

APPENDIX THREE: Harrow Magistrates' Court Details

Magistrates Court, Harrow

Description: Magistrates Court

Grade: II

Date Listed: 20 October 2003

EXTERIOR: The building is in a neo-Georgian style. The principal street (south) facade is long and low with a projecting central pavilion. An entablature with stone architrave and cornice runs along the front, continued on the east and west sides. The central pavilion is articulated by brick pilasters. The entrance breaks forward from this with paired pilasters, stone columns in antis and stone pediments with a carved cartouche. End bays are marked by smaller pedimented, pilastered breaks. East and west facades are of similar design, with projecting end bays. There are four replacement windows on the east side. The rear (north) facade is two and a half storeys above ground level, with high level basement glass brick cell windows visible. There is a single storey projecting central bay and two pedimented, pilastered entrances at east and west ends. The former is raised, with a modern metal access ramp. To its left is a round arched window. A further entrance on the northeast corner serves the basement cells. There are first floor balconies on the northeast and northwest corners, the latter reached by a projecting hexagonal stair tower. The building faces south and is largely single storey, with a second storey above the north range, with floor levels rising at the north end.

MATERIALS: The building is red and brown brick with stone dressings. External windows are wooden sashes. The entrance hall has semi-circular metal lunettes. The two principal court rooms have round arched clerestory metal windows, three on each of their east and west sides. External doors are timber. Each element of the plan is separately treated with largely hipped roofs, roman tiles on the four sides, plain tiles for the central court rooms and hall. There is a central stone cupola with balustrade on the front range. Chimneys are brick, including two positioned prominently at each end of the front range.

PLAN: The plan is rectangular, the front range projecting slightly at its east and west ends. The two principal courtrooms are positioned on the west and east sides of a central corridor, running from north to south (now partitioned at its north end), leading from the entrance lobby on the south side. An internal corridor surrounds the courtrooms, leading to offices along the four external sides of the building. A third court room on the east side occupies the space of the former magistrates' luncheon room and a portion of the east corridor. The caretakers' flat occupying the first floor of the north side is reached by a stair in the northeast corner and has been converted to offices. The basement is occupied by the cells, servicing and storage.

INTERIOR: walls and ceilings are painted plaster, with some modern suspended ceilings added. Floors are carpeted. Original varnished or painted timber doors survive, including a segmental pedimented doorcase and double door to central principal office in the north corridor. Original fireplaces remain. The two main court rooms are mirror images of each other. They retain original wooden fittings: seating, magistrate's bench and dock, with only minor alterations. There have high coved ceilings, decorative plaster work and painted carved wooden royal coats of arms above the magistrate's seat. Glazed screens have been added. The central lobby has an arched roof and columns, and a domed roof light at its partitioned north end.

ADDITIONAL FEATURES: The front boundary is marked by a low brick wall and metal railings.

HISTORY: The building was formerly known as Wealdstone Police Court, renamed Harrow Magistrates Court during the 1950s. One of a number of suburban police courts designed by the noted Middlesex County Council architects' department, this is a good example of the genre, designed in a dignified Neo-Georgian idiom, with an unusually intact interior.

SOURCE: www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk