

# Drawing my way round London

by Heather James

*Drawing my way round London* is a lush, refreshing collection of sketches drawn by an artist who is not trying to prove anything. Heather James takes us through London on her own personal journey and on her own terms, including us in her moods, in her day, in her thoughts about art, and in the passing history lessons she stumbles upon. We meet who she meets, we see what she sees. For anyone who thinks about drawing and art, this is a book that will keep you company forever.

**Marta Szabo**

Author of the memoirs *The Guru Looked Good* and *The Imposters*  
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# Drawing my way round London

A sketching tour of the route of the North London railway line by  
**Heather James**

Begun: 1 August 2005      Completed: 1 July 2011

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To Graham White

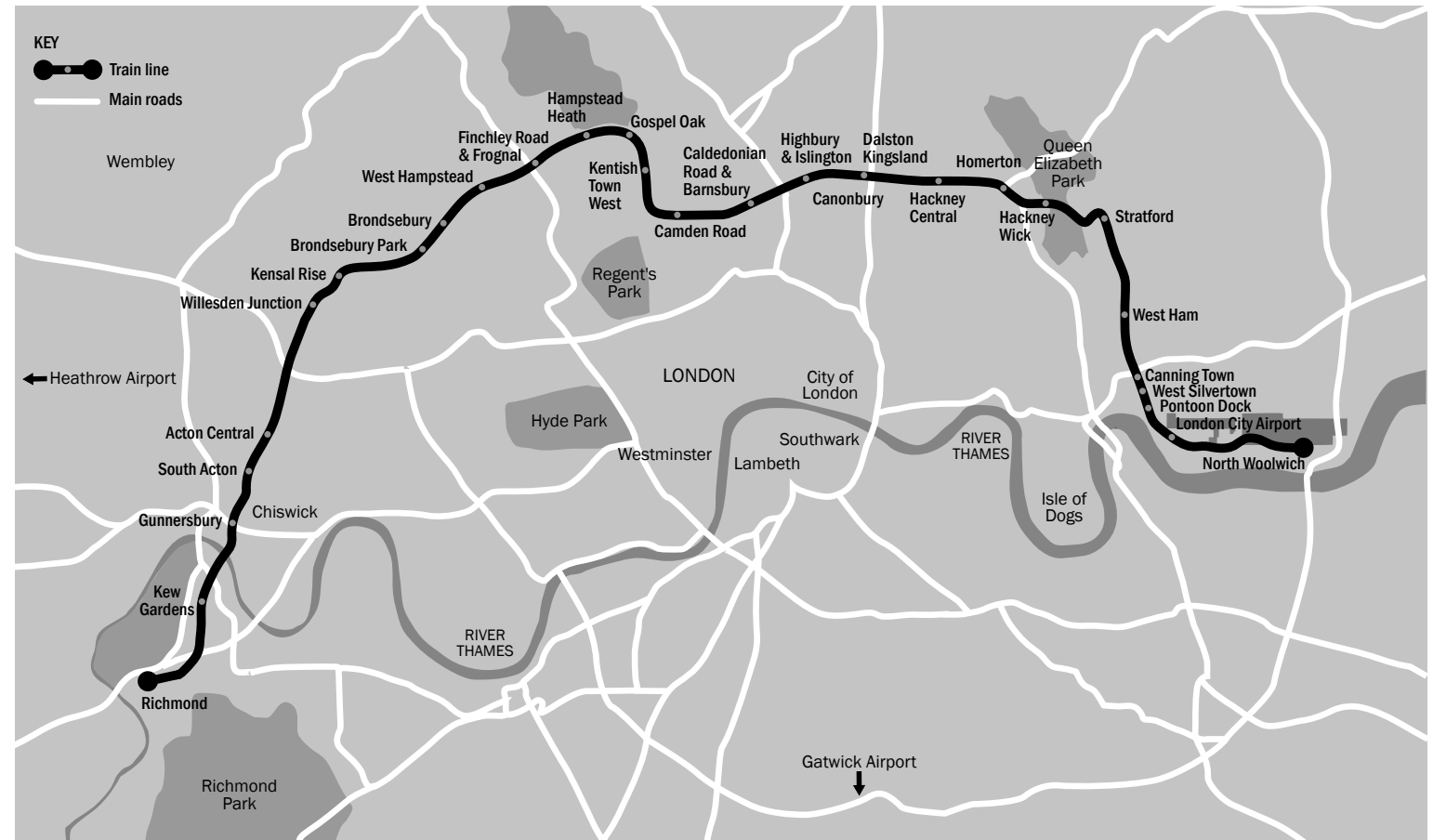
I'd like to thank Beverly Davies for editing, Marta Szabo for her enthusiastic support for this project all the way from the

United States and those readers of my blog: *Drawing my way round London* who became fellow travellers on the journey.



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## Historical background

London's population grew rapidly during the 19th century. As industry flourished so did the numbers of competing train companies. The North London Railway was one of these and it operated from 1850-1922. It's headquarters were initially located in Bow in east London and it ran trains from Camden Town to Poplar.

Over time routes were extended or closed, some train companies went bankrupt or were taken over by competitors. The North London Line was also known as the Silverlink Line and was taken over by Transport for London and officially incorporated into the London Overground network on 12 November 2007.

The main east to west route is now part of the London Overground network. Other NLR lines fell into disuse but were later revived as part of the Docklands Light Railway and the Overground's East London Line.

## INTRODUCTION

In 2005 I awarded myself a travel bursary. I wanted to follow in the steps of great travel writers like Eric Newby, author of *A short walk in the Hindu Kush*. I wasn't going to write, I was going to draw. And I wasn't going to explore Afghanistan, I was going to get to know my own native city better. I began this project on 1 August.

I've always enjoyed train journeys and since moving to Hackney in 2004 I wanted to explore the North London Line (also known as the Silver link line) which runs nearby. I began this project in the east at North Woolwich and completed a couple of drawings. Then, largely due to a lack of confidence, I didn't do any more for nearly another three years.

By the time I picked the sketch book up again the eastern end of the line had closed and the rest of the route

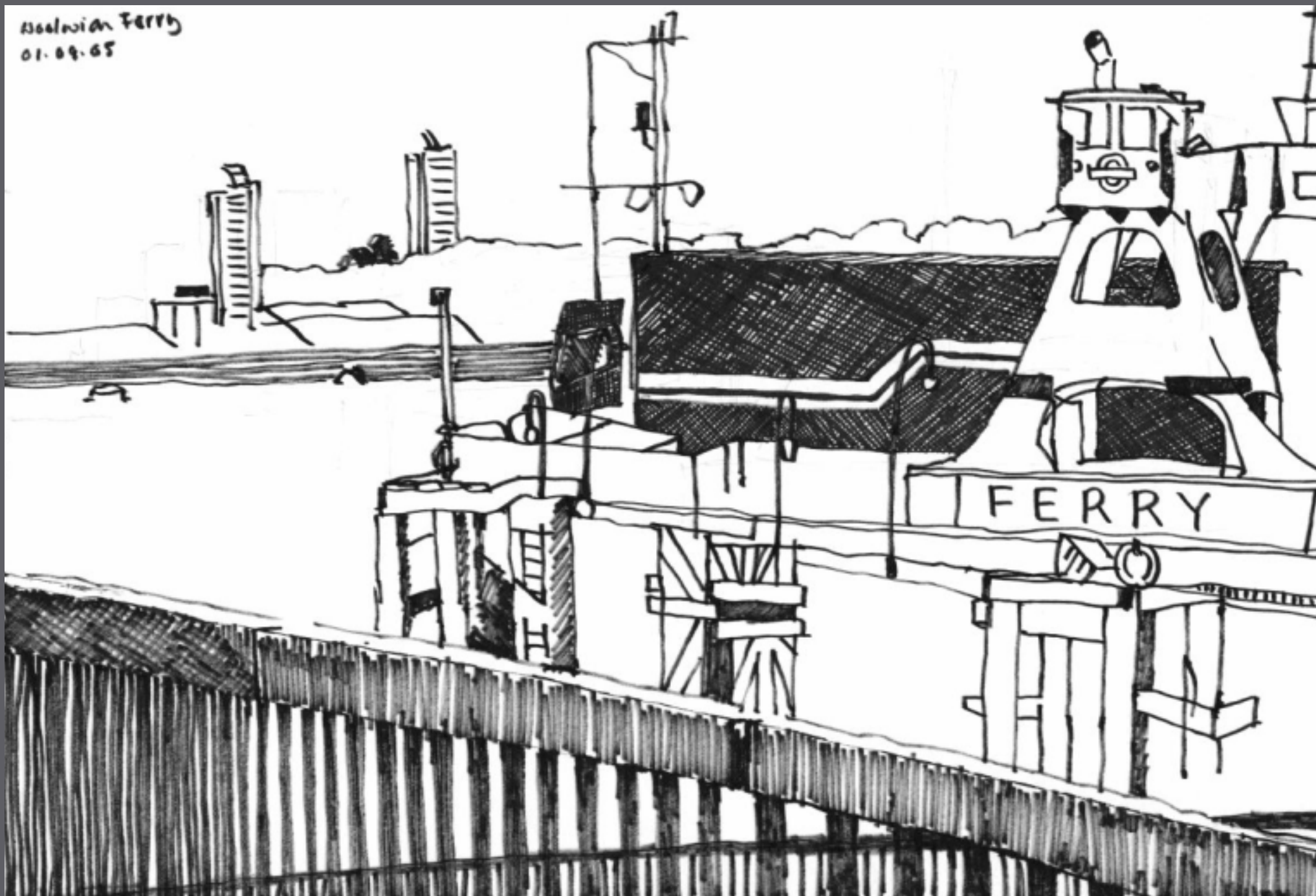
had been incorporated into the Overground so now the line begins at Stratford (home to the 2012 Olympic Games). I decided to travel on the Docklands Light Railway (DLR), which is close to my original route and draw the stations as I came to them, until I reached Stratford.

I arrived at each station by train. When I got off the train I headed for the nearest seat and drew whatever I saw in front of me. I published the results on my blog (<http://drawingmywayaroundlondon.blogspot.com>). I often explored the area beyond the station and drew something there too. The journey finished on 1 July 2011 in Richmond in the west.

There were some highs and lows during this project. One of the highs was seeing the Thames Barrier for the first time from Pontoon Dock and another was drawing Keat's garden in

Hampstead. One of the lows was West Silvertown where there seemed to be so little to draw and another was at West Hampstead when it was so cold I regretted leaving the house and my eyes watered so much that I could hardly see what I was doing.

Having completed this series of around 30 short journeys, which became longer the further west I travelled, my confidence in my ability to draw grew. I was delighted with the comments I received from readers of my blog, my fellow artists on the Urban Sketchers flickr site and the two young people I met separately at Gunnersbury station and Willesden Junction who happily chatted with me about what I was doing and their own art.



Woolwich Ferry: 1 August 2005

## Public transport

The Woolwich Ferry is run by the maritime arm of Transport for London. It links Woolwich in the Royal Borough of Greenwich, which is south of the river Thames, with North Woolwich in the London Borough of Newham which is north of the river.

It is a free service and runs every five to 10 minutes. A ferry service has operated across the river at Woolwich since at least the 14th century.

## Woolwich Ferry: 1 August 2005

This was my first visit to Woolwich Ferry. I had a great time just watching, before I began drawing. The ferries load up with vehicles and passengers and cross the River Thames from the north side to the south side and then repeat the whole business at the other side of the river. There was a constant stream of lorries, cars and foot passengers – I had no idea that so many people use this free service every day.

I promised myself that one day I would take a trip on the ferry which I finally did on 5 June 2013 and you can read about it on page 108.







## Political background

**6 July 2005:** London beat Paris to host the 2012 Olympics. This would be the first time the Olympics had been held in Britain since 1948. This decision was celebrated with great enthusiasm and the Red Arrows marked it by flying over central London which I was lucky enough to see as I left the office in Holborn to buy my lunch.

**7 July 2005:** The following day four suicide bombers struck in central London targeting the public transport system during the morning rush hour. There were 52 deaths and approximately 700 non-fatal injuries. I was at Mile End station trying to get to work in Holborn when the station was evacuated and all public transport came to a halt which meant that all I could do was go home.

**21 July 2005:** Two weeks later there were four attempted bomb attacks that disrupted part of the London underground system but didn't cause any injuries.

## North Woolwich Railway Museum: 1 August 2005

This drawing marked the start of my journey around the North London Line. I began this project nearly one month after the 7 July bombings in central London and the police presence at every railway station emphasised the nervousness we were all feeling.

Because of this it occurred to me that I should be discreet about what I chose to draw in case I attracted unwanted attention from a police officer.

This is a sketch of the North Woolwich Railway Museum which was dedicated to the history of the Great Eastern Railway. (The station and the line to Stratford closed on 9 December 2006 and the museum closed in November 2008).

You can see where my pen is running out of ink and I can remember rebuking myself for not taking a better selection of pens with me.



London City Airport: 23 April 2008

## Regeneration

London City airport is sited on reclaimed dockland and opened for business in 1987. It is the smallest of London's five airports due to its proximity to the City of London and the Docklands financial districts.

I recall, some time after my visit, an artist was arrested near the Tate & Lyle sugar refinery for painting a view of the factory but I can't find any records of this online. The refinery is very close to London City Airport and the police couldn't believe anyone would want to paint that particular view without having an ulterior motive.

## London City Airport: 23 April 2008

I didn't pick up my sketchbook again for roughly two and a half years. Consequently I didn't know that certain significant changes had occurred in the meantime.

I caught the Silverlink train from Hackney Central at 13:06 to Stratford expecting to be able to continue my journey from Stratford to Silvertown only to discover that the trains didn't run that far any more. This was because the North London Line had been incorporated into the London Overground system and the stations from Stratford to Woolwich North had been removed the previous year. This wouldn't have come as such a surprise if I had paid more attention to the news.

So, thinking on my feet, I decided to try and stick as closely as possible to the original route by using the DLR (Docklands Light Railway). London City airport became my next

sketching stop instead of Silvertown.

I can remember feeling a bit self conscious about being observed drawing the airport and wanted to avoid attracting any official attention even though this was before the authorities became nervous about people taking photos and painting sensitive locations. This sketch was drawn using dip pen and ink (Quink ink for fountain pens which I remember using at primary school).

Thames Barrier Park  
from Pontoon Dock  
23.04.08



## Risk of flooding

London is low lying and at risk of flooding. The Thames Barrier was constructed to protect all but the easternmost boroughs of Greater London from exceptionally high tides and storm surges. The barrier is a series of rotating gates which are closed when flooding is likely and has been operational since 1982.

The Thames Barrier Park, on the north side of the river Thames, opened in 2000 and has helped to regenerate this part of the docklands.

## Thames Barrier Park from Pontoon Dock: 23 April 2008

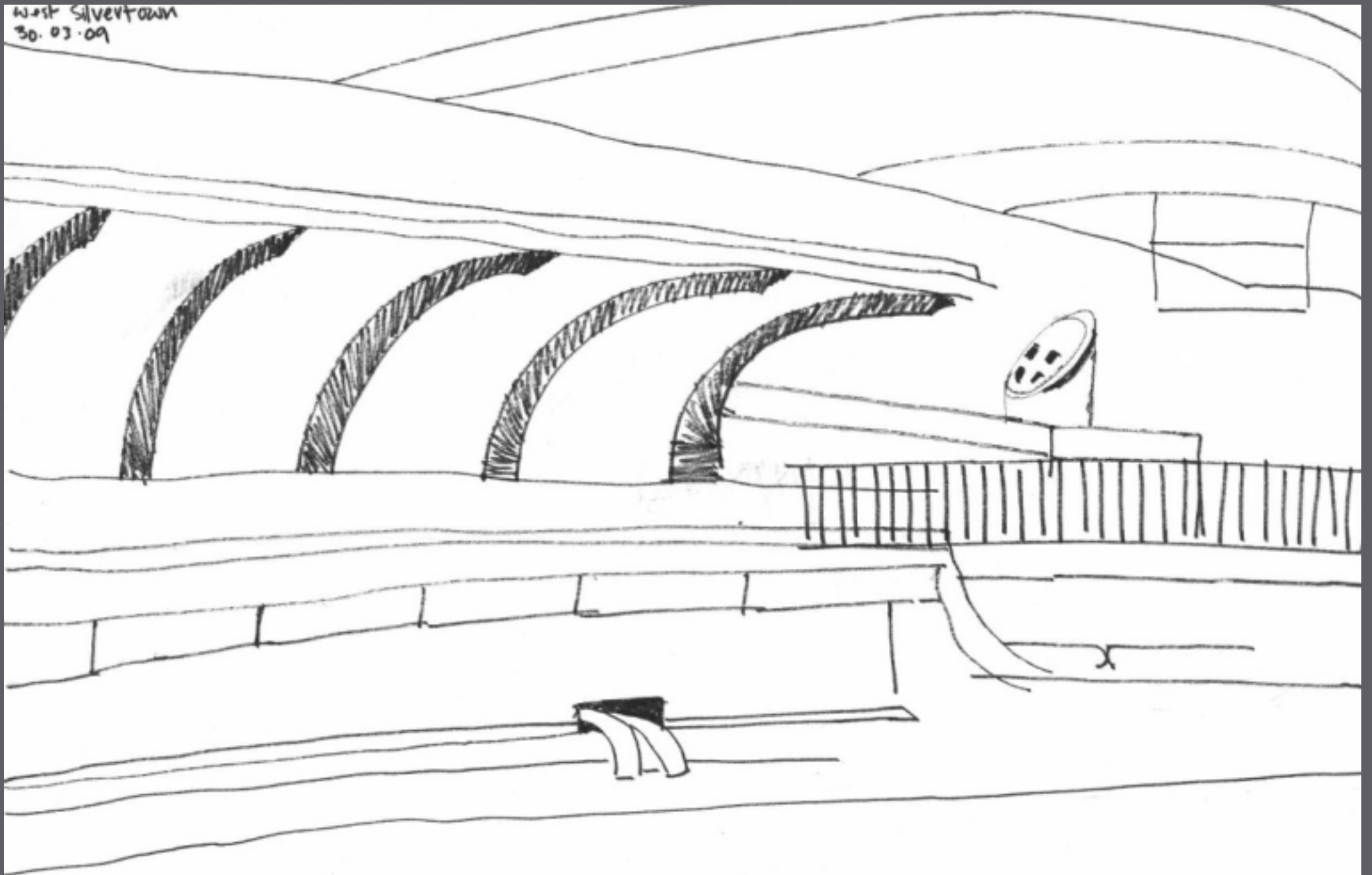
I had foolishly sat in the smokers' corner just outside the entrance to London City airport to do my previous drawing and was eventually driven away by the noxious smell of nicotine.

I got back on the DLR and headed one stop to Pontoon Dock – this is a vast modern station with almost no-one using it.

This stop had the attraction of a park with a pleasant café and a view of the Thames Barrier which stops London from flooding. I had never seen it before, other than in a photograph, and it was fascinating to see the engineering up close.



West Silvertown  
30.03.09



This station is so devoid of interest I can't find anything to hold my attention.

## The G20 summit

On 2 April 2009 the G20 summit was held at the Excel Centre in Docklands not far from Canning Town and security was very tight. It was the second meeting of the heads of state of the countries involved to discuss the financial markets and the world economy. The financial crisis that threatened the stability of the western economies began in 2007-08. Gordon Brown was our Prime Minister and Barak Obama the US President.

West Silvertown is geographically close to the Excel Centre and there was increased security in evidence locally.

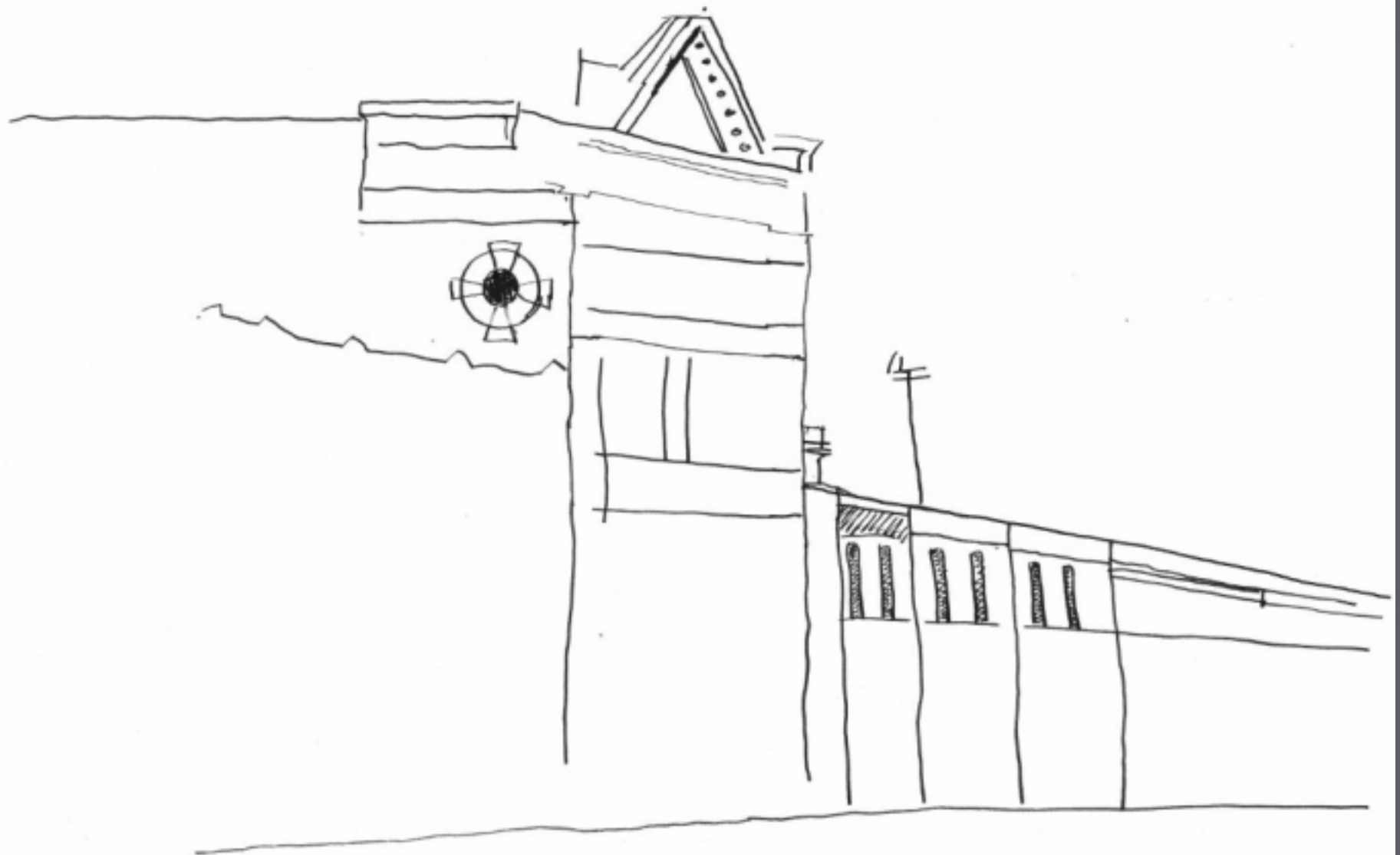
## West Silvertown: 30 March 2009

It was another 11 months before I picked up my sketch book again and continued on my journey towards Stratford.

I took the DLR to West Silvertown and the caption on this drawing says: "This station is so devoid of interest I can't find anything to hold my attention."

However, I quite like the finished drawing in spite of feeling so blue at the time of making it and I think that it proves that you can always find something to draw wherever you find yourself.

Barking Road,  
Canning Town  
30/03/09



## Historical background

Before the 19th century this district was largely marshland and only accessible by boat or toll bridge. In 1809 an Act of Parliament was passed for the construction of Barking Road.

Canning Town remains among the bottom of the five per cent most deprived areas in the UK with local people suffering from poor health, low education and poverty.

Source: Wikipedia

## Barking Road, Canning Town: 30 March 2009

Since I'd found West Sivertown so dispiriting I took the train one stop to Canning Town, and rather than make a drawing inside the station (which was almost identical to the previous one) I set off on foot to see what Canning Town had to offer a new visitor to the area.

And to be honest it wasn't a lot. After a cup of coffee in McDonald's I settled on drawing the only building that looked in any way interesting and that was the Victorian library on Barking Road.



Memorial Park, West Ham: 21 May 2010



## Current events

**6 May:** UK General Election. The election resulted in a hung parliament with no single party having an overall majority. The Conservatives had won the most seats but were 20 short of a majority.

**11 May:** The UK Government formed between the Conservative party and the Liberal Democrats. This was the first coalition government in the UK since the Churchill War ministry of WWII.

I worked part-time for the Liberal Democrat party in Westminster designing the party newspaper, *Liberal Democrat News*, from June 2009 until November 2012 when the paper was closed.

The Liberal Democrats consulted their party membership about going into government with the Conservatives and it was agreed at a special one-day conference in Birmingham on Sunday

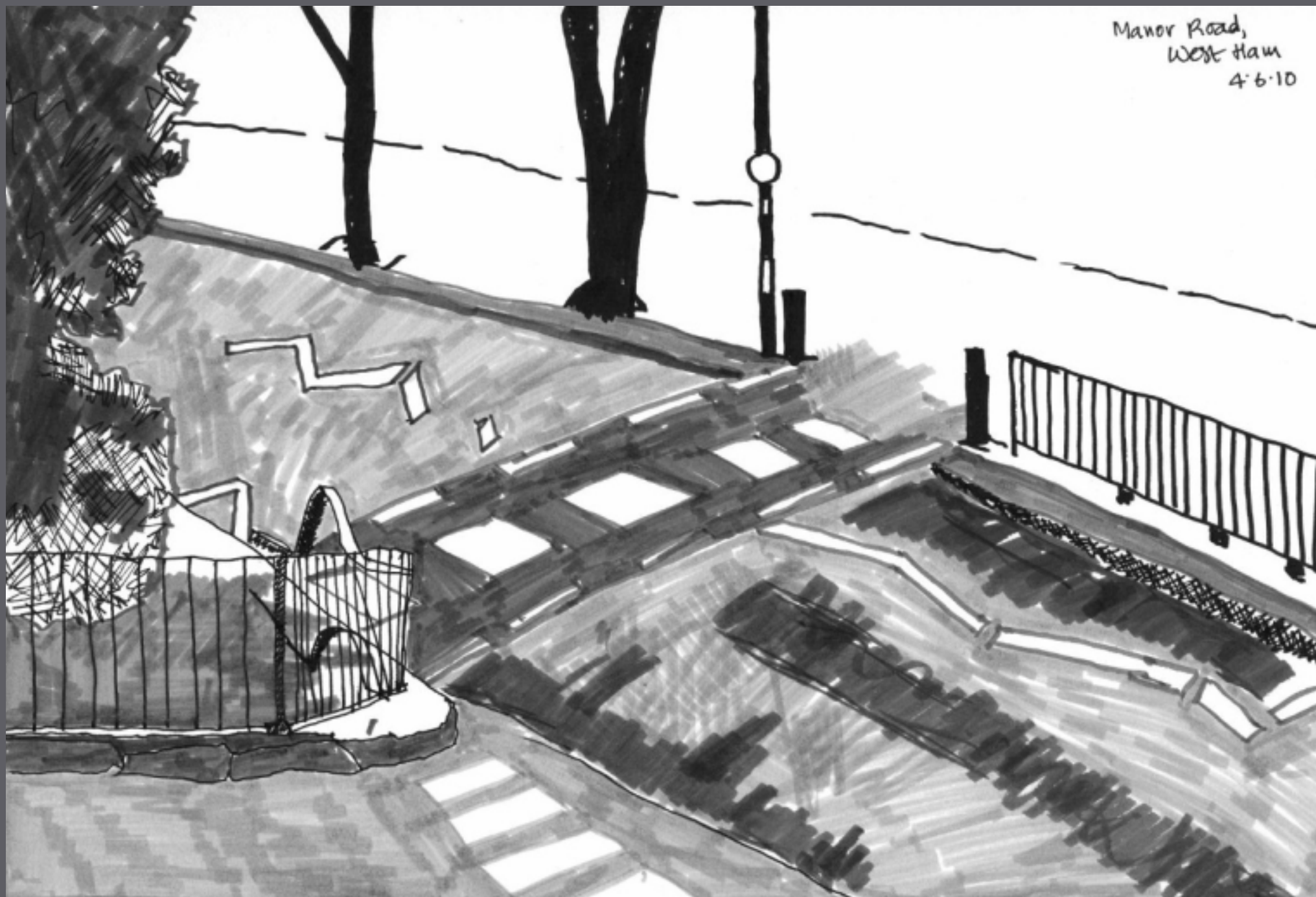
**16 May.** This was a very exciting time to be working for the Lib Dems and emotions were running high for a long time.

## Memorial Park, West Ham: 21 May 2010

I felt rather despondent after completing the previous two drawings so I put this project very much on the back burner for over a year until the sunny weather enticed me outside again for my first visit to West Ham.

For this drawing I decided to experiment with some water soluble pencils that I'd been given as a present. Behind the row of trees in the background is the East London cemetery where I had roamed before settling on this view in Memorial Park.

I felt that West Ham was a big improvement on my visit to Canning Town and it looked like a nice place to live. I enjoyed the day.



Manor Road, West Ham: 4 June 2010

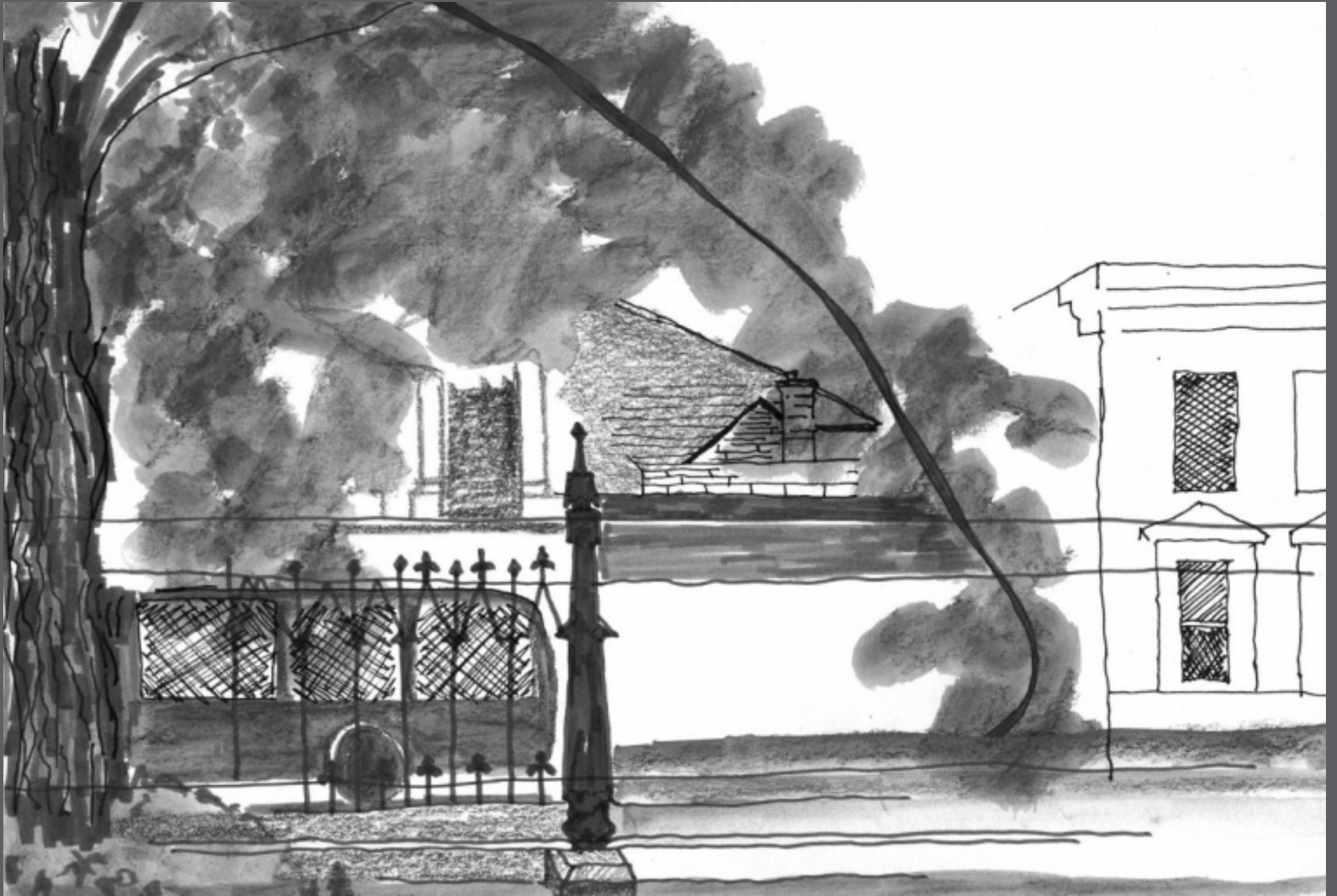
## West Ham FC

West Ham is famous for its football club which was founded in 1895 as the Thames Ironworks. West Ham plays in the Premier League. Their home ground was at Upton Park previously known as Boleyn Ground because of an association with Anne Boleyn but their present home is at the stadium in the south of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

## Manor Road, West Ham: 4 June 2010

A couple of weeks later I returned to West Ham because on my previous visit I'd spotted a view right outside the station that piqued my interest and looked worth drawing.

It was another rare day of sunshine and, even though I was sitting in some shade, I had to stop drawing when I got too hot.



St John's churchyard, Stratford: 17 June 2010



## St John's church

St John's Stratford opened in 1834 in response to the growing population in Stratford. It was designed by Sir Edward Blore in the Early English style with a tall spire and is an imposing landmark in the town.

The interior of the church was remodelled 50 years later. In 1879 the Martyrs Memorial was built in the churchyard to commemorate the men and women who were burnt at the stake at 'Stratford-at-Bowe' in 1556 during the reign of Mary Tudor and this is where I was sitting to do this sketch.

The church was badly damaged during WWII and was restored in 1951.

## St John's Churchyard, Stratford: 17 June 2010

Stratford strikes me as an odd place. When we first moved to Hackney six years ago Stratford was a destination you passed through on your way to somewhere else. A lot of the buildings were boarded up, there was a collapsed air about the place and deprivation was clear all around. The only signs of life might be a street fight outside a café in the high street.

Five years ago the 2012 Olympic games were awarded to London with Stratford being at its heart. One of the blessings of this decision is that millions of pounds are being invested in the area to regenerate it. So yesterday I went there by train, enjoyed the new rolling stock and arrived at a very new and clean platform that suggested efficiency and purpose. This felt very odd and nothing like the Stratford I'm familiar with and have grown accustomed to.

I decided that this was not

what I wanted to record on paper. I wanted a reminder of the faded, down-at-heel Victorian architecture, the pollution and congested traffic before it all disappears. So I ended up in the centre of the town in St John's churchyard where I found a place to sit underneath a memorial. It was a warm day and I had the place to myself. Then I spied an empty bottle and concluded I must be sitting where the drunks normally loll about. I sat and drew the picture you see above – I was facing the Broadway which runs from east to west and I combined water soluble pencil and ink in this drawing.

It wasn't until I got home that I looked up some of the history of Stratford on Wikipedia. Like much of London Stratford was open countryside until the advent of the railways in 1839. What surprised me was that there had

been an abbey called Saint Mary's that dominated the area from 1135 when it was founded, until the dissolution of the monasteries in 1538. It survived for 400 years and now there is no sign above ground of it ever having existed.

That made me ponder what might be the long-term future of these new sports facilities and the development of the Westfield shopping centre that is currently dominating the landscape. I find it hard to imagine that there will be any of it left in another 400 years and maybe by then London will have returned to open countryside and rural pursuits.





Stratford bus station: 24 June 2010

## The Stratford Centre

The Stratford Centre shopping mall is opposite the bus station. It is a single storey centre that opened in 1974. It has a mixture of shops in it ranging from supermarkets, building societies, pharmacies and clothing stores plus there are market stalls which sell everything you can think of. It is a very lively place and apparently has 21 million visitors a year who walk through it to get from both the train and bus stations to the town.

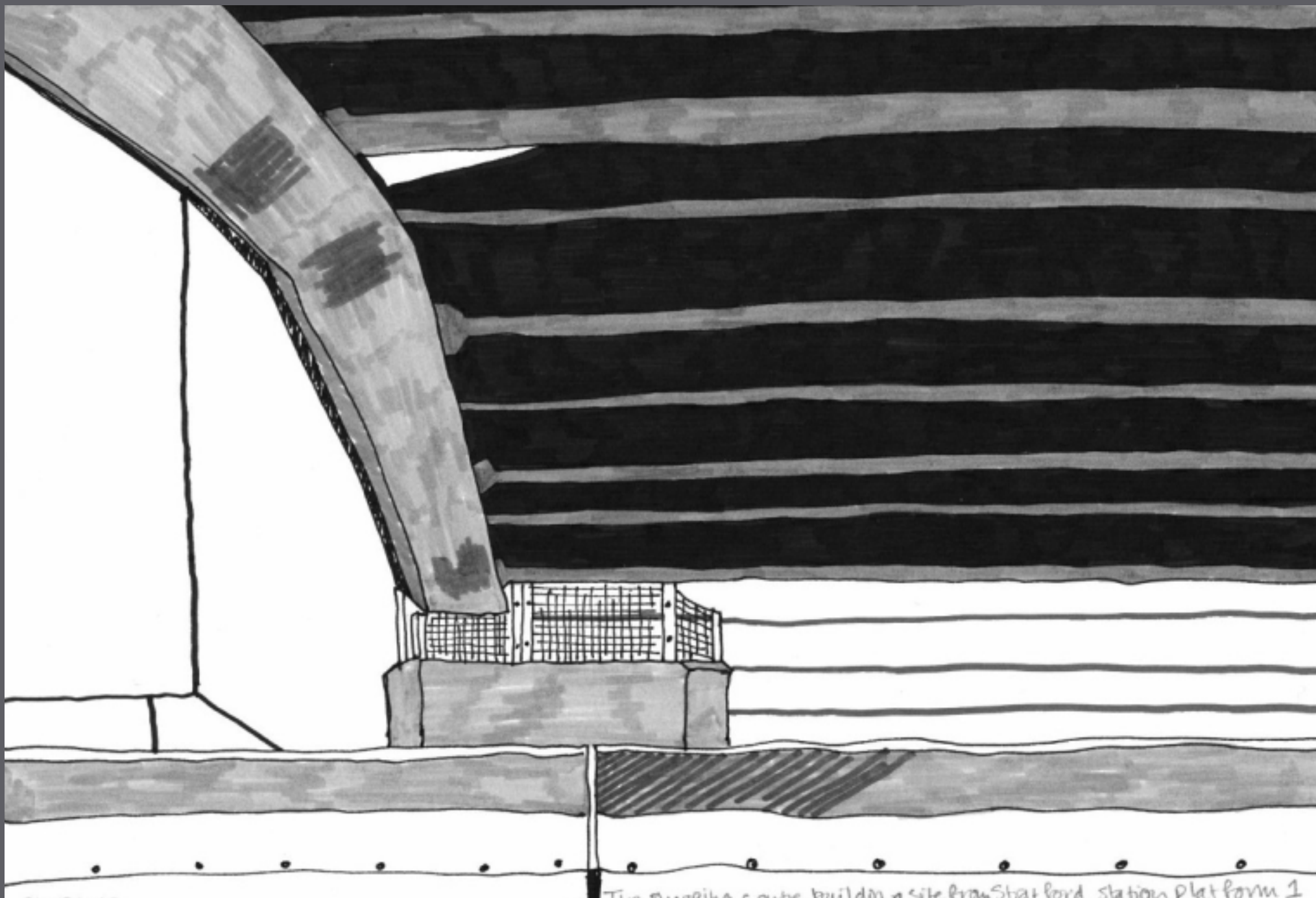
The Stratford Centre, which was previously the beating heart of Stratford, has been dwarfed, and its position usurped, by the nearby Westfield Stratford Centre that opened in September 2011 and is one of the largest urban shopping centres in Europe.

## Stratford bus station: 17 June 2010

Over the years I have spent many hours waiting at Stratford Bus Station to catch a coach to visit my parents who lived in Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk.

Although the bus station is still fairly new it smells of stale fry-ups and, being tunnel shaped, the wind whips through it so if you have to wait for much more than 15 minutes you can end up feeling frozen solid. As the bus has to drive through central London from Victoria Coach station you could almost guarantee that it would be late.

The day I made this drawing the weather was still very warm and wind wasn't a problem. In this sketch I was attempting to convey people in the act of walking, which proved to be quite frustrating.



Westfield shopping centre building site from Stratford station: 24 June 2010

## Westfield

Westfield Stratford City shopping mall known colloquially as 'Westfield' is on the site formerly occupied by Stratford Works and Locomotive Depot which finally closed in 1991. It is adjacent to the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park on one side and Stratford International station on the other.

## Platform 1, Stratford Station: 24 June 2010

Sitting on platform One underneath a bridge beyond which is the building site which will be the new Westfield shopping centre (now known as Westfield Stratford City).





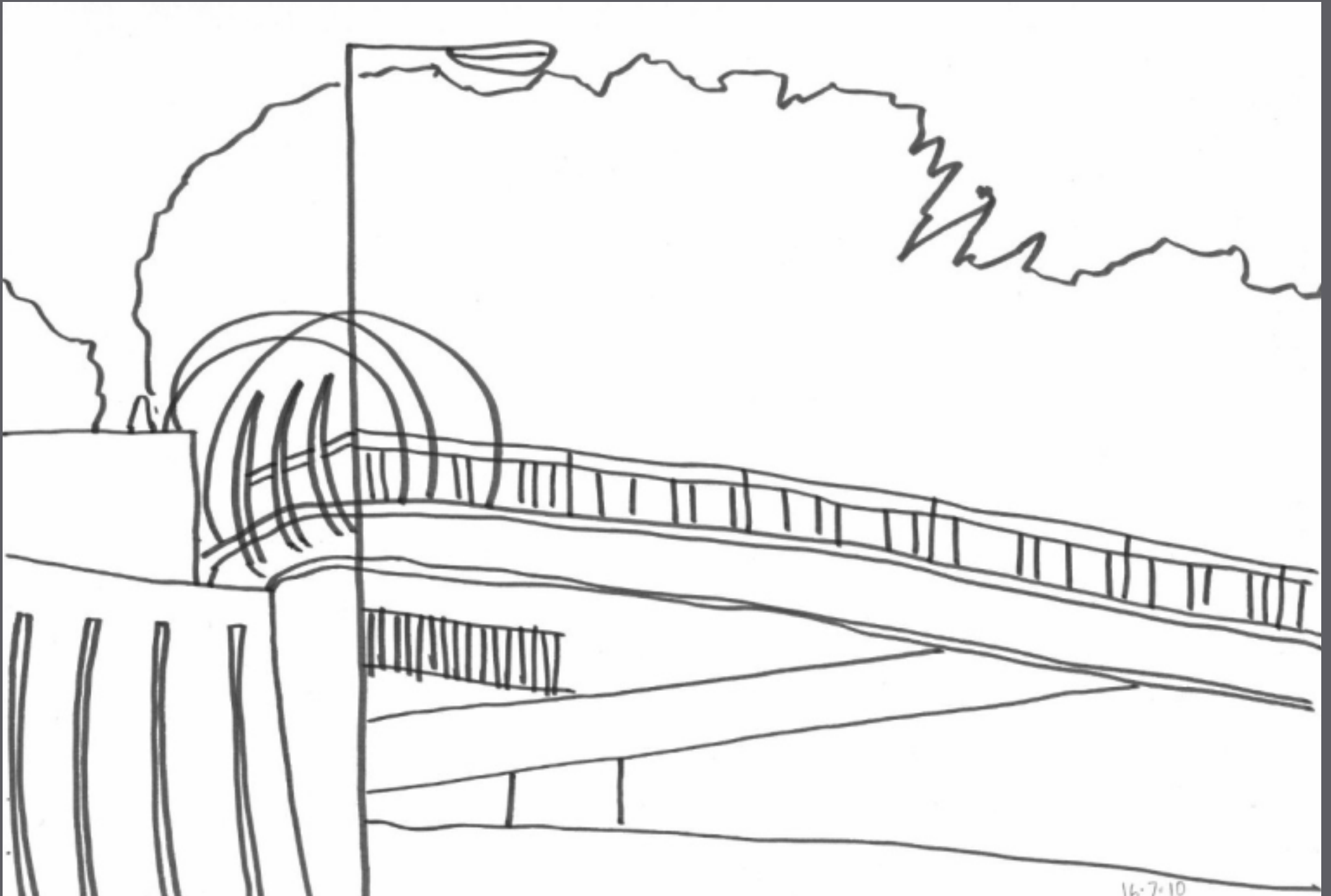
## The Wick

Hackney Wick was historically part of Homerton. It was an area prone to flooding and was surrounded by marshes. The construction of canals alleviated this problem and allowed the area to be developed. It became very industrialised during the 19th and 20th centuries and still retains an element of that today with warehouses and artists studios dominating the area. Being so close to the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park property developers are keen to exploit it.

The marshes were used extensively for grazing cattle and Hackney Marsh is one of the largest protected areas of common land in Greater London. It is a delightfully peaceful place to visit and observe all manner of wild life.

## Hackney Wick: 16 July 2010

Now I've reached Hackney Wick and I wanted to try and draw some of the passengers who use the station. Of course they would keep moving around so that is why some of them are only partially drawn but I like the life they bring to the drawing.



The pedestrian bridge over the A12: 16 July 2010

## Car heaven

The A12 is a major road in England which begins just north of the Blackwall Tunnel. It runs between London and Great Yarmouth on the coast in Norfolk. The route from London to Essex has long been important with Old Ford being the location on an ancient Celtic crossing of the River Lea.

A new section of the A12 known as the M11 link road was built in the early 1990s in the face of major opposition. I can remember seeing news footage of the protests regularly on television and I had sympathy for those people whose property was compulsory purchased as they were going to lose their homes. But, I have to say that we can drive from our house to the start of the M11 link road in 12 minutes flat which wouldn't have been possible without this road.

## The bridge over the A12: 16 July 2010

I could see this bridge beckoning to me from Hackney Wick station. Once across it I could quickly walk into Victoria Park and then I was nearly home.

This bridge offers people on foot a way of crossing the A12 without getting run over. Although the A12 is not a motorway is certainly looks and sounds like one with traffic using it constantly 24 hours of the day.

## Engineering works...

... on the railways invariably means traipsing to the exit of the station and being directed to a bus by a harassed member of staff. There is always a risk that you won't get on the bus and have to wait for the next one or you might be separated from your companion, which increases the anxiety levels.

Our most recent experience of this was in Holland when we had tickets to visit the Mark Rothko exhibition at the Gemeentemuseum in the Hague. We eventually enjoyed one hour at the exhibition compared with several hours of disruption to our travels to get there. Gazing at miles of Dutch countryside wasn't adequate compensation. Note to self: in future check travel arrangements carefully!

## Rail replacement bus service: 28 August 2010

Now we were home from our summer holiday spent travelling around the West Country catching up with friends and exploring Cornwall I was ready to start on my next drawing.

I walked through Victoria Park, back over the bridge spanning the A12 and towards Hackney Wick station when it occurred to me that there might be engineering works this weekend and, blow me, there was.

I could have got on the rail replacement bus service to go one stop to Homerton but since this project is as much about travelling by train as it is about drawing I decided to wait until the service resumed.



Homerton Station looking north: 3 September 2010



## Sutton House

The hamlet of Homerton was first recorded in 1343. In medieval times it was largely rural and fruit and vegetables were grown there for the City of London markets.

Homerton became a popular place in the Tudor period for wealthy people to build their country homes away from the stench and overcrowded conditions in the City.

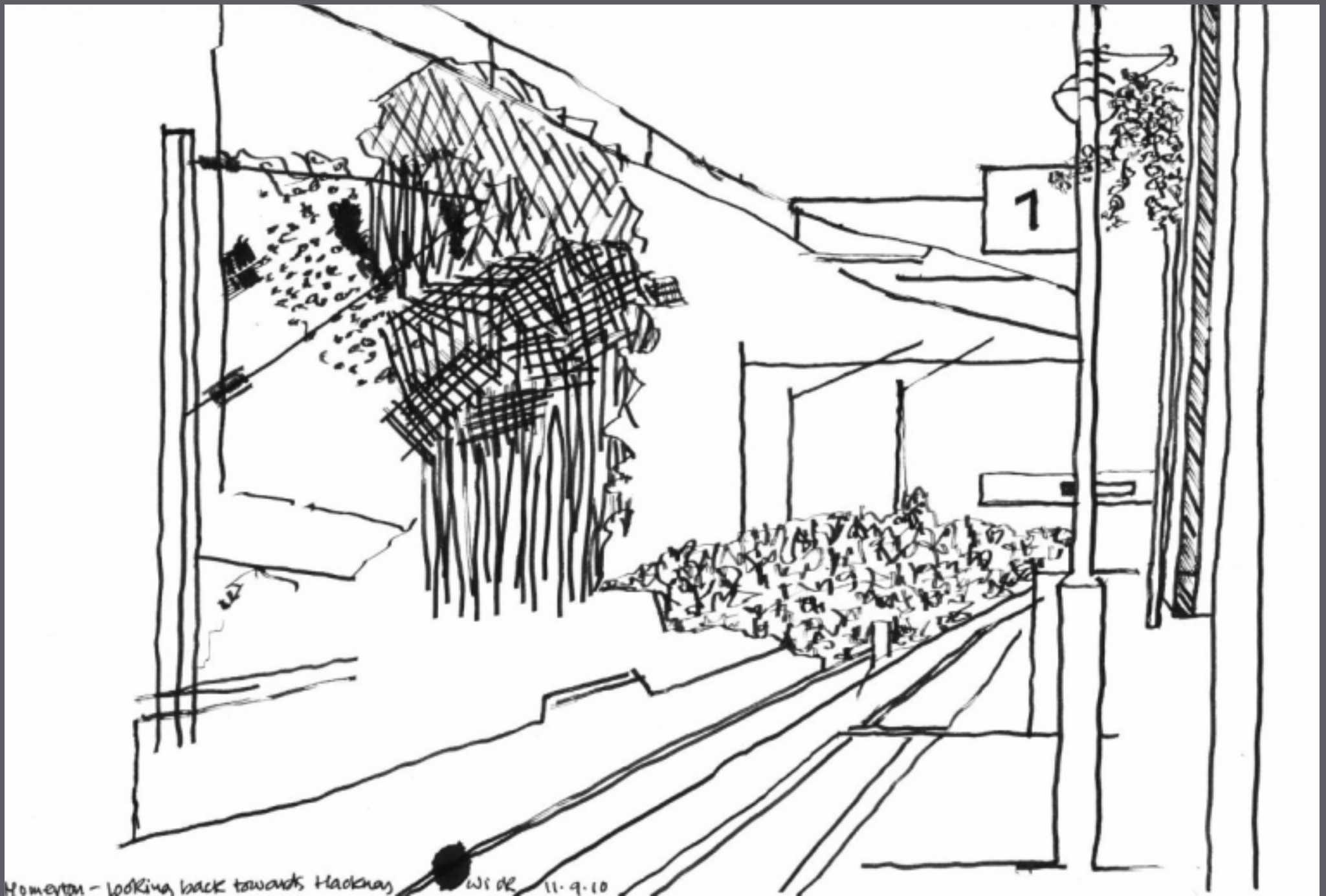
Sutton House in Homerton is the oldest house in Hackney and was built by the Tudor diplomat Sir Ralph Sadler.

## Homerton Station looking north: 3 September 2010

I travelled one stop from Hackney Wick to Homerton station on a beautiful sunny Friday morning and sat on the seat that was in front of me when I left the train and drew this picture.

Following my rule of drawing whatever I could see in front of me I ended up with this view facing north where I combined pen and water soluble pencil. There was a lot of construction work going on immediately around the station where new housing was being developed so my time there was accompanied by some spectacular building noises. In addition I was surprised by the number of freight trains that thundered through the station.

This station is the closest one to where I live so from here on I will be moving further away from the comfort of familiar territory.



Homerton- looking back towards Hackney Wick: 11 September 2010

## Rural no longer

London was developing rapidly during the mid 19th century because of the industrial revolution and increase in population and Hackney's transformation from rural suburb to urban landscape was confirmed by the arrival of the railway in 1850.

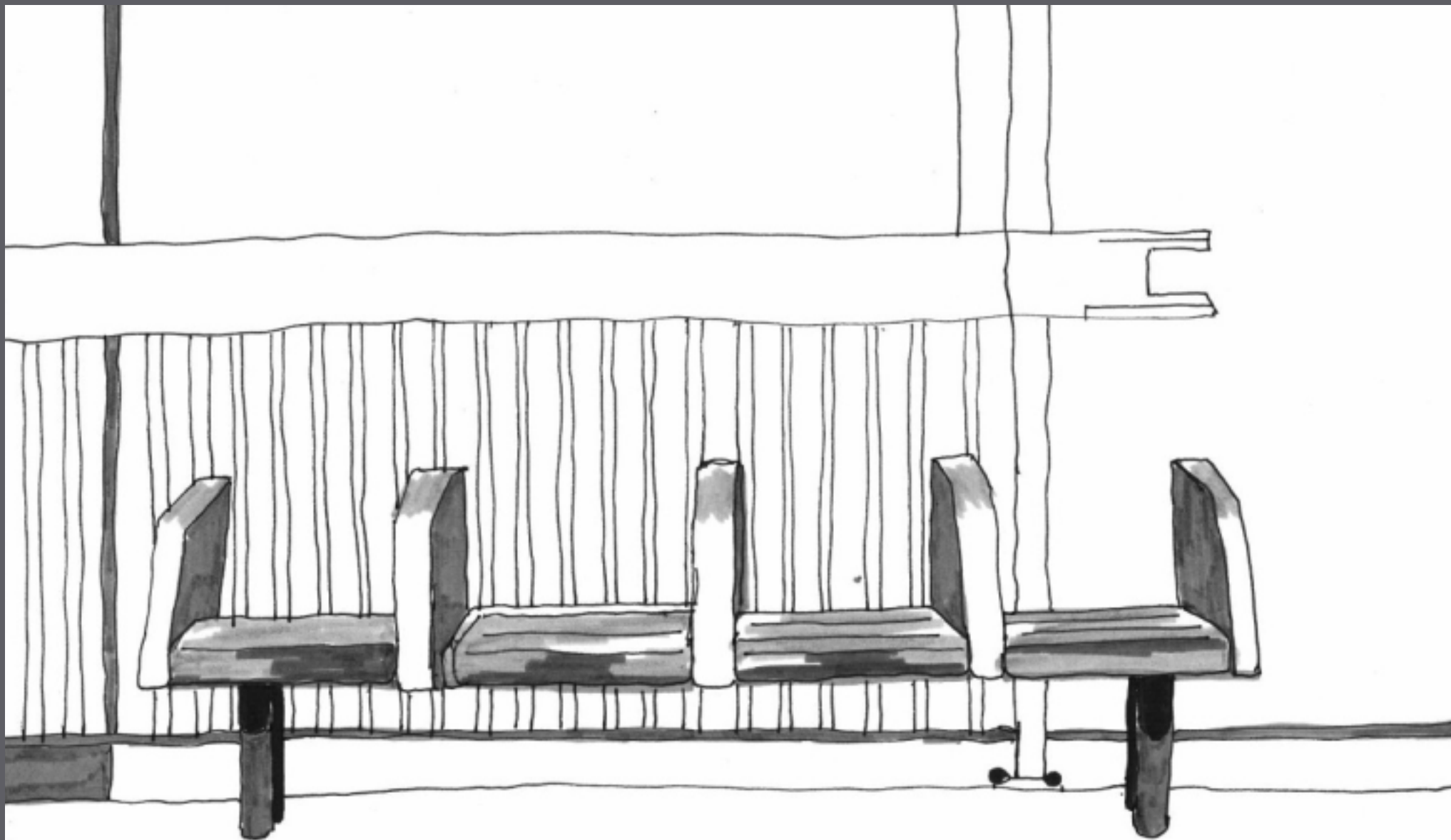
## Homerton—looking back towards Hackney Wick: 11 September 2010

I returned to Homerton today and, before I got on the train to travel one stop to Hackney Central, I took the opportunity to look back towards Hackney Wick.

From where I was sitting the view looked oddly rural which is an illusion since London is entirely man-made and generally very built up. But then again London is just a very large collection of towns and villages that have merged over the years so it's not really that suprising when a glimpse of a rural scene pops up. I wonder how many more I will see on this journey?

I chose to use a dip pen for this drawing. I haven't used one of these for years and I really love the wonky lines, scratches in the paper and the very prominent blob of ink in the foreground. It's tricky working out how much ink to leave in the reservoir and blobs can occur when there's too much.

The last time I was at Homerton I had to work with the thumping noise of a construction site in the background. This time, as it was the weekend, it was blessedly quiet and all I could hear were ordinary domestic sounds overlaid with some jazz music coming from one of the flats near the station. Lovely.



Empty seats, platform 2 - Hackney Central 11/09/10

## Station architecture

Hackney Central opened in 1980 and is a short distance away from the former Victorian station building which is now a bar and music venue. The original station building is one of only two examples of North London Railway architecture remaining, the other being Camden Road station.

## Empty seats, platform two–Hackney Central: 11 September 2010

This is the view that took my fancy when I arrived at Hackney Central station. I seemed to have the place entirely to myself which was slightly disconcerting since this is generally a very busy station.





Hackney Central - gardens outside the Town Hall, Mare Street 17/09/10

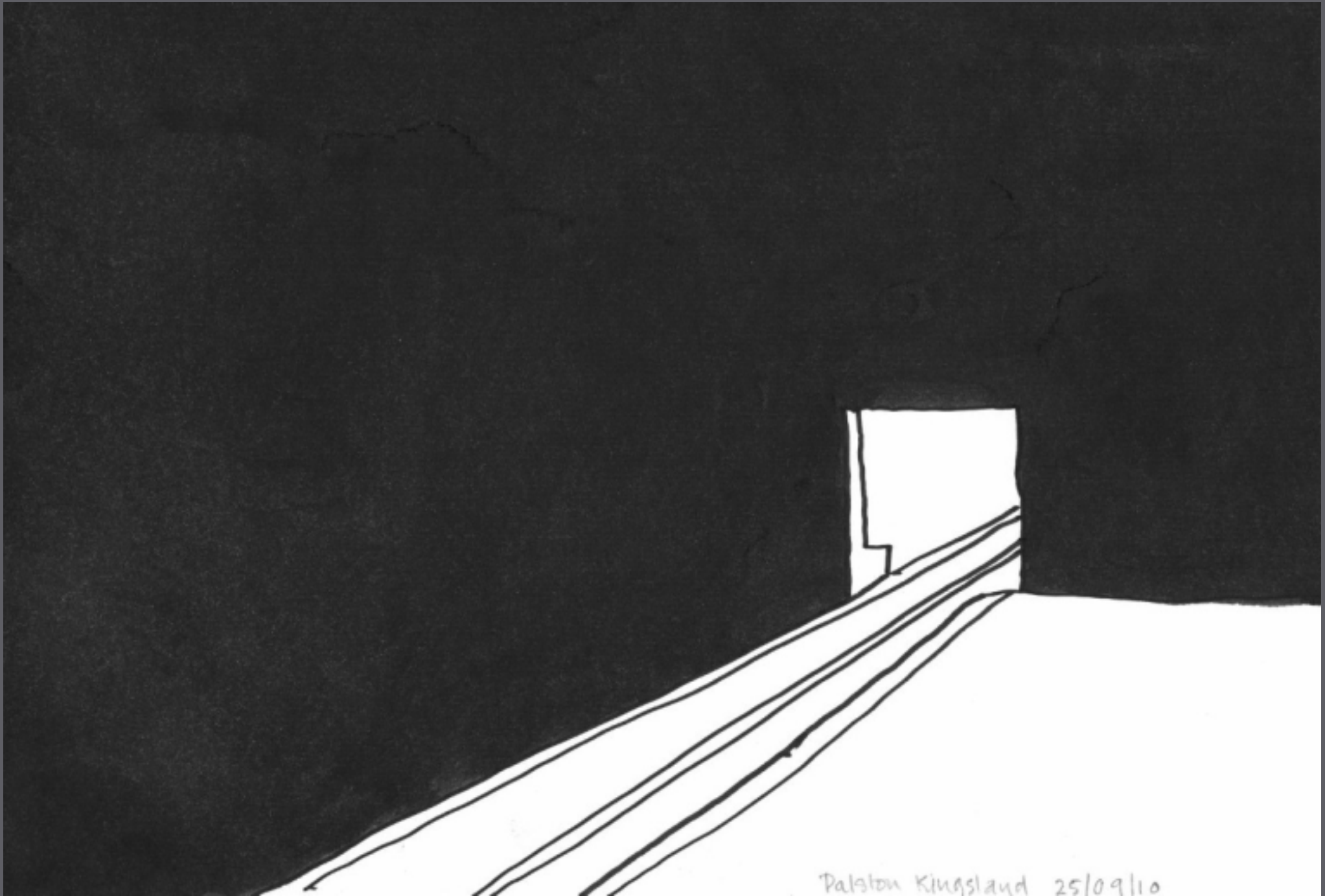
## Hackney Town Hall

Hackney has had a number of town hall buildings over the years and each new building has been bigger than the one before. There is a garden in front of the current building which is the location, and footprint, of its previous incarnation and it was here that I chose to do this drawing.

## Gardens outside the Town Hall, Mare Street: 17 September 2010

I decided it would be nice to pause in Hackney briefly before moving on to Dalston. I enjoyed lunch at a noodle bar in Morning Lane and then sauntered over to the Town Hall in the afternoon sunshine. This view is part of its small, formal front garden.

I thought I would have a go at the dip pen again this time and, being very daring, used two nibs of different widths and a Chinese calligraphy brush to paint the grass.



Dalston Kingsland 25/09/10

## Deorlaf's tun

According to Wikipedia the name of Dalston is thought to have derived from Deorlaf's tun (farm) and the village was one of four small villages within the Parish of Hackney along with Newington, Shacklewell and Kingsland.

Nowadays Dalston is better known for being part of the edgy, creative, hipster sprawl that east London is now famous for. High rise blocks of flats are replacing tatty old shops and art galleries and cafés are popping up all over the place.

## Dalston Kingsland station: 25 September 2010

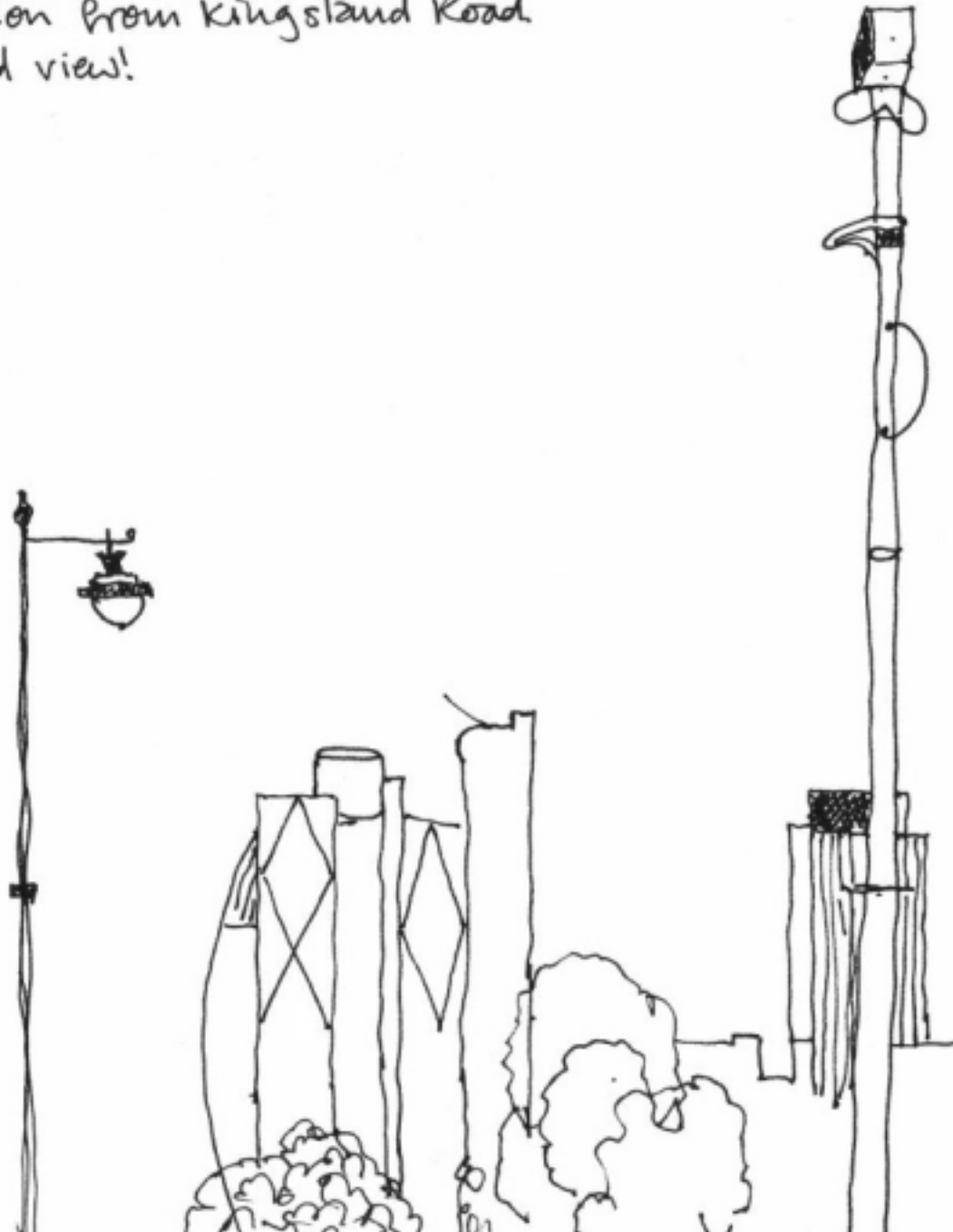
I'm moving on to Dalston now and I didn't expect to go through a small tunnel-like structure when it became dark inside the train. This is illogical because the station is underneath a road and so I should have expected it to get darker. I've been wanting for a while to do a drawing that was mostly black ink. I did this using Parker Quink black ink. When I applied it to the paper it appeared to be blue/black and then dried a rusty brown. I was assured it would go darker in time which it did.

This is a very busy station and just as I was getting up to leave the train a young man sat next to me wearing headphones and, lo and behold, opened a sketchbook which is just like one I own. He began doing a quick drawing of a man sitting on a bench on the opposite platform. I would have chatted to him if he hadn't made it very

clear that conversation wasn't an option. I do just the same when I'm drawing so I can't complain when others do it too. Anyway I enjoyed seeing someone else drawing on the train because it made me feel that I'm part of an underground movement.

I can see the City of London from Kingsland Road.  
This is a slightly lopsided view!

25-09-10





## Kings Land

Kingsland derives its name from being the hunting grounds of a Tudor royal residence at Newington Green when the area was still heavily forested, hence the name 'Kings Land'.

Now it is so built up you would have trouble finding a blade of grass but it is full of Vietnamese restaurants worth exploring. This is because Vietnamese refugees began to arrive in the UK after the end of the Vietnamese War in 1975. Many of them settled in Lewisham, Southwark and Hackney and eventually opened their own restaurants.

## View of the City of London from Kingsland Road: 25 September 2010

Having left Dalston Kingsland station (to give its full name) I turned right and strolled down the road to a noodle bar for some lunch. I saw this view of the City of London from Kingsland Road. It is a common mistake – and one I make routinely – of thinking of London as being completely flat. From where I was standing this view was distinctly looking downhill.



## Open land to suburb

Canonbury is a residential district in the London Borough of Islington. In 1253 land in the area was granted to the Canons of St Bartholomew's Priory in Smithfield and became known as Canonbury. The area continued to be open land until it was developed as a suburb in the early 19th century.

Notable people who have lived in Canonbury include Thomas Cromwell, Lord Privy Seal who lived in Canonbury Tower from 1533 until his execution in 1540. More recently George Orwell and Evelyn Waugh lived in the area as did Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell and Dame Flora Robson.

## Canonbury: 2 October 2010

So now I've left Hackney behind and have reached Canonbury which is in the borough of Islington.

Like the other stations that were part of the North London line Canonbury is being extensively renewed. It was built during the 1860s when London was expanding rapidly but very soon any remaining Victorian features here will have been obliterated and all you will see is a brand new station. It will be much more comfortable to use and it includes the wonderful addition of a lift, or elevator, if you prefer.

This drawing shows the old wall backing on to gardens overlooking the railway and I used mostly water soluble pencils plus black pen.

Canonbury in the  
rain 2/10/10



The old ticket office–Canonbury in the rain: 2 October 2010

## Canonbury station

The station originally opened in 1858 to the east of its present location. It was called 'Newington & Balls Pond' which is a bit of a mouthful. It was renamed 'Canonbury' before its move to its present site in 1870.

## The old ticket office–Canonbury in the rain: 2 October 2010

I approve of the refurbishment of Canonbury station but the ticket office looks like a concrete shed that was thrown up in the 1950s. I was wondering where the original ticket office had been because the present one clearly isn't it. Anyway it became obvious which building it must have been when I exited the station and turned left.

Here's a somewhat wonky line drawing of it. I think it's a rather handsome building – the three large windows on the ground floor could have been where you bought your train ticket from. And I wondered if there was a waiting room behind the door on the left? Well I can only speculate about its previous use because it's now been turned into a small block of flats (also handy for the station).





Highbury & Islington 14.10.10 - Just after dusk.

## Flying bomb

The present station is made up of two previous stations. The first was an impressive Victorian gothic building with a drive-in forecourt built in 1872. It was damaged in WWII by a V-1 flying bomb on 27 June 1944. It remained in use until it was finally demolished in the 1960s during the building of the Victoria Underground line.

The second station is on the opposite side of Holloway Road and opened in 1904. It is now disused and houses signalling equipment for the Victoria Line.

## Highbury & Islington station just after dusk: 14 October 2010

For this drawing I was sitting on the west bound platform and looking up at buildings overlooking Highbury & Islington station just after dusk. I was attracted to the lights that had been left on in the rooms above the platform while everything around them became darker and less distinct. The days are getting shorter now and chillier.



Avenue of trees in Highbury Fields: 15 October 2010

## Imposing houses

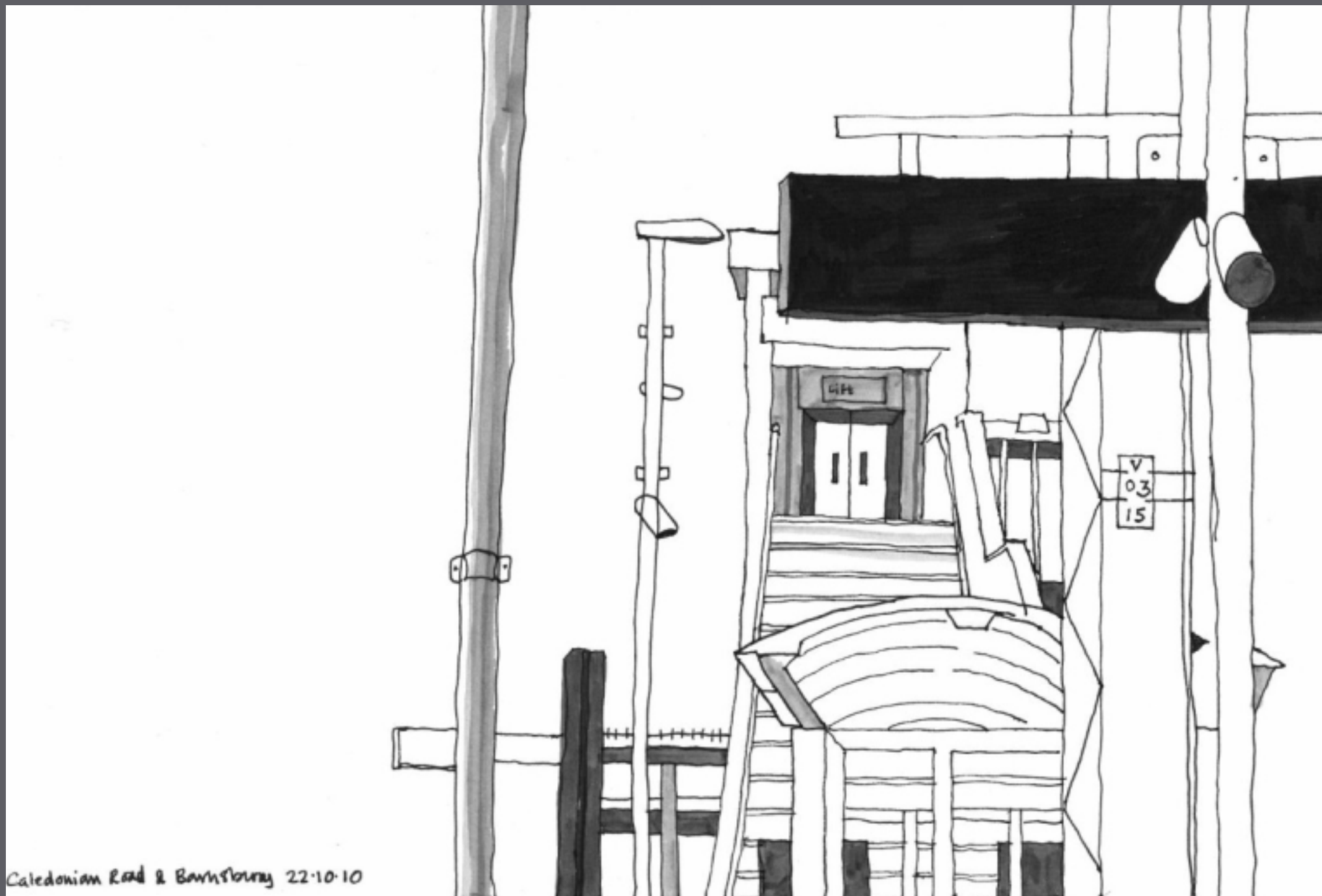
The land surrounding Highbury Fields was developed for residential use during the 18th century and the Georgian and Victorian town houses are very expensive and considered highly desirable.

Famous residents have included: Walter Sickert the Impressionist painter, John Wesley the 18th century Methodist preacher and Joseph Chamberlain a notable British politician.

## Avenue of trees in Highbury Fields: 15 October 2010

This is a view of Highbury Fields. A description on a notice board at the edge of the park states that it is the largest public park in the borough of Islington and in pre-Victorian times it used to be full of dairy farms. I have to admit that I thought it was a bit pokey compared with our local park and felt a bit sorry for Islington residents.

It was quite cold and I wanted to draw something quickly since I didn't want to linger too long. I liked this avenue of trees and wanted to try and describe the quantity of leaves against the stark trunks and branches.



Caledonian Road & Barnsbury 22.10.10



## The Norman conquest

The name Barnsbury is a corruption of *villa de Iseldon Berners* after the powerful Berners family of medieval manorial lords who gained ownership of a large part of Islington after the Norman conquest.

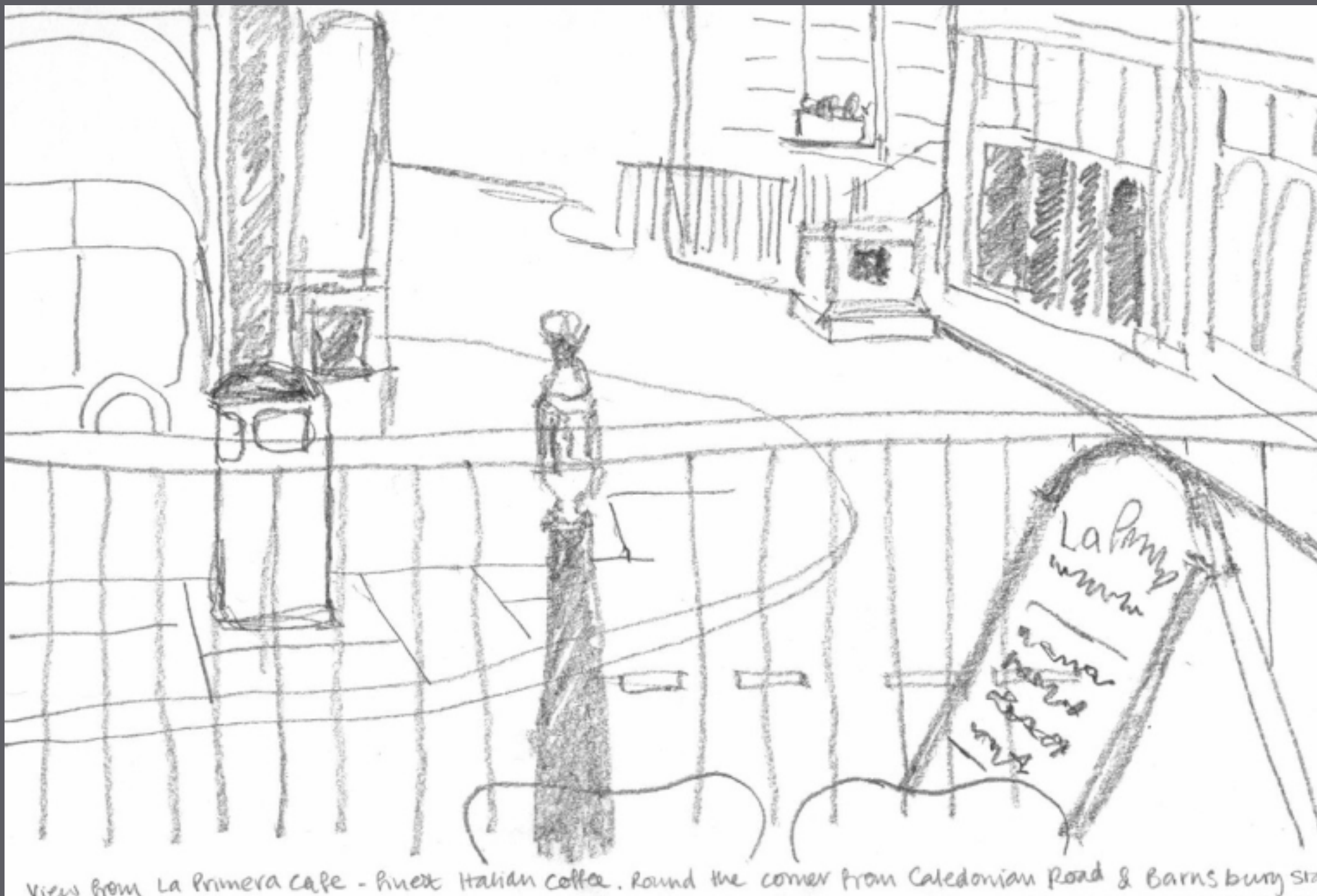
The area is close to the City of London and was the first staging post for travellers making the journey north from London.

## Caledonian Road & Barnsbury: 22 October 2010

I can't get used to the stations on this line appearing so new and clean – but I do like it. It's much more pleasant as a paying passenger than the old grit and grime we've been used to.

The only trouble (from the point of view of an artist) is that every station looks much like the one I was at before. In spite of this I am managing to find interesting views to draw at each location.

Now it's getting into late October it is getting quite chilly to work outside. I'm wearing more layers now and soon I'll be adding a hat. Since I was getting cold, having sat for long enough, I decided to leave the station and look for a café, preferably close by. Which leads me to my next drawing.



View from La Primera café–finest Italian coffee–near Caledonian Road & Barnsbury station: 22 October 2010

## A social conscience

In Victorian England the Temperance Movement set up coffee houses for the working classes as a place for relaxation free of alcohol.

In the 19th and 20th centuries coffee houses became popular meeting places for writers and artists to socialise and exchange ideas.

Nowadays you'll often find solitary people glued to their laptops or mobile phones, or posing and taking 'selfies' which has largely eliminated any feeling of relaxation that cafés used to be famous for.

## View from La Primera café – finest Italian coffee: 22 October 2010

I felt a bit lost when I came out of the station so was peering around for a minute or two in search of a café. Initially I saw a bespoke kitchen shop, I didn't want that. Next door there was a bathroom shop, I didn't want that either. I cast around and then saw what I was after and headed towards La Primera Café – finest Italian coffee.

I've no idea how good the coffee was because I had a cup of tea and a slice of cake. It seemed to be the kind of place that doesn't bother with plates but I did get a cup for the tea and I chose a window seat so I could draw the view.

I decided that since the previous sketch had been so tightly drawn I would go for a loose pencil approach for a change and I quite like the result.



## Two stations one name

Camden Road station began life in 1870 called Camden Town which is the same name as the nearby London Underground station. To avoid confusion it was renamed as Camden Road in 1950.

It is one of the few railway stations in England where there was a police station.

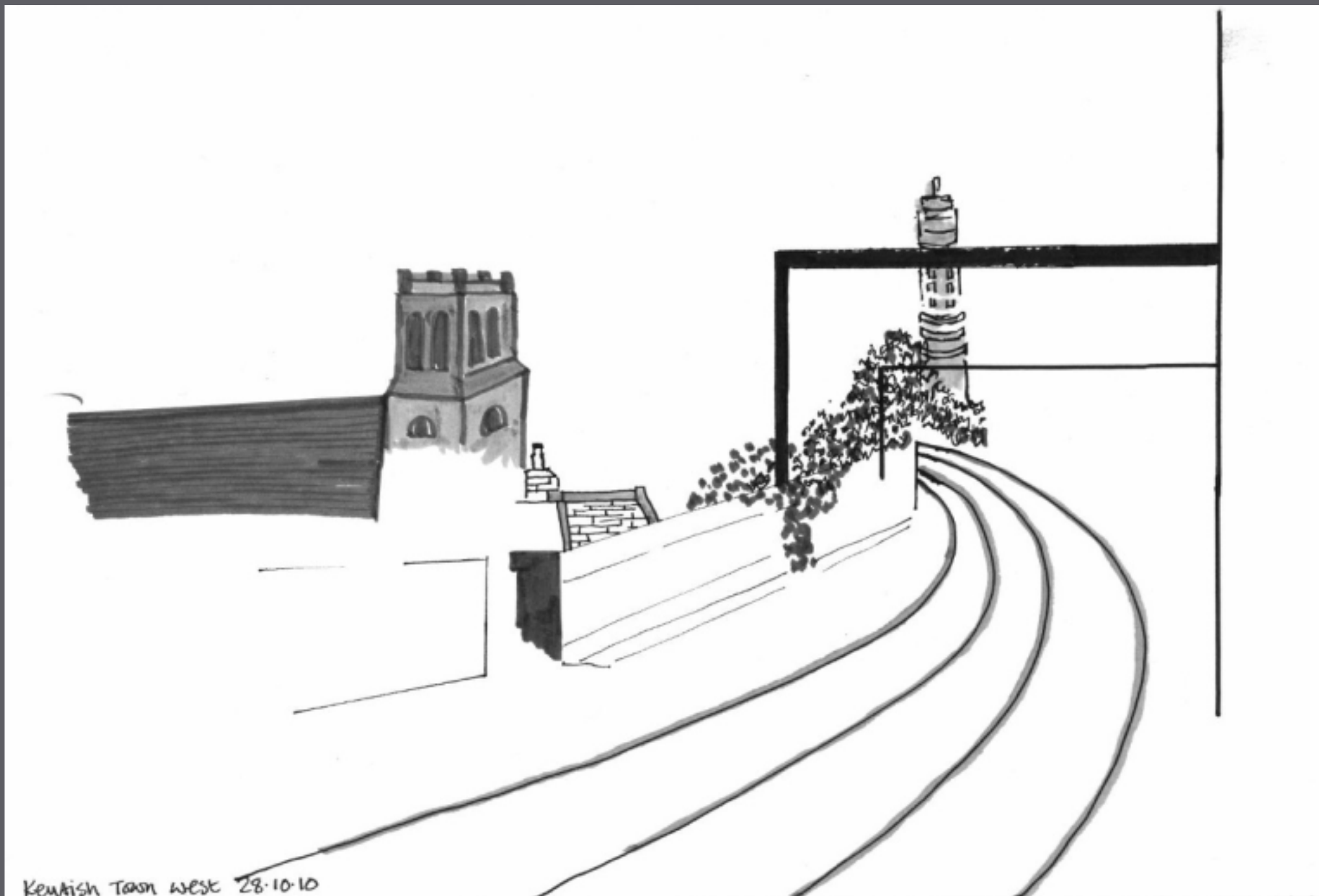
In addition to its frequent passenger service the station also sees a lot of freight traffic running through it.

## Camden Road: 28 October 2010

I found this pencil drawing particularly difficult to do. The perspective was all over the place and I wanted to try and draw some of the Victorian cast iron work that is a feature of this station.

Camden Road, close to the famous Camden Markets, is unlike any of the other stations I have visited so far. You can clearly see its Victorian heritage even though it is being painted in the same livery as all the other stations on this route which have been refurbished beyond recognition.





## The BT Tower

The BT Tower, formerly known as the Post Office Tower is one of London's many prominent landmarks. It is 177 metres high and until 1980 was the tallest building in both London and the United Kingdom.

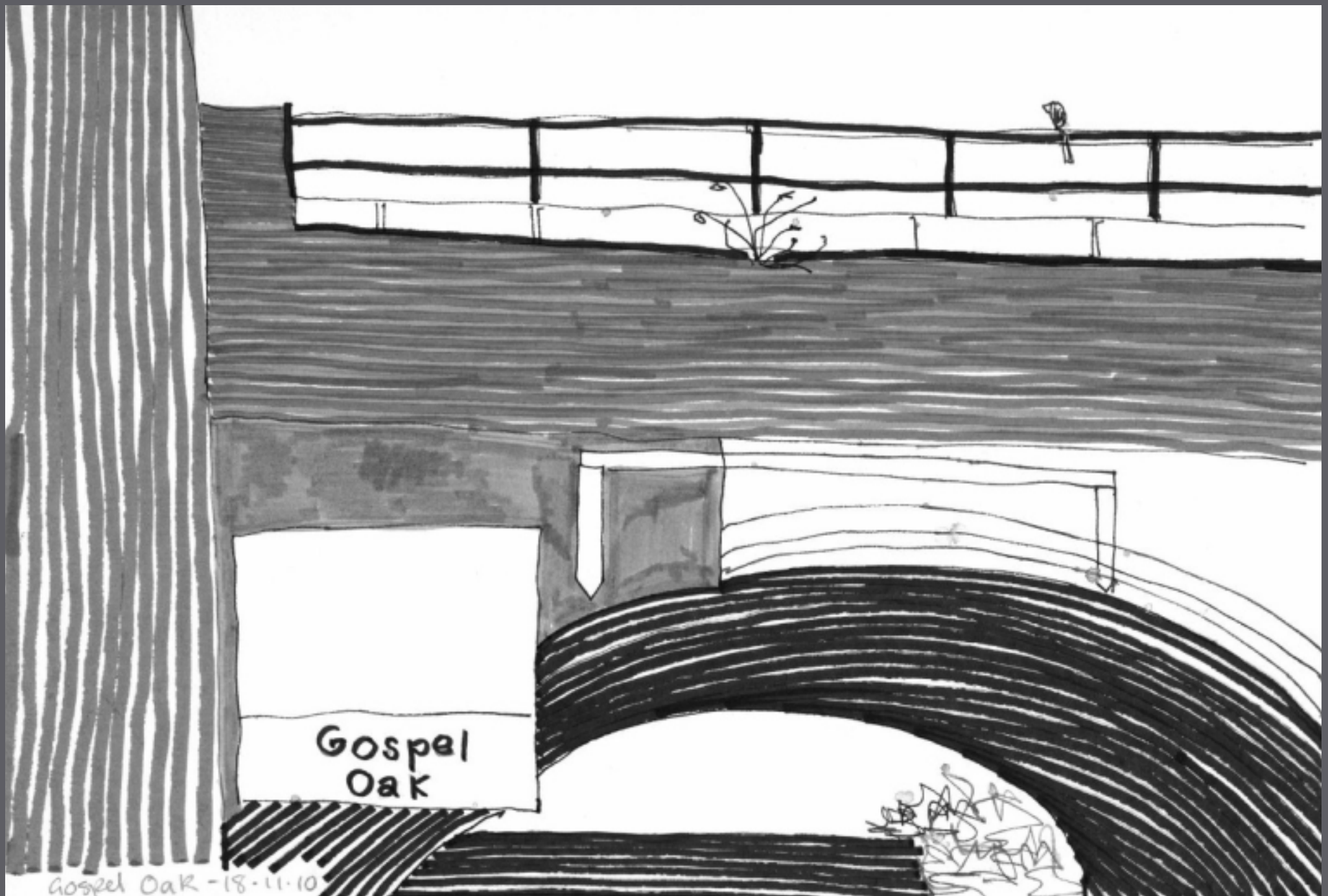
It was officially opened in 1965 and opened to the public in 1966 and closed in 1981 due to worries about terrorism.

The tower is still in use as a major UK communications hub. The rotating restaurant was supposed to reopen in time for the 2012 Olympics but the plans were quietly dropped.

## Kentish Town West: 28 October

When I got off the train at Kentish Town West the first thing I could see in the distance was the BT (British Telecom) Tower—formerly the Post Office Tower—one of London's famous landmarks. It used to have a revolving restaurant so diners could get a 360 degree view of London. It was closed about 30 years ago because an IRA bomb exploded there in 1971.

I thought it merited a quick sketch so I did this pen drawing of it in the distance. This station marks more or less the half way point on my route.



Gospel Oak: 18 November 2010

## Rail disaster

Gospel Oak is known locally to some as 'Hampstead Bottom' as it occupies the void between Kentish Town and Hampstead.

Gospel Oak was also the site of a railway disaster in September 1861 when an excursion train from Kew Gardens hit an empty train on the bridge next to the station. It plunged down the embankment killing 14 and injuring 300 people.

## Gospel Oak: 18 November 2010

My journey around London came to an unexpected halt a couple of weeks ago because I came down with a heavy cold. Now fully recovered I was raring to get back to my travels and continue exploring.

I gather from Wikipedia that the name Gospel Oak derives from an oak tree under which parishioners gathered to hear an annual gospel sermon when the area was still rural so that must date back at least 150 years.

This sketch, begun in the rain and completed at home, shows Gospel Oak's twin railway bridges. One leads to Richmond and other such places and the second bridge takes you to Barking.







## The Tumulus

I understand that you will find the Tumulus north of Parliament Hill on the way to Kenwood House. It is in the middle of the meadow that stretches west from the Boating Pond and is a large earthen mound covered with pine trees, surrounded by gorse, an iron fence and possibly a trace of a ditch.

The origin of Tumulus is a mystery but there is no shortage of theories including that it is the grave of Icenian Queen Boudicca, defeated in battle by the Romans. (This theory has been discredited.) It might be the base of a 17th century windmill or a Bronze Age burial mound (2000-750 BC). For more theories read the source below.

Source:  
[/www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/hampstead-heath/heritage/Documents/The Tumulus.pdf](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/hampstead-heath/heritage/Documents/The_Tumulus.pdf)

## Hampstead Heath: 18 November 2010

I had no idea when I got off at Gospel Oak how close I was to Hampstead Heath. According to the local map I just had to turn left out of the station and then take the first left, and there it was in front of me.

Even though I have lived in London for 30 years I've only visited the heath a couple of times so I really felt I was exploring somewhere unknown and possibly exciting.

I walked up to the top of the heath to Parliament Hill Fields where the authorities have thoughtfully placed a number of park benches. From this vantage you can enjoy a very famous view of London's skyline. This sketch really does not do the view justice but, for what it's worth, I managed to get Canary Wharf in on the left hand side and St Paul's Cathedral on the right hand side.

Since it's November and there is not much daylight

around I was lucky that the sky was a lovely combination of soft, billowy greys and some of the buildings on the skyline appeared ghostly and insubstantial. The air smelled lovely and clean and I could hear birdsong too. Eventually the cold drove me to search out a café so I could warm up.

When I had entered the heath I was intrigued to see on the park map that there was a tumulus that I could visit but I left it too late in the day. Maybe that can wait for another visit.



## Refuge for wildlife

Hampstead Heath known locally as the Heath is a large, ancient London park which sits on one of the highest points in London running from Hampstead to Highgate. It is an important refuge for wildlife and it contains the largest single area of common land in Greater London.

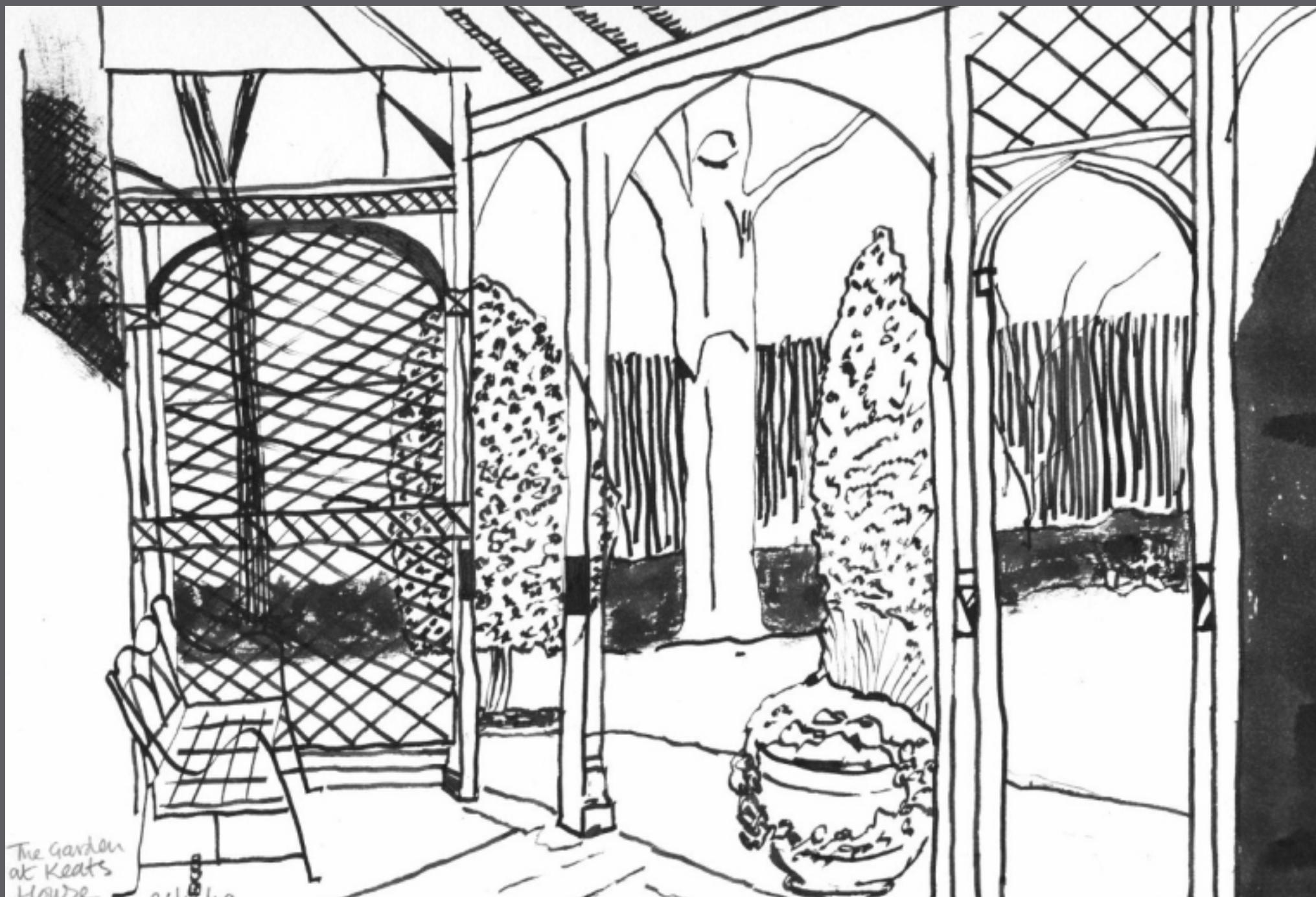
During the 19th century up to 100,000 people per day used Hampstead Heath station at weekends and on public holidays as the Heath was a popular holiday destination for Londoners. The station was rebuilt after being damaged during WWII.

## Hampstead Heath station: 26 November 2010

This morning I enjoyed the train ride from Homerton, my nearest station, to Hampstead which took about 20 minutes. It was fun looking out of the window and remembering the sketches I have made so far and reflecting on how interesting the journey has been.

Today has been lovely and sunny but very cold. Quite a lot of the country has had snow which is most unusual at this time of year for the UK. London has escaped it so far but we can still expect very cold weather for the next couple of weeks.

So my aim was to draw quickly and still produce something worthwhile and for once I managed to get some people in my sketch. The ink in my pen was reluctant to get on the paper so the result is very sketchy (that could mean the pen is either running out of ink or it was just too cold to work).



The Garden  
at Keats  
House

The garden at Keats House: 26 November 2010



## Romantic poet

John Keats lodged in this house with his friend Charles Brown from December 1818 to September 1820. According to Brown 'Ode to a Nightingale' was written under a plum tree in the garden.

While living there Keats fell in love with, and became engaged to, Fanny Brawne who lived with her family next door. He became increasingly ill with tuberculosis and was advised to move to a warmer climate. He left London in 1820 and died, unmarried, in Italy the following year.

## The garden at Keats House: 26 November 2010

I was very excited at the prospect of drawing in the garden of Keats House and I was required to gain permission for this from the museum.

Until today I really knew nothing about John Keats other than he was a poet who died young. He was born on 31 October 1795 in Moorgate, London and died 23 February 1821 in Rome, Italy (I had the vague idea that he had drowned in the Bay of Naples but that was Percy Bysshe Shelley.)

Initially, I strolled around the garden while I was deciding where to work and thought this is the house of someone extremely well off. Well for a start Keats didn't own it and it turns out that he came from a humble background. He lost both parents when he was very young and went on to have a very turbulent life with almost his entire family, including himself, dying of tuberculosis.

I'm amazed and impressed that he managed to produce any poetry at all.

It was so cold today I thought I would be doing well to complete any drawing at all so for an hour I worked away with a dip pen and ink pausing occasionally to have a cup of tea from my flask. I chose to sit under an awning that provided a bit of shelter and some visual interest and here is the result.



## Celebrity fracture

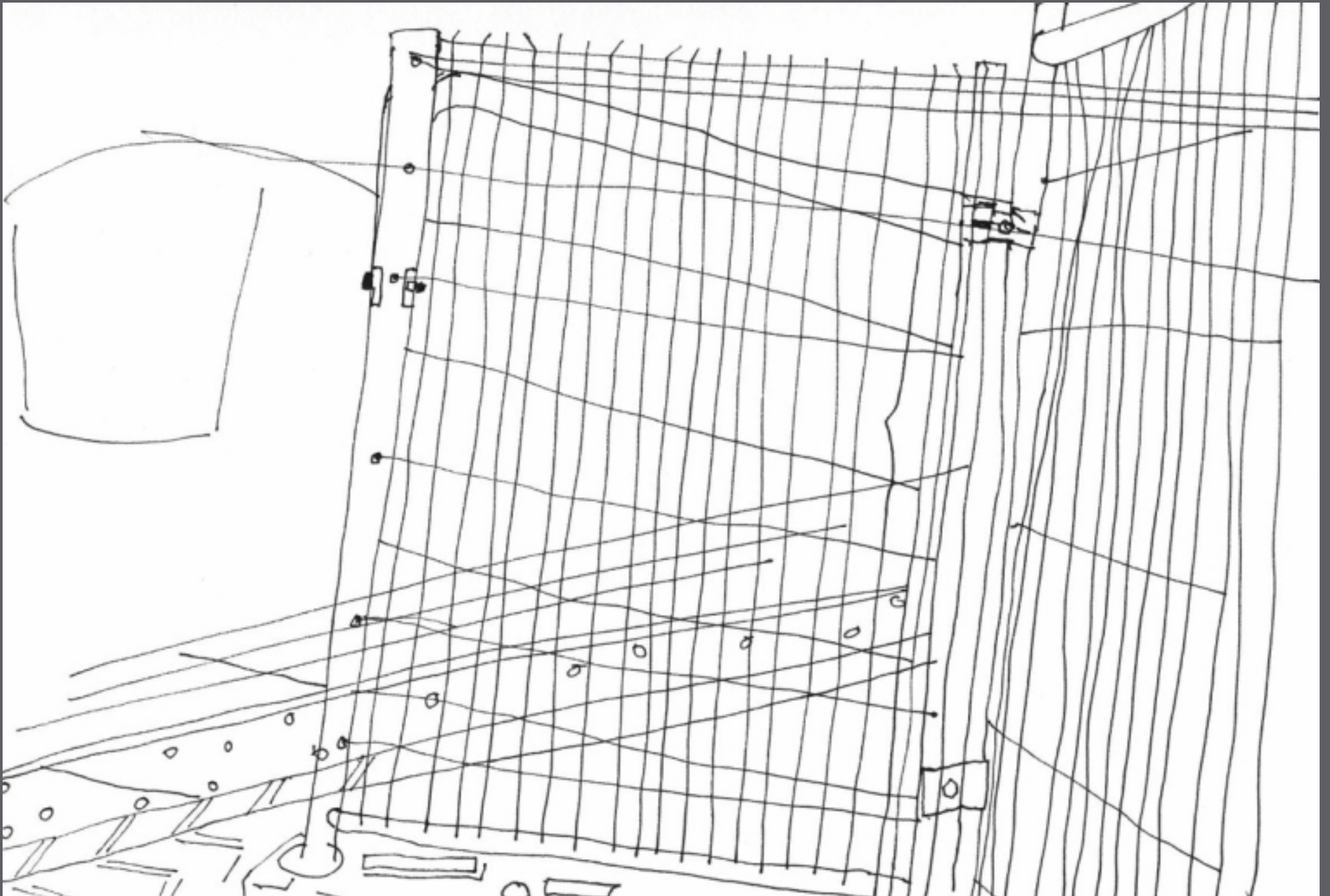
In 2002 David Beckham, the England football captain, broke a bone in his left foot (the second metatarsal) which meant it was doubtful if he would be able to play in the World Cup.

In 2010 I was rushing around during my lunch break at work and fell over an uneven pavement breaking the fifth metatarsal in my left foot. I was teased that I had a celebrity fracture but fortunately for me the reputation of the nation didn't rest on my recovery.

## Tuesday 21 December 2010: Interruption to the service

I had planned to continue with this drawing project throughout December. I hadn't counted on the weather being too cold to work in or having an accident where I broke a bone in my left foot which impeded my movement and the train line being closed over Christmas.

Oh well! I will return to the sketchbook as soon as I reasonably can in the New Year and so all I can say is 'Seasons Greetings'.



## Turnpike road

Finchley Road is one of north London's main roads and it is a heavily used route in and out of London. It was built in the late 1820s/early 1830s as a turnpike road where tolls were charged for its maintenance.

## Finchley Road & Frognal: 14 January 2011

At last today, after a six week break, I've been able to get back to trekking my way round north London.

As anyone who has ever been outside their house knows many journeys are beset with unexpected delays and diversions. My life was suddenly diverted in December by falling over in the street and earning myself a celebrity fracture made famous by David Beckham. I broke my fifth metatarsal on my left foot and, although I've been able to walk, I've avoided going anywhere I didn't have to and that includes leisurely train journeys.

Then we were hit with unusual amounts of snow (for London). They are used to snow up in Northumberland where my mother-in-law lives. It falls in vast quantities every year but down south, here in the capital, we usually only see snow on Christmas cards. For

the time being all that has melted away, the temperatures have risen so now is the time to get out and about.

Did I also mention that every journey has sections that are very tedious. Today's outing was one of these. I always take the view that there is always something interesting to draw if only you look for it. I looked in the station. I looked as I walked along the High Road. I looked again as I walked back towards the station and I wondered if this would be the stop with no drawing.

I returned to the platform to wait for a train home and drew what was in front of me. This is one of the wire mesh fences used to separate passengers from the building works going on along the length of the platform and in the background you can see a quick outline of a train that moved off before I had a chance to add any detail.

When I got home I had a chat with my friend David who began to reminisce about Finchley Road because he had lived near there in the '70s when he was a schoolboy. He remembered when he'd had a job as a road sweeper and recalled the perils of driving his little cart over a busy four lane highway. He also remembered an obscure lane he was scared to walk down in case he got beaten up by skinheads. He talked about a café that only sold freshly ground coffee and that a pub opposite it had been blown up by the IRA. He was at home when he heard the explosion.

This just showed me that it is possible to live a very rich and interesting life in a very dull looking place so perhaps I shouldn't have been so judgmental.



## Hampstead cemetery

Hampstead cemetery is an historic cemetery in West Hampstead. The entire site covers 26 acres. It was consecrated by the Bishop of London and opened in November 1876. There are an estimated 60,000 people buried there.

While the neighbouring Highgate cemetery can boast Karl Marx as a 'resident' Hampstead cemetery has its fair share of notable people including Kate Greenaway, children's book illustrator; Joseph Lister, who pioneered the antiseptic treatment of wounds and Marie Lloyd, music hall star.

The cemetery has a large number of mature trees and there is a wildlife area in the north part of the eastern half of the site.

## West Hampstead: 28 January 2011

West Hampstead has three stations within walking distance of each other. I suppose if the train network was being designed now, instead of 150 years ago, the engineers would have devised one large railway hub which would extend north, south, east and west.

