

• CARA • IRISH HOMELESS PROJECT



ANNUAL REPORT
1987/88

CARA IRISH HOMELESS PROJECT ANNUAL REPORT 1987/88

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CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

This year saw continued growth in both the housing and information work of Cara. Thinking back over the months it seems to me that three particular aspects of our activities stand out.

In June we opened our first scheme for Irish women, the Craven Park Road Project in Haringey. Cara from the outset recognised that while the needs of Irish homeless men are immediately and often painfully apparent, it must not be assumed that all is well for Irish women. The fact that they have historically emigrated in equal proportions to men, the fact that the employment (and therefore income) available to them is less advantageous than to men, and the fact that that employment frequently exposes them to exploitation and long term insecurity, made it imperative that Cara investigate and develop provision appropriate to women's needs. Craven Park Road represents the beginning of this element of our work, and we have been pleased to add further provision for women to the Development Programme, bringing the number of schemes for this section of our Community to six. We were pleased to receive the comments of the first group of young women resident in the project for this report, and I hope you will read them with interest.

Continuing on this theme, Cara was invited by SHELTER to address a workshop at the International Women's Housing Conference it hosted in Sheffield in July, "Our Homes: Ourselves". Our Director, Ada Burns, spoke on Irish women's experiences of housing need and the text of her talk was included in the final conference report. While this kind of event inevitably adds to the workload of the organisation, it is crucial if we are to broaden understanding of, and foster positive responses to the housing needs of Irish people.

In 1986/87 Cara produced a comprehensive report on the issue of homelessness affecting young Irish people in London. 'The Housing Position of Young Irish People' contained wide ranging recommendations for local and central government agencies, here and in Ireland. Work continued during the year to bring these to the attention of those responsible for housing policy and provision in London. Cara has presented the report to the London Borough's "Single Homelessness in London Working Party" (S.H.I.L), to the SHIL Womens' Sub Committee and to the Special Needs Housing Working Groups of a number of local authorities. The Association of London Authorities (A.L.A) requested comments from its members on the report's recommendations.

As a consequence of this work, discussions with officers at the A.L.A and SHIL produced a view that a number of small-scale seminars should be organised around the issue and this is something which we intend to progress over the coming year. It has to be said, nevertheless, that while Cara's report clearly identifies a number of cost-effective and easily-implemented proposals which could help to alleviate the situation, no local authority or voluntary agency has as yet grasped the opportunity to respond to the need of the growing number of young Irish people who are homeless in London.

While I believe that Cara has presented a clear, strategic appraisal of the needs, it does not as a housing association, have the resources to push this through the variety of bureaucracies involved. Consequently we submitted a funding proposal for consideration by the Irish Lottery Fund which would facilitate an intensive one year information project on the issue of Irish youth homelessness. As the year ends we have not yet had an indication of the response to this, but hope that the Authorities in Ireland will take this opportunity to make a constructive contribution to welfare work with vulnerable Irish folk living in Britain, without negating the chief responsibility of British Authorities to support such activities.

I think that the third aspect of the year's work which is particularly significant is the decision to seek to register as a housing association with the Housing Corporation. The reasons behind this move are outlined later in the report, but it should be stressed that it was not a decision taken lightly by Cara. Nevertheless, I believe that after our first full year of housing management, and with the work we have done to put together a balanced programme of supported housing schemes for vulnerable Irish people. Cara is now well placed to move on to this important next stage of its development as a specialist ethnic housing resource. I recognise that much work remains to ensure that those agencies responsible for funding and monitoring the activities of housing associations understand the special cultural dimensions of the work which Cara does. This is crucial if Irish homelessness as a phenomenon rooted in disadvantage and discrimination is to be effectively challenged. However, the initial findings arising out of the major research project undertaken in Westminster over the last two years, clearly substantiate this view, and we are working towards the launch of a major policy pamphlet in 1988/89

which will I believe contribute significantly to the debate.

Space does not permit me to consider all of the work of the agency during 1987/88; the high quality resettlement services being offered to Irish men and women within the secure and dignified environment of our housing projects; offering Irish people a safe place where they can critically assess their past and plan for their future within a culturally sensitive ethos; the growth in our development programme which across seven London boroughs now stands at 80 new bedspaces; the successful application to LB. of Haringey for a grant to appoint a Development Manager to help us to develop further provision.

