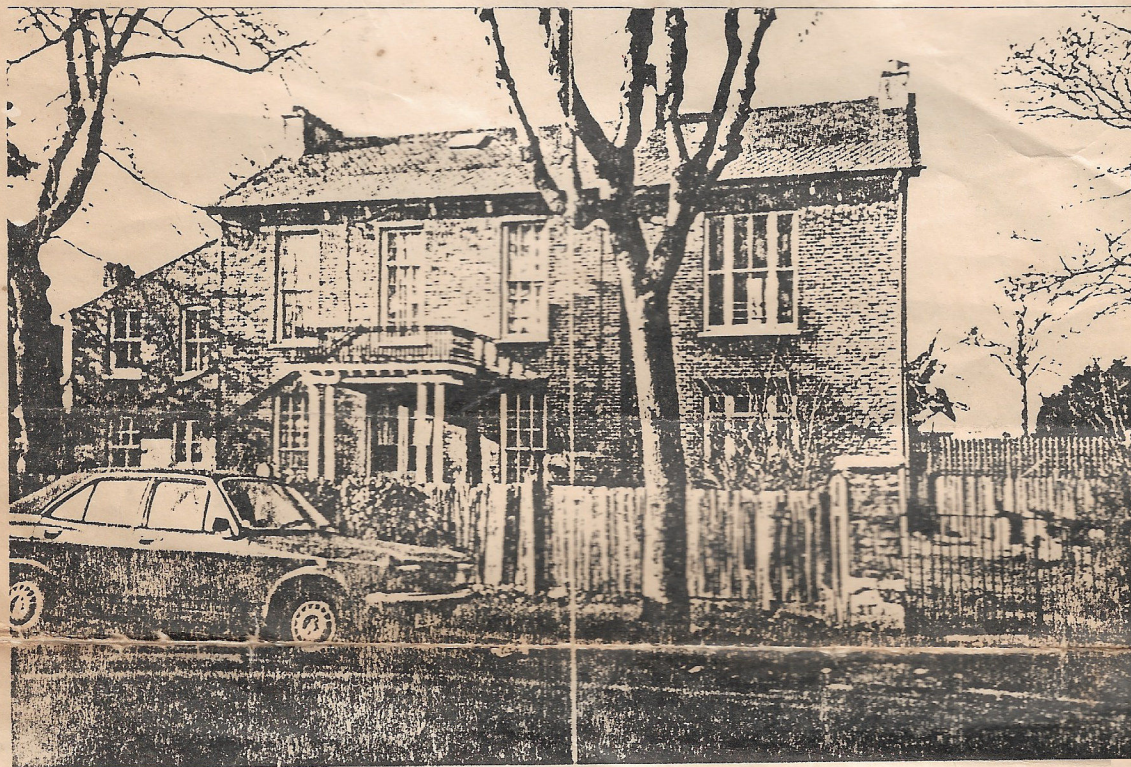


THE CARSHALTON SOCIETY

for the preservation of old buildings and the scenic amenities of Carshalton



STANLEY HOUSE, 59, STANLEY ROAD, CARSHALTON-ON-THE-HILL.

At present, Stanley House is threatened with demolition by property developers, who wish to replace it with a part two, part three storey building to be used as a nursing home for the elderly. It is hoped that its owners can be persuaded to change their plans and incorporate the house into their scheme, because its demolition will mean the loss of the only surviving building of importance to the history of the area once famous for its fields of herbs and lavender in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Stanley House was built in 1860 on a plot of ground one hundred feet wide and two hundred and sixty five feet deep. A London stock-broker, his unmarried sister and their two servants lived here until 1874, when a local business man bought the house for himself, his wife and family. Carshalton-on-the-Hill was a small, select group of villas and the Stanley Hotel, which was a popular place for country holidays, and convalescence in healthy rural surroundings after an illness. Property developers financed by a Mr. Israel Abraham, spoilt the neighbourhood when they built three large terraces of houses on the land on the opposite side of Stanley Road in the 1880s. These properties remained unfinished due to lack of buyers because there were no piped water or gas supplies here at that time. Homeless local workers moved in but they could not afford the repairs and maintenance of these houses which became the slums known locally as "Jerusalem. Thus, other residents moved away and the hotel was closed.

The most important part of the history of Stanley House began in 1906, when it was sold to Mr. E.C. Pannett, who was a partner in the firm of seed merchants known as Pannett and Needham. Consequently, the large garden was soon well-stocked with all kinds of flowers, shrubs and fruit trees, a long greenhouse was erected, and Mr. Pannett employed two gardeners to work here. He also established a small herb-

drying factory in the present-day Fir Tree Grove at the rear of his home. The fields in the nearby Little Woodcote Estate were used mainly for growing sage, Thyme, black and white peppermint, lavender and camomile. Eventually the factory's products were sold under the name of "Pannett & Needham", and could be found in the shops up until recent times.

Mr. Pannett converted the three attic rooms of Stanley House into a nursery suite for his children, and added an annexe on to the south side of the house to provide accommodation for his older daughter and her husband. A Mr. F. Hosker became the new owner of the property in 1919 and moved here with his wife and two daughters. He had been in service at the Court of King Edward VII, during which time he travelled to India to act as valet and escort to a Maharajah's sons, who came to England to receive their education.

After moving to Stanley House, Mr. Hosker retained one of the gardeners to assist him in the upkeep of the well-kept lawn, with its full-sized tennis court and a section for croquet. As well as the long greenhouse, there were avenues of raspberries and loganberries, fruit trees and a mulberry tree. The Hoskers' home was a very popular venue for gatherings of their friends, who thought that it was quite out of character with its surroundings. In the early 1930s, part of the gardens were sold for the first St. Margaret's Church. In 1932, more of Mr. Hosker's land was bought by a builder, who erected four bungalows on it in Fir Tree Grove. The shrubbery provided a site for the shops in Stanley Road, and a garage for Mr. Hosker's two nephews, who lived in the adjoining house.

In the Second World War, the small wine cellar under the kitchen at Stanley House was used as an air-raid shelter. Mrs. Hosker died after the end of the war, and Mr. Hosker continued to live here until his death in 1959, when his son sold the house to Messrs. Farren Estates, who converted it into flats. Its surroundings improved in the early 1960s, as "Jerusalem" was demolished by the local Council and replaced by smaller houses. The other large properties were pulled down to make way for Alexandra Gardens, and a block of private flats.

Until recently, Stanley House presented a well-kept appearance. Its special features are the front porch supported by pillars, and with decorative wrought-ironwork around its balcony; the unusual pattern of the tiles on the roof which has wide, projecting eaves and modillions; the small windows in each gable end and the large, longer ones on the front of the house. During the last three years, and since Messrs. Farren Estates sold the house, it has been threatened with demolition. The tenants have moved elsewhere, and the condition of the property has been allowed to deteriorate. We hope it can be saved before it is too late!

Margaret Cunningham,
October 1991.

(Reproduction of photograph by kind permission of Mr. J.A. Vinn).

The information above was generously given to the Society by Mrs. Margaret Cunningham and the photograph by Mr. J.A. Vinn. If you have information about a building or location in the Carshalton area and would like to share it, particularly if it is at risk, please contact us. If you would like to gain more knowledge about Carshalton, past or present, please join us. If then you wish to know more about the Carshalton Society please complete the slip below and return it to:

Mr. Gordon Rookledge, 15 Beeches Walk, Carshalton Beeches, SM5 4JS
Tel: 081 642 6347

CARSHALTON SOCIETY

Name (Block capitals please) _____

Address _____

Phone No _____

Date _____

The Society looks forward to hearing from you and will contact as soon as possible.