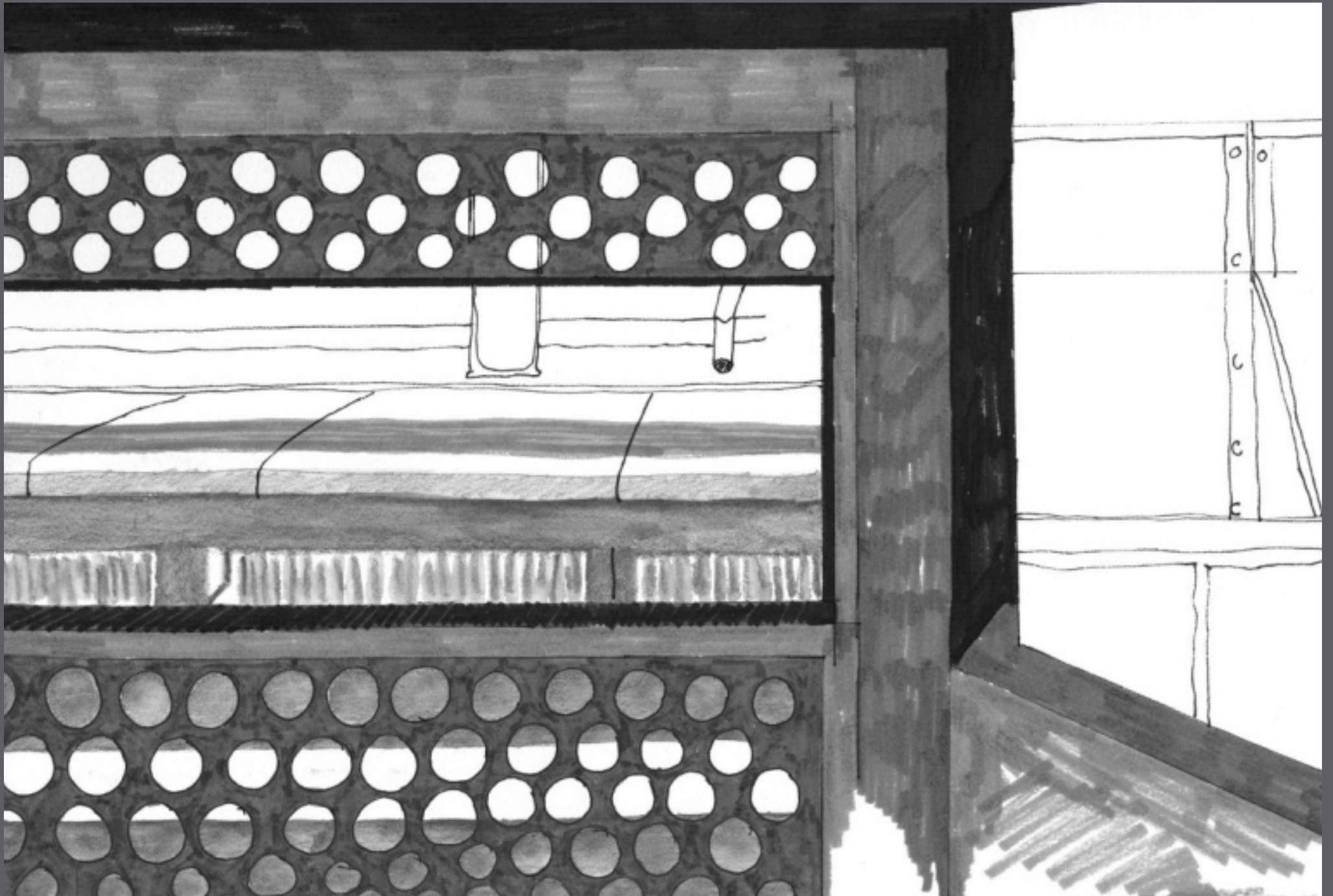
Today I arrived at the station in the middle of the three. It was very cold, really too cold to draw outside. I headed out of the station looking for a lunch stop and ended up at a small café called Bon Café and enjoyed an egg mayo sandwich while gazing out of the window wondering what to draw. When I wasn't staring out of the window I watched the lunchtime news on the television which was broadcasting the rioting going on in Cairo which I found quite disturbing.

When I couldn't find any excuse for staying where I was

any longer I left the warmth behind me and went exploring. Fortunately there was a lot more going on in the area than there had been at Finchley Road. The general views were a lot more interesting and if it had been warmer I would have enjoyed taking more time over my drawing. As it was I dashed this picture off and developed it a bit more when I got home and after my hands had thawed out.

I have decided to mothball this drawing project until the weather has warmed up. I'll keep an eye on the weather forecasts over the next few weeks before I set out again.





Brondesbury station: 18 March 2011

## Affluent suburb

Brondesbury is an affluent suburb close to Kilburn in north west London. It was a rural area until the arrival of the railways in the mid 19th century when residential housing began being built in earnest. It soon became seen as a desirable place to live, especially for London's Jewish community.

## Brondesbury station: 18 March 2011

Today I've once again resumed this drawing project after a seven week delay and, as you can see, managed to complete an entire drawing.

It was definitely warmer today than my last excursion at the end of January but, because it rained most of the day, it still felt very cold. I've decided that I must be a fair weather artist after all.

Since it was raining I needed to find some shelter so I sat in the waiting area towards the back of the platform. Once upon a time you would have had a real waiting room to sit in that had doors and even a gas heater to keep the chill off. Now, if you are lucky, you get to sit in something like this that is designed to look like a bike shed.

While I was sitting there I felt there was a tangible relationship between the shape and size of my shelter and the shape and size of

a train carriage, so my view from here is as though I was sitting in the train that I was actually waiting for.



## Victorian charm

Brondesbury Park is another affluent suburb in the Borough of Brent that developed during the expansion of London in the mid 19th century.

Yusuf Islam, commonly known by his former stage name Cat Stevens, founded in 1983 the Islamia Primary School in Brondesbury Park.

## Brondesbury Park station: 28 March 2011

Brondesbury Park station struck me as being much more attractive than Brondesbury where I was just 10 days ago but that is probably because the weather was so nice today.

This station, along with all the others on this line, is undergoing major refurbishment. However the covered walkways still retain some of their Victorian charm and in this drawing I was interested in the lines of the roofs. Simple as that.



Close to Brondesbury Park station: 28 March 2011



## St Anne Brondesbury

The church in this drawing is called St Anne Brondesbury and is part of the Church of England. Their worship is within the 'liberal catholic' tradition. They engage with the London Inter Faith Centre and with the United Reformed Church.

## Close to Brondesbury Park station: 28 March 2011

This is the drawing I made after I had left the station and turned right into what I think was Salisbury Road.

I was attracted to the view in the distance and then ended up drawing what was in front of it. For this one I used a fine black pen and the previous one was in pencil.

Since I can never predict what medium I will want to work in at any given time I usually take a selection of things so I can make a choice on the spur of the moment. I decided at the beginning of this project that I would do all the drawings in mono, regardless of the medium, to provide some continuity.



Café culture, Kensal Rise  
6.5.11 - lovely warm day

## Tornado strikes

Kensal Green and Kensal Rise have vague boundaries and some residents are known to use both terms with little regard for geographic accuracy.

Kensal Green is the site of Kensal Green Cemetery which was inspired by Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris. There is a set of gates in the southern wall of the cemetery which is adjacent to the Grand Union Canal where it is said coffins carried by barge could be unloaded.

A tornado struck Kensal Green on 7 December 2006. Up to 150 houses were damaged, six people were injured and the cost of the damage is estimated to be at least £2m.

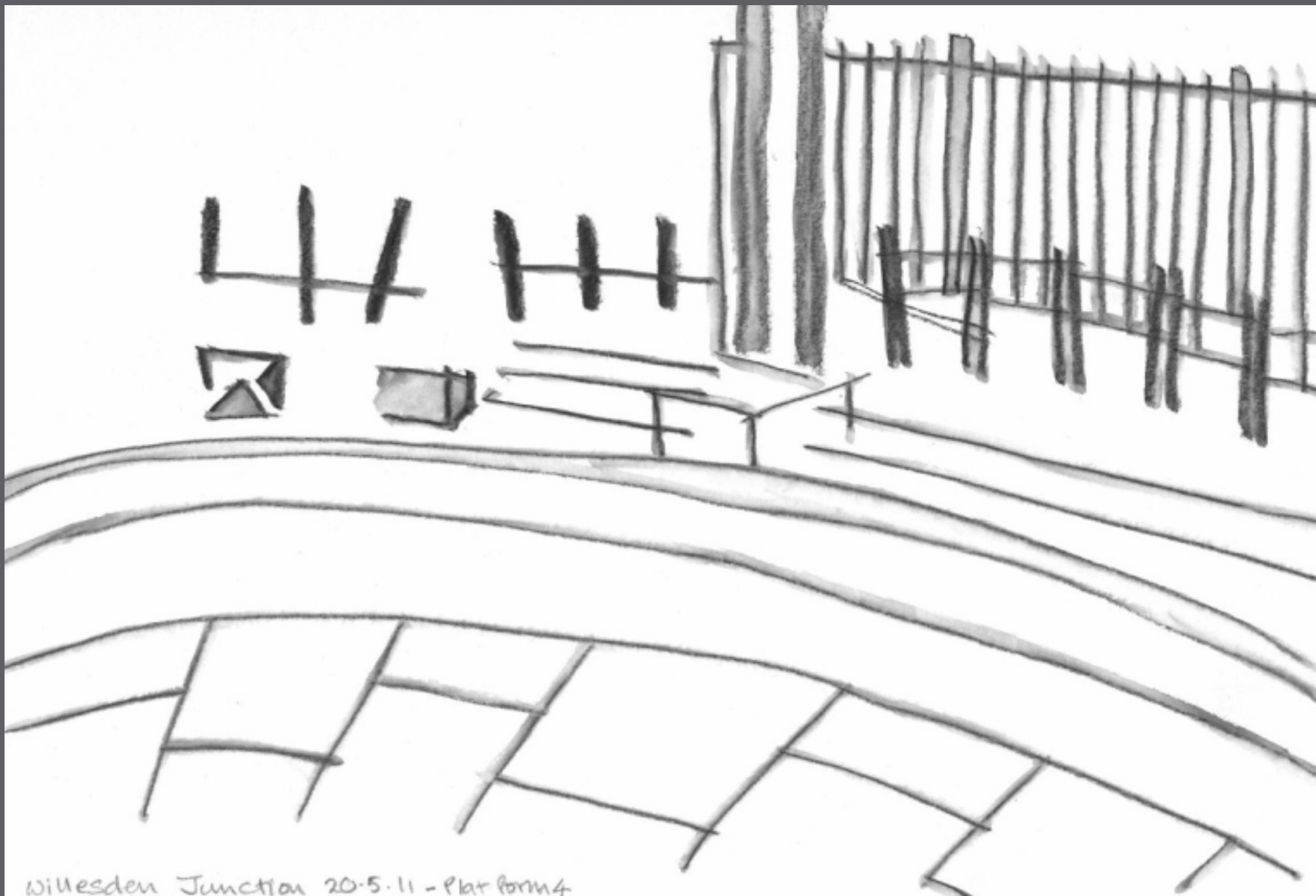
## Café culture, Kensal Rise—lovely warm day: 6 May 2011

I'm two thirds of the way through this project now and I can see the end in sight. It is tempting to rush ahead, get the job done and crack on with something else. Instead, I decided to take this drawing fairly slowly and savour the experience of being in a part of London that is new to me.

The journey to Kensal Rise took longer than expected what with cancellations and delays but when we finally got moving I enjoyed passing through the stations where I have already stopped and made drawings. It gave me a chance to be nostalgic while the journey is still in progress.

On arrival I peered through the slatted wooden fence separating the station from the neighbouring street and spied the word COFFEE in large letters on a building some distance away. I realised that I fancied a cup of coffee so headed

over to this rather uninteresting looking building only to be greeted with this lovely scene of oranges on a cart outside the café. The weather was warm and not windy. I had a table to myself and was able to spread out. Towards the end of my visit I had a chat with the proprietor, who I think was Italian, and he told me that watching me work in dip pen and ink reminded him of when he was at school and that's what they used to write with.



## Anglo-Saxon origins

The name derives from the Anglo-Saxon Willesdune meaning the Hill of the Spring and a settlement bearing this name dates back to 939AD.

From the 14th to the 16th centuries the town was a place of pilgrimage due to the presence of two ancient statues of the Virgin Mary at the church of St Mary.

The parish of Willesden remained predominantly rural until 1875 and the arrival of the railways. Willesden changed from a middle class suburb to a working class area during WWI. The area went into a period of decline during the 1970s and 1980s.

## Willesden Junction–Platform Four: 20 May 2011

Willesden Junction is a vast industrial site with platforms and railway tracks pointing in different directions almost as far as the eye can see. It doesn't have the charm of Hampstead or the liveliness of Stratford but the many vertical and horizontal lines make for an interesting view.





Willesden Junction from Station Road: 20 May 2011

## Lively culture

The town featured in the novel 'White Teeth' by Zadie Smith (published in 2000).

'The Last Detective' (2002) was set and filmed around Willesden.

Ronald Coase, Nobel prizewinner in Economics, was born in 1910 and grew up in Willesden.

Willesden is home to London's largest cycling club which was founded in 1926 and has over 200 members.

## Willesden Junction from Station Road: 20 May 2011

The area immediately around the station doesn't seem to have been developed much since the end of the 19th century with the exception of constant traffic.

There is an interesting group of Brazilian businesses close by the station including a finance company, a lingerie shop and a grocery store. I enjoyed a cup of coffee in a café that was showing a Brazilian game show on the television which made me feel as though I was on holiday abroad.



Acton Central Station: 3 June 2011

## Soap Sud City

The name Acton means 'Oak farm' or 'Farm by oak trees'. It was originally an ancient village that became absorbed into London as the city expanded.

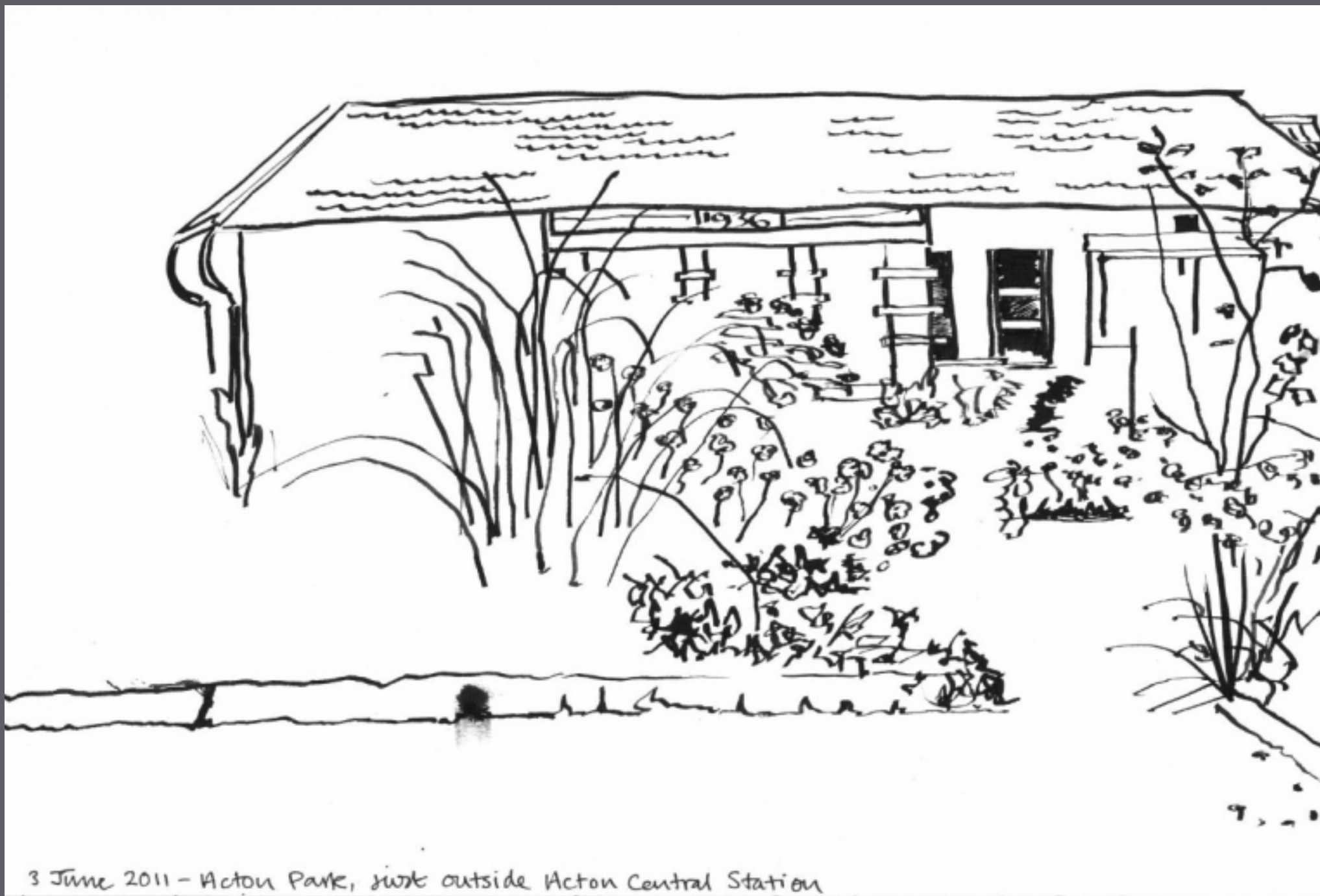
By the 17th century Acton had become popular as a summer retreat for courtiers and lawyers.

Acton became famous for its laundries as a result of its source of soft water (London is noted for its hard water) which led to the nicknames of 'Soapsud Island' or 'Soapsud City'.

## Acton Central Station: 3 June 2011

This was the warmest day of the year so far and I felt as though I was on holiday.

Acton Central seems to be very green and leafy and delightfully old fashioned. It was like taking a step back in time.



Acton Park just outside Acton Central Station: 3 June 2011



## Much loved park

Acton Park is just one of the parks open to the public in the Borough of Ealing. It opened to the public in 1888 to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria.

It includes an important site for nature conservation in the southern part of the park where the ponds are located. There are also some fine specimens of mature trees.

There are many recreational facilities to enjoy in the park and it is much loved by the local community and is rarely empty.

## Acton Park just outside Acton Central Station: 3 June 2011

This is Acton Park which is just outside Acton Central station.

There was a fun fair behind this pavilion and I enjoyed listening to the fun while I made this drawing. I used pen and ink for this sketch and managed to get ink all over myself.



South Acton Station: 3 June 2011

## South Acton Estate

South Acton is dominated by the South Acton housing estate, a large public housing development. South Acton was originally built to a traditional Victorian street pattern. In the post war period the area was earmarked for redevelopment. The council began building the South Acton Estate in 1949 and building continued until the 1970s.

Flats on the upper floors of the taller tower blocks enjoy spectacular views across London but the fabric of the buildings need significant repair.

Historically, crime has been a problem for the South Acton Estate but in recent years efforts have been made to tackle the problems.

## South Acton Station: 3 June 2011

This was my second drawing of a bridge in one day which is something of a record for me (Acton Central was the first). South Acton is not as picturesque as Acton Central but I found this view intriguing none the less because once your eye has been drawn to the top of the stairs you've no idea what there is to see unless you pay a visit to the station.



