

TQ 3382

OLD STREET EC1  
(South Side)

Shoreditch Town Hall

735/35/455

4.2.75

II

Originally vestry hall, later Shoreditch Town Hall, more recently Borough Health Department, but latterly owned by a trust. Building of four phases. Eastern five bays was originally built as a vestry hall in 1866 by C A Long. Between 1898-1902 W G Hunt incorporated the earlier vestry hall into a monumental Shoreditch Town Hall, following on from the Local Government Act of 1899 when the Metropolitan Borough of Shoreditch was created. This comprises a further three bays to the west linked by at east, linked by set-back with tower, with vestry hall preserved as council hall and a new public hall on the first floor. In 1904, this public hall was gutted by fire and completely rebuilt by AW Cross. A rear wing was added to the south in 1936-38. Old Street frontage in Classical style with front of Portland stone and sides of stock brick. Two storeys and attics; 9 windows. First floor arcaded with wreaths and palm fronds, elaborate keystones and Corinthian engaged Rusticated ground floor and stone balustraded area. Eastern part has open pedimented terminated by patarae with recessed niches with urn plinths and cambered window with keystone and cast iron balcony. The alterations to the pediment date from the sire of 1904. Ground floor has keystones of male and female masks. Ionic tetrastyle porch up five steps with curved balustrading. Recessed link bay also has round headed window and ground floor has curved pediment and Ionic columns to door case. Above the link a square tower of 2 stages with Corinthian pedimented faces: in the tower a torch-bearing figure of Progress steps from the niche. Western three bays have pediment with female figures in classical attire representing Light and Power with the motto "More light more power". First floor has similar arcading to western part. Ground floor has central keystone of Mercury, right hand one representing Labour and left side one a king's head. 1936-38 extension to Rivington Street of 4 to 5 storeys red brick with tall stone architrave with municipal shield and motto "More light more power". Original double door case but with windows replaced in late C20th.

INTERIOR: original Vestry Hall survives from the 1866 building re-used as Council Chamber and is considered the largest and grandest of the London vestry halls. It has engaged Ionic columns and coved ceiling with central panels and elaborate ceiling roses. Entrance Hall has Minton tiled floor, plaster ceiling roses and double staircase with Doric piers and triglyph frieze. First floor Assembly Hall is of 1095 by AW Cross after the fire. It comprises a curved ceiling of six bays, ribbed and coffered with glazed skylights, proscenium arch with masks of comedy and tragedy and large shell niche to stage with lyre. The balcony is decorated with cornucopiae and the sides and rear of the ground floor are lined with marble panels of three colours. 1898 wing has further well staircase with scrolled cast iron balustrading and wooden handrail and has stained glass window with municipal crest. On the first floor there are a suite of Committee Rooms, one having a vaulted ceiling, and curved stained glass windows and retaining original fireplace and joinery. 1936-8 wing has well staircase with metal handrail.

[BOE London: 2 p384-5, Chris Meile's unpublished preliminary report of 1998 ]