

CHURCH GATE TO PALACE GATE



Fulham Palace is the oldest building in the borough, the property of the Bishops of London from the eighth century until 1972. The Bishops were lords of the manor of Fulham, an area which included the present borough. The medieval community lived in the immediate vicinity of the manor house, later to become Fulham Palace. The earliest features of English village life can still be seen around Church Gate; the lane, old houses, the church, manor house, park and remnants of the village street.

The parish church of All Saints, which originally served the whole area of modern Hammersmith and Fulham, was the administrative centre of the parish of Fulham

from the sixteenth to the mid nineteenth centuries - former manorial responsibilities having passed into the hands of parish officials. It is not known when the church was established although there is evidence for its existence in the mid thirteenth century and its dedication to All Saints is first documented in 1445. The churchyard, which contains the tombs of several Bishops of London, was closed to burials in 1863 but still retains its rural atmosphere.

The area which is now Bishop's Park was formerly meadowlands surrounding the Palace. In 1884 Bishop's Meadow (also known as Church Meadow) was conveyed to the local authority for conversion into a public recreation ground. This former grazing land extended along the river from All Saints' churchyard to the level of Bishop's Avenue. Between 1887 and 1899 the further meadows to the north and west were added to extend the park, the first section of which had been opened in 1893. The riverside house known as Pryor's Bank was demolished by the vestry in 1894 and its grounds incorporated into the park.

For centuries Fulham Palace was surrounded by a moat but in 1921 this was filled in. It was laid out with a pathway, shrubs and rock gardens and opened as the Moat Garden in July 1924.