South Acton 3 June 2011 - Leaky subd<sup>h</sup>bia

## Victorian housing

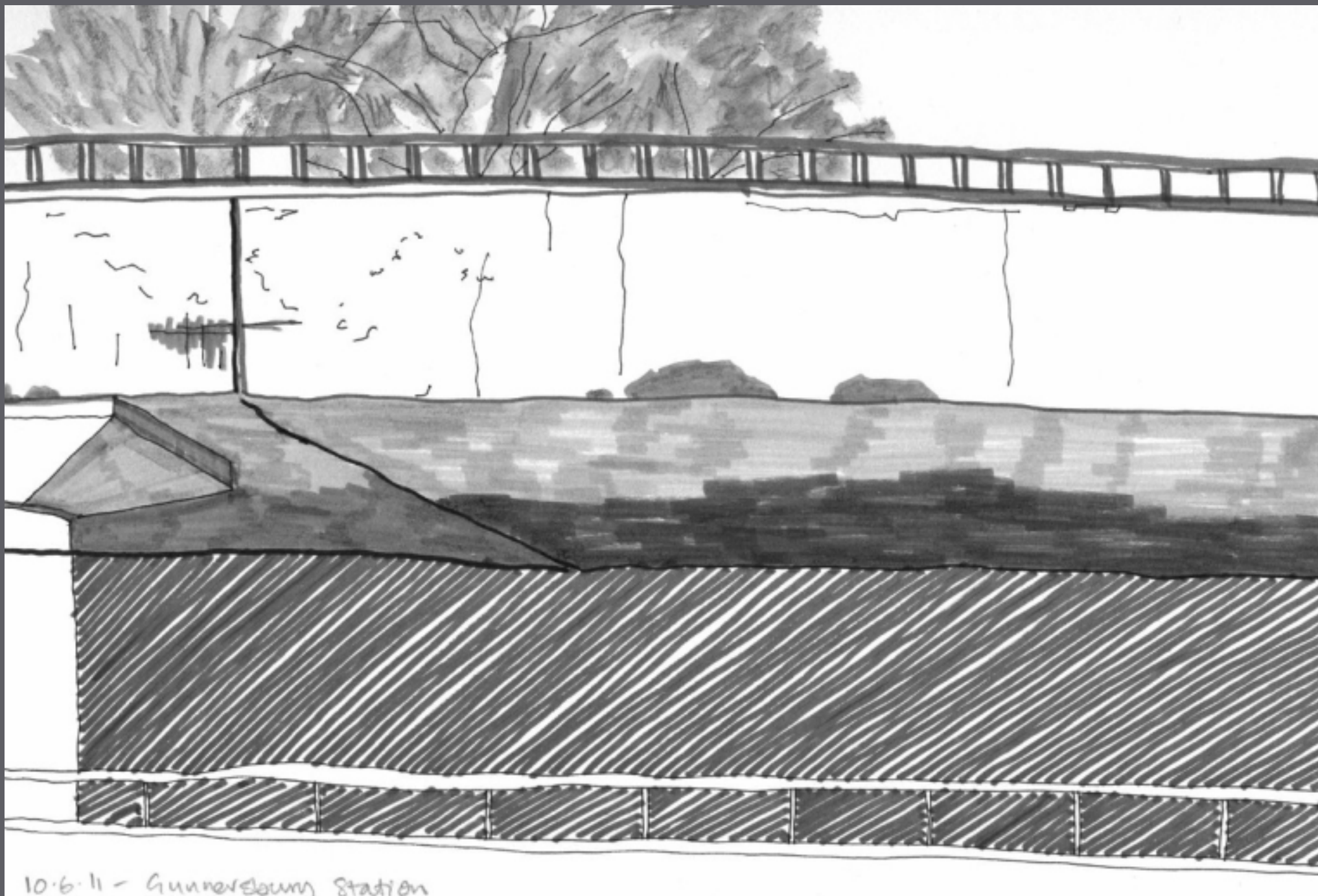
I had no idea when I visited South Acton station that such an enormous estate of public housing dominated the area.

I read on Wikipedia that the site is surrounded to the north by Acton High Street, to the south by the London Overground railway line, and to the east by a Victorian residential neighbourhood which is what I think I must have been looking at when I drew the drawing above.

## Just outside South Acton Station: 3 June 2011

Then I turned left out of the station and was met with this view straight out of suburbia. There was so much greenery growing around this house I wondered if they got any natural daylight at all.





## Nature reserve

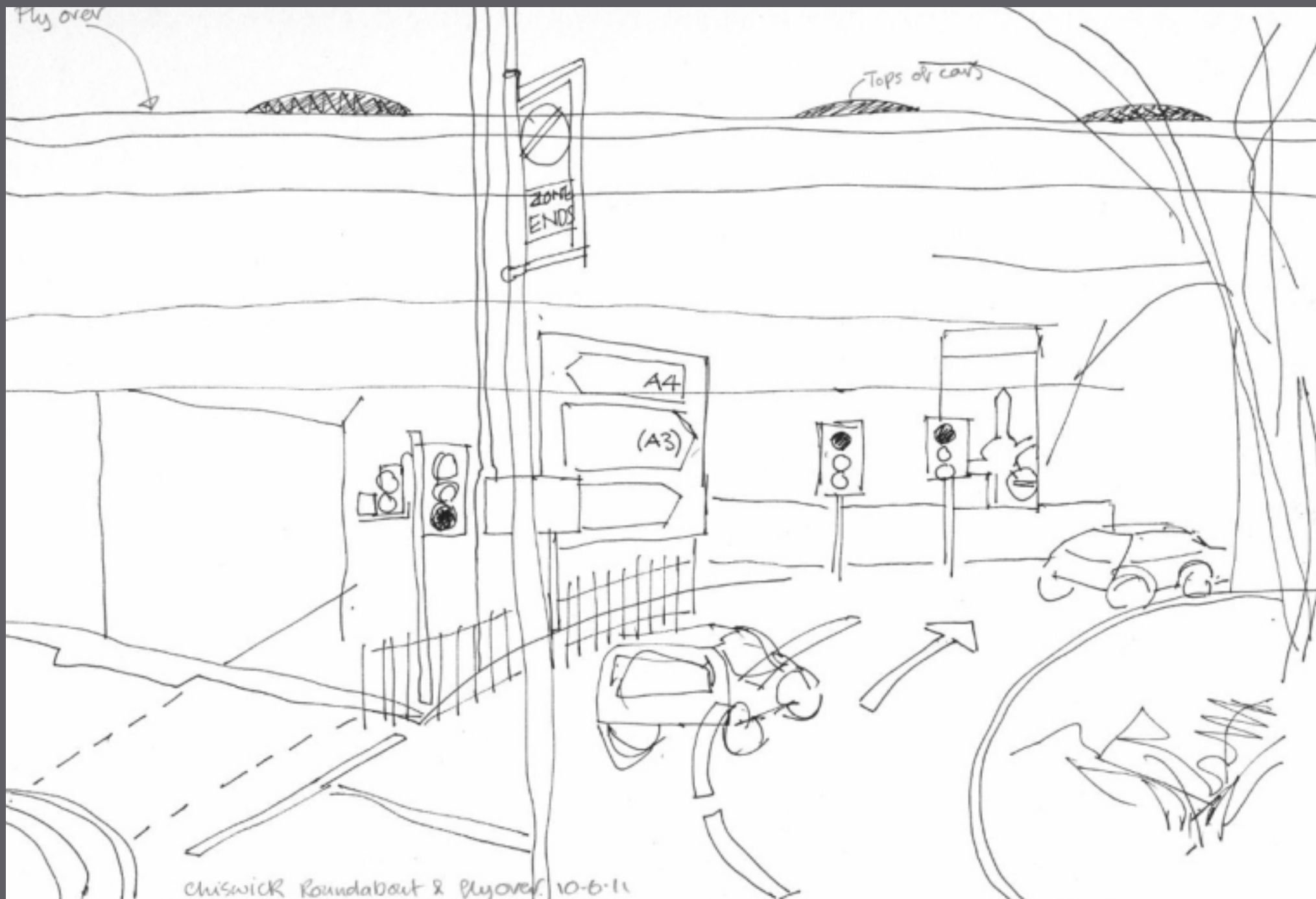
According to Wikipedia the name 'Gunnersbury' means 'Manor house of a woman called Gunnhildr'. It is an area of mainly residential housing and to the east is the Gunnersbury Triangle nature reserve.

This is an area of woodland between three curving railway lines that supports thousands of different species of birds, plants and wildlife. It is managed by the London Wildlife Trust. It is open to the public and entrance is free. The aim is to manage the woodland as a natural piece of countryside in town.

## Gunnersbury Station: 10 June 2011

The view when I got off the train was fairly dispiriting. It was raining as well so I sheltered in the waiting room and drew this view (excluding the window frame). I did wonder if I should have stayed at home, however I persevered for a bit and found I'd become quite fascinated by this view of damaged concrete that is supporting a road or car park above.

When I decided that I'd done enough I spotted a young man watching me work. We got into conversation and he came and sat next to me. He asked if he could look at the sketch book and as he flicked through the pages asked me for some tips for improving his own freehand drawing. I gave him an impromptu lesson which seemed to please him and I hope he had the courage to persevere with his own drawing.



Chiswick roundabout and flyover: 10 June 2011

## M4 rollercoaster

The Chiswick flyover is an elevated section of the M4 motorway. It was designed to relieve congestion at Chiswick roundabout. The opening ceremony for the flyover was performed by the Hollywood actress, Jayne Mansfield in 1959.

Ten years later in 1969 it was said to be the most dangerous road in Britain. By 2009, 97,000 vehicles per day were using the M4 flyover.

## Chiswick roundabout and flyover: 10 June 2011

I turned left out of Gunnersbury station and found myself on Chiswick High Road. My only association with Chiswick was visiting my brother when he lived in a very cold, shared house in the area in the 1970s. So this area is uncharted territory for me.

I wandered along the road until I reached the Chiswick roundabout and flyover. I did recognise this and decided to record the view because, like it or not, it is a famous west London landmark. It was tricky to work out how to portray noisy moving traffic that wasn't still long enough to draw. I decided to suggest it with the movement of the lines and one or two vehicles.

I also observed that the trees and shrubs growing on the roundabout are really beautiful and that's not something you'd generally notice when you are just racing round it in a car.





The Railway Pub, Kew Gardens Station: 24 June 2011



## The Tap on the Line

The two storey yellow brick station buildings are fine examples of mid-Victorian railway architecture and are protected as part of the Kew Gardens conservation area.

Kew Gardens is the only station on the London Underground network that has a pub attached to it. The pub has a door (no longer in use) which leads onto platform one. Previously known as The Railway, the pub has been renovated and reopened in 2013 as The Tap on the Line.

The footbridge to the south of the station is also noteworthy and is Grade II-listed in its own right.

Source: Wikipedia

## The Railway Pub, Kew Gardens Station: 24 June 2011

I've reached Kew Gardens Station now and only have one more station left to visit which will mark the end of my journey. I'm pleased that I'm still enjoying the train ride and recalling the images I've drawn as the train passes through each location.

I finally arrived at the station around lunchtime so decided to kill two birds with one stone by having lunch in the Railway Pub. When you look at the building from the outside it appears to have been built at the same time as the railway ticket office but I can't imagine what it was used for – perhaps it was always a pub.

From where I was sitting I could see the station platform to my left with the trains arriving and departing and to my right the busy little cul-de-sac outside the station with its fancy restaurants, health food shop, book shop, banks and expensive

children's clothes shop. I chose a complicated scene to draw and wasn't sure where to start, or to finish, for that matter.

The tennis from Wimbledon was showing on the TV in the pub and the commentary was loud enough to be a welcome diversion from my internal dialogue that was grumbling away while I laboured on the drawing. I eventually decided to call it quits around 2:20pm since I also wanted to get into Kew Gardens and do a drawing there too. On reflection I quite like its unfinished look.



The Temple of Aeolus, Kew Gardens: 24 June 2011

## Exotic gardens

Kew Gardens was founded in 1840 and is the world's largest collection of living plants which include more than 30,000 different kinds of plant. The library contains more than 750,000 volumes and in 2003 the gardens were put on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites.

Kew has one of the largest compost heaps in Europe made from green waste from the gardens and the waste from the stables of the Household Cavalry.

The Palm House, built in the 1840s, was the first large scale structure to use wrought iron. The Temperate House, which is twice as large as the Palm House was built later in the 19th century is now the largest Victorian glass house in existence.

## The Temple of Aeolus, Kew Gardens: 24 June 2011

It's always a mistake to have a preconceived idea about what you intend to draw and I fell into this trap yesterday.

I had planned to do an elaborate drawing inside the Palm House in Kew Gardens but they keep the temperature so high in there, since it is full of tropical plants, I almost felt my life-force drain out of me while I was in there. It is a fascinating place to explore but I couldn't spend too long inside.

I had to abandon this idea and, while sitting on a memorial bench outside this giant green house, I mulled over what to do next. I was surrounded by other limp looking visitors who also seemed to be in need of recuperation which may explain why there are so many benches outside the Palm House.

While sitting there I could see in the distance on top of a grassy hillock this temple which

looked intriguing. So I wandered over to it, via the Waterlily House where a nice, elderly gentleman took some time to explain to the assembled visitors in clear detail the sex lives of waterlilies (which were in bloom and looking lovely).

There are a few temples dotted around Kew Gardens and this one is called the Temple of Aeolus who was a mythical king of storms and winds. When I had settled upon a convenient position and began my drawing I found I was also being entertained by a bunch of young school children who were behaving like the 'famous five' and were chasing up and down to the temple playing some game where they were rescuing people from slavery. I managed to draw part of one of these children but it may be difficult to spot them.





Overlooking the Thames from Richmond Hill: 1 July 2011

## Royal origins

Richmond was founded following Henry VII's building of Richmond Palace in the 16th century. The town and the palace were particularly associated with Queen Elizabeth I who spent her last days there.

Richmond was formerly part of the ancient parish of Kingston upon Thames. The town became a municipal borough in 1890 and now it is part of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. Many of the historic houses have listed building status and the scenic view of the River Thames from Richmond is protected by an Act of Parliament.

## Overlooking the Thames from Richmond Hill: 1 July 2011

I have arrived in Richmond which means I'm almost at the end of my journey. I was keen to return to a view I have drawn before which overlooks Petersham Meadow from Richmond Hill. I rarely visit this side of London so I felt, not for the first time on this tour, as though I was on holiday. I am a

stranger here so finding my way back to this view felt like an adventure.

Richmond is a very wealthy town. It is full of large, gracious houses with expensive cars parked outside. There are boutique hotels on the riverbank and expensive restaurants everywhere. It was a

lovely sunny day when I visited and that enhanced the general feeling of tranquility and 'everything's all right with the world'. The last time I visited this particular view was in May 2005, just a few months before I began this whole project, so it seems fitting to show you the sketch I made then.







Richmond Station 1-7-11

## A chequered history

Richmond station is managed by South West Trains. It is the terminus of one of the branches of London Underground's District Line and London Overground's North London Line. Train services from Waterloo to Reading also run through Richmond.

The present station building dates from 1937 and was built in Portland Stone in Art Deco style. The station first opened in 1846 by the Richmond and West End Railway (R&WER). Thereafter train services operated by different railway companies continued for many years until 1923 when the station came under the management of Southern Railway (SR) before being nationalised and becoming part of British Railways.

## Richmond Station–journey's end: 1 July 2011

This marks the end of this journey. I'm at Richmond Station and I've attempted in this pen and ink drawing to convey the hustle and bustle of people constantly coming and going.

I chose to eat, very slowly, a pasty from the *West Cornwall Pasty Company* for my lunch because they have tables and chairs on the concourse that provided a handy view of the foot traffic. Richmond is a very busy station with various lines beginning and ending there. The station architecture is an odd mish-mash of styles from its Victorian beginnings, through 1960s utility, up to the present day with its smooth glass partitions and electronic gates.

I have finally completed this drawing journey which consisted of a series of around 30 short trips which became increasingly longer the further west I travelled. It has resulted in 50

drawings (including the front cover), beginning on 1 August 2005 and ending on 1 July 2011. As an enthusiastic train traveller I enjoyed encountering areas of London that I had never visited before and using the train to get there.

My confidence in my drawing has developed enormously along the way and I have learned to appreciate equally the drawings that I felt were successful along with the less successful experiments and made myself publish them all. Last but not least, I've enjoyed having the readers of my blog along for the ride too and their comments have always been interesting and helpful.





HIJ '13



## The north bank

Historically North Woolwich consisted of two nearby tracts of land, situated on the north bank of the River Thames. The western detached part was surrounded on three sides by the parish of East Ham and the eastern portion bordered East Ham to the west and Barking Town to the north.

Administratively, North Woolwich was part of Kent at least since the Norman Conquest when one of William the Conqueror's lords, Hamo, was granted land on both sides of the Thames at this spot, probably to enable him to enjoy the taxes from cross-river traffic. The population peaked just before the First World War, and reduced substantially in the Second World War when it was heavily bombed.

Source: Wikipedia

## Looking over to the north bank of the Thames: 5 June 2013

I began my 'Drawing my way round London' project with a sketch of the Woolwich Ferry. I can remember being spellbound by the view of the ferries travelling to and fro across the river and I made a note to myself to make a trip on it one day. Nearly eight years later I finally did.

Little did I know back in 2005 that the North London Line would be closing for good a year later. So returning there a couple of days ago was a bit of a shock. The station buildings are shuttered up and look very small and Victorian next to the gigantic Crossrail project that is being built next to it.

There are building works everywhere nearby but I finally managed to make my way to the queue for the ferry. Years ago I proved to be a useless sailor on the one occasion I spent a weekend on a yacht but I do get a buzz from travelling on ferries

because it feels like an adventure and I can enjoy looking at yachts from a safe distance (preferably from the safety of shore).

All the freight vehicles and cars stay up on deck and the foot passengers go below. There may have been only about a dozen of us on foot but there was probably enough space for at least a 100 or more people. It felt quite eerie with so much space for so few people. The clanking sounds were impressive as was the gloomy lighting. All too soon it was over and we had to disembark.

My plan was to find a spot to do a sketch looking back to the north bank. Here I was trying out a combination of watercolour paint and Inktense pencils which are water soluble. I also had the treat of watching a very large, two masted yacht sail past while I worked.

I finished my outing with a

walk through the Woolwich Foot tunnel back to the north bank of the river. Like the Greenwich Foot tunnel it goes under the Thames but unlike the Greenwich tunnel, which is quite popular, I was the only person using it so I only had my over active imagination and the sounds of my own footsteps for company. I was very relieved when I finally climbed up the steps on the other side and reached daylight again.