

# westpark august 2011

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**After a recent trip up to Surbiton Hospital, we figured that faithful old West Park was just down the road, so we thought we'd pop in and see how the place was coming along.**

**Demolition is well advanced and the redevelopment of the place into a faceless, androgenous housing estate populated by cardboard chicken sheds is progressing a little too well for our liking. However, it was nice to find some previously locked down wards now wide open and virtually untouched.**

LEFT: as there is now very little in the way of buildings left around our usual way onto the site, we thought we'd have a look around the other side and hung a left. This path runs around the perimeter of the site.

BELOW: Another ward gone. Note the little barrier around the outside: not so much to keep explorers like us out, but to stop wildlife from getting back in. Great care is taken to export wildlife to a safe distance, especially after such a long period of dereliction. bat colonies, lizards, birds and all manner of other wildlife make these places their home.



BELOW: After a short walk around the perimeter, it was almost as though the place had never encountered the demolition crews and we began to enjoy the serene calm for which West Park has always held such an attraction to us.



BELOW: Thankfully, a lot of what had previously been very well boarded up by "MC Hammer" was now remarkably accessible.



BELOW: However, as we got closer to the central nucleus of the site from the outer reaches, there were obvious signs of stripping out and maybe the previously undiscovered country we thought we had found wasn't quite such virgin territory after all.....



BELOW: Eager to find part of the site that we hadn't explored as yet, we made our way back to the edge and where the buildings looked far more intact.





ABOVE & BELOW: floorboards had been removed, leaving an interesting maze of little walls that would have made up the underfloor void. None of the brickwork had been removed as yet, so this gave us hope that maybe this location would be saved and converted; the structure appeared to be sound in this Villa and very much more so than in some of the more popular locations we had seen before. There was no water damage and the internal paintwork and render looked very sound.



BELOW: "NissanMan" keeps a lookout for contractors.



BELOW: It's very unusual for contractors to be so tidy in the process of stripping buildings out, which makes us think that these blocks are being kept and converted. After all, they are in pretty good condition.





BELOW: ceilings removed in some locations: we did wonder if strengthening was going to take place, as there was plenty of room for a loft conversion or a complete flat conversion up here.



ABOVE: There were some very intricately designed tunnels around the place, but sadly only just big enough for heating and water pipes.

BELOW: Following the "Safe route for contractors" - the best way to be chucked off site! The floorboards here were all in excellent condition, adding further to our hopes that this location would be kept and turned into a development of flats.



BELOW: In the next room along, we became increasingly thankful for the impromptu walkway, as the drop into the underfloor void deepened considerably.





BELOW: In some places, the door frames, picture rails and wooden valance strips had been removed and we wondered as to the reasons they had been removed so carefully. Maybe the intention was to put them back or render over the doorway here, but usually, blocking up of a doorway would be a lot rougher, due to the need for edges to key new brickwork onto. Again, the ceilings have been very carefully and tidily removed, giving us hope that this place will be reused.



BELOW: Beautifully detailed construction inside the roof void. The worrying amount of daylight coming through here was cause for concern - we hope a new roof will be going on soon - the timber work looks to be in good condition, so could easily be kept (we hope).



BELOW: "West Park will live on" - if not as an actual physical location (the place has already been renamed Noble Park), then at least online. There are literally hundreds of websites dedicated to this place and many thousands of photographs. West Park has achieved the same level of notoriety and status as other great Asylums such as Cane Hill and Hellingly and have been immortalised online, thanks to the many thousands of Urbex visitors that stalk their way through it.



BELOW: No prizes for guessing that there was a toilet block nearby...



BELOW: This block was originally Nurses' Accomodation. The kitchen is still reasonably intact, complete with lovely 1980's cupboards and period gas cooker.



BELOW: Further into the blocks in this location, we soon rekindled the lovely air of decay we had come to love this place for.



BELOW: A poignant reminder (as if any were needed) that no one had bought a water bottle with them...! It has always struck us as odd that, no matter where we go or what type of building we visit, there will always be at least a few playing cards chucked on the floor somewhere. Does this strike anyone else as odd? maybe it is the calling card of another group of explorers?



BELOW: Ah, this is more like it. Peeling paint, period curtains flapping in the moaning wind, doors ajar to rooms filled with melancholia. Some of the old West park still shone through the chaos of redevelopment.



LEFT: I wish that this photo hadn't blurred, as the graffiti is very pretty. Sadly, there is quite a lot of motion blur, so the image has been kept purposefully small to hide my embarrassment!

BELOW: More of that lovely peeling paint. There are designers out there who will spend years trying to perfect this effect - it looks fantastic. It is doubtful this location will be kept as the ingress of damp and water damage are quite heavy here.





BELOW: "In case of Loonies with burning torches, run to the nearest car park" .

SURREY HEARTLANDS NHS TRUST

**FIRE ACTION**

**STAFF FIRE INSTRUCTIONS - RESIDENCES**

**IF YOU SEE OR SUSPECT A FIRE**

1. Immediately operate the nearest fire alarm call point.
2. Dial 999 ask for Fire Brigade and give full address of building:-  
**GREENBANK WEST WING  
HORTON LANE EPSOM**
3. Proceed to evacuation point at:-  
**CARPARK AT FRONT OF BUILDING**
4. Close all doors behind you.
5. Fight the fire (BUT ONLY IF SAFE TO DO SO).
6. Wait outside the building for the Fire Brigade and inform them of the details of the incident.

**ON HEARING THE ALARM**

1. Proceed to evacuation point.
2. Close all doors behind you.

**DO NOT RE-ENTER THE BUILDING UNTIL THE FIRE BRIGADE SAY IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.**

**FIRST AID**  
The nearest First Aid kit is situated  
**NURSING OFFICE**  
Person in charge  
**NURSING STAFF**  
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**Your fire assembly point is CARPARK 1**



ABOVE & BELOW: Just had to get some shots of this staircase. I loved the incongruity of the rough interior of the roof void and the finished banisters and wood panelling. Sadly, there was nothing mysterious about the little hatch under the stairs and it didn't lead to any service tunnels. It's unlikely we'll be able to get into the tunnels again.



BELOW: More stripping out. This location doesn't look to be in fantastic condition, so is probably for the chop. Very sad.



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## Ghosts of Fireplaces



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BELOW: A moment of reflection. This corridor must have been quite grand in its heyday.



BELOW: Another lovely shot of those amazing underfloor voids. Evidence (if any were needed) of our desires to get into the huge maze of wonderful service tunnels.



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## Shelters.



ABOVE & 2 BELOW: Back out into the grounds. There are a few of these little shelters remaining in the exercise areas and the developers attentions have not swung towards them yet. I can see conversion into a newspaper stand or an ice cream or flower stall would be a fitting tribute to these little structures.





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**The Inevitable March of Progress**



ABOVE & BELOW: From certain angles it is hard to believe that there was a huge complex on this site housing almost 3000 inmates. We feel very honoured to have played a part and been able to contribute to an online account of this inimitable chapter in our sociological history. the days of the Lunatic Asylum concept were always going to be numbered and land is too valuable in the UK to allow such massive estates to sit neglected and derelict for long. We came, we saw, we photographed. Thank you West Park for the fantastic opportunities we have had with you.







ABOVE: A glimpse of the future. Agent Skyframe clearly isn't impressed. I just hope some of the people who move into Noble Park will have the presence of mind to do a bit of delving into the history of the place they live in, the events that took place there and the lives of the people that once called this place home.....





**SIGN THE GUESTBOOK**