Edmonton makes a significant contribution to the London Borough of Enfield’s rich mix of history. By following the trail map you will be able to see Edmonton’s heritage come alive by discovering more about the many interesting people who have lived here over the years. Although Edmonton Council merged with Enfield and Southgate in 1965, the area still retains a strong identity of its own. The Council is keen to promote and protect the rich heritage which helps to make Edmonton the diverse area it is today.

UPPER EDMONTON

Life was Hard

A report by the General Board of Health (1850) on sanitary conditions in Edmonton showed a very sorry state of affairs. Pymmes Brook was badly sited and the trains were slow and expensive. People preferred cheap workmen’s fares. By 1914 large areas had been built on.

Influx from the Inner Suburbs

In the later years of the 19th century saw a vast working class influx into Edmonton from the overcrowded inner suburbs, attracted by the cheap workmen’s fares. By 1914 large areas had been built on.

Arrival of the Railways

The railway arrived in 1840 with the opening of the first section of the Lea Valley Railway Line from Stratford to the station on the new main line to Angel Road (Angel Lane). The trains were not popular at first because the station was badly sited and the trains were slow. People preferred the horse buses. In 1845 there were buses every 15 minutes along Fore Street, going alternately to Bishopsgate and Holborn.

In 1872 the direct line from London to Edmonton Town opened, with stations at Silver Street, Church Street and Monmouth Road.

The Influence of Transport

By 1886 Edmonton had good transport facilities with buses running at half hourly intervals to London. The Eastern Counties Railway opened a branch line from Angel Road to Enfield Town in 1849 with an intermediate station at Edmonton Green.

But fares were high and ran a roundabout route via Stratford to an intermediate station at Mile End. Some large villas were built on Church Street and development along Fore Street had almost reached the junction with Town Lane (Town Road). Southwards, there was patchy development along Fore Street stretching just beyond the junction with Knight’s Lane. Westernly, the line reached the point just beyond All Saints’ Church and there were a few houses in Church Lane and Milestone Alley (Victoria Road).

LOWER EDMONTON

Lower Edmonton was the principal settlement in Edmonton and the religious and administrative centre of the parish. Parts of the ancient parish church of All Saints, in Church Street, date back to Norman times.

St. Alphege’s Church, Hertford Road


The Crescent

An impressive built terrace in the mid 1820s. The pediment is classically open. In front of the houses there were originally two porter’s lodges, railings and a carriage drive. Monmouth Road landscaped green space is at the south end.

Edmonton Green Station

Opened by the Great Eastern Railway in 1872 as part of its direct line from Enfield via Bethnal Green and Hackney Downs. At platform level it retains its original canopies, while the ridge and four out characteristic of Great Eastern suburban stations of this period. The name changed from Lower Edmonton Station in 1992.

Edmonton Girls Charity School, Church Street

Founded 1870. The Charles Lamb Institute built in 1906 as a monastic building in collegiate Tudor style. Now occupied by the New Covenant Church.

All Saint’s Church, Church Street

The ancient parish church of Edmonton. Dates mainly from the 15th century, but the south wall contains some Norman fragments discovered during restoration in 1889. The north side was rebuilt in brick in the 18th century. It contains many monuments from the 16th century to the early 19th century. In the churchyard are the graves of Charles Lamb and his sister Mary.

Salisbury House, Bury Street West

Late 18th century timber-framed building with jetted storeys and brick chimney stacks. Reused from near ruin by the former Edmonton Borough Council and opened as an Arts Centre in 1957. Contains panelled room and 17th century fireplace wall painting.

Edmonton Cemetery, Church Street

Opened in 1884. Note the former superintendent’s house and the chapel which is a scheduled monument initially as a house for the victim of the Dunholme Road air disaster of 1938.

Millfield House Arts Centre

A late 18th century house, once the home of Robert MUSHET, a painter employed by the Royal Mint. Between 1849 and 1913 it was used by the Strand Board of Guardians as a workhouse school. After being used as a house for Belgian refugees. During the early part of World War I, it became a hospital for epileptics in 1917. After the closure of the hospital in 1971 it was converted into an Arts Centre. The building has an unusually impressive staircase. There is an early 19th century entrance lodge and an 18th century brick wall boundary.

Pymmes Park

Edmonton’s oldest public park. During the late 16th century Pymmes was owned by the Cecils and Robert Cecil (later 1st Earl of Salisbury) spent his honeymoon there. Edmonton Council took a lease of part of the estate in 1967 and opened it to the public immediately. The freehold was acquired in 1896. A beltal official opening was staged in 1908. The house, parts of which probably date back to the time of the Cecils, was damaged during World War II but the Tudor walled garden has survived.

Angel Place

A fine Georgian terrace dating from c.1780. Note the fine doorcases. A blue plaque commemorates the ‘site of the Angel where met the Cecils’.

Heritage Trail Plaques

1. St. Alphege’s Church, Hertford Road
2. The Crescent
3. Edmonton Green Station
4. Edmonton Girls Charity School, Church Street
5. Lamb’s Cottage, Church Street
6. The Charles Lamb Halls, Church Street
7. All Saint’s Church, Church Street
8. Pymmes Park
9. Angel Place

After the Wars

After the First World War, Edmonton’s first council housing estate was built to the west of Victoria Road. There was also much private house building in the Church Street area, eventually culminating in the closure gap between Lower Edmonton and Bush Hill Park. By the late 1930’s the area was more or less fully developed.

The early post-Second World War years saw much of Edmonton in a run down state. There was also an acute housing shortage. Edmonton Council’s response was a massive programme of redevelopment that culminated in the total rebuilding of the Edmonton Green Shopping Centre from 1968. Although Edmonton Council merged with Enfield and Southgate in 1965, the area still retains a strong identity of its own.

Influx from the Inner Suburbs

The later years of the 19th century saw a vast working class influx into Edmonton from the overcrowded inner suburbs, attracted by the cheap workmen’s fares. By 1914 large areas had been built on.

Other commemorative plaques

Gladys Aylward, missionary to China was a pupil at this school.
On side of 37 Church Street
Site of the offices of the Edmonton Local Board of Health (1855-1864).
3 Keats Parade, Church Street
On this site formerly stood the cottage in which the poet John Keats served his apprenticeship (1811-1815) to Thomas Hammond, a surgeon of this parish.
133 Chichester Road, Edmonton

There was extensive development along the Hertford Road and the Bournes Road and Bury Street areas were largely built up. There was also considerable development on the Victoria Road area. The first part of Edmonton Town Hall was finished in 1884 and was extended in 1903. The same year saw the opening of a swimming pool adjoining the Town Hall in Knight’s Lane. The public library service started in 1884 in one of the Town Hall and a purpose-built library opened in Fore Street in 1897.

Shopping facilities were greatly augmented by an East End style street market that grew up around Edmonton Green in the late 19th century. The Edmonton Empire, a music hall, opened on New Road Hill in 1905.

Mevlana Rumi Mosque and Dialogue Centre.

The building incorporates part of the former Edmonton Union Workhouse originally built in 1842.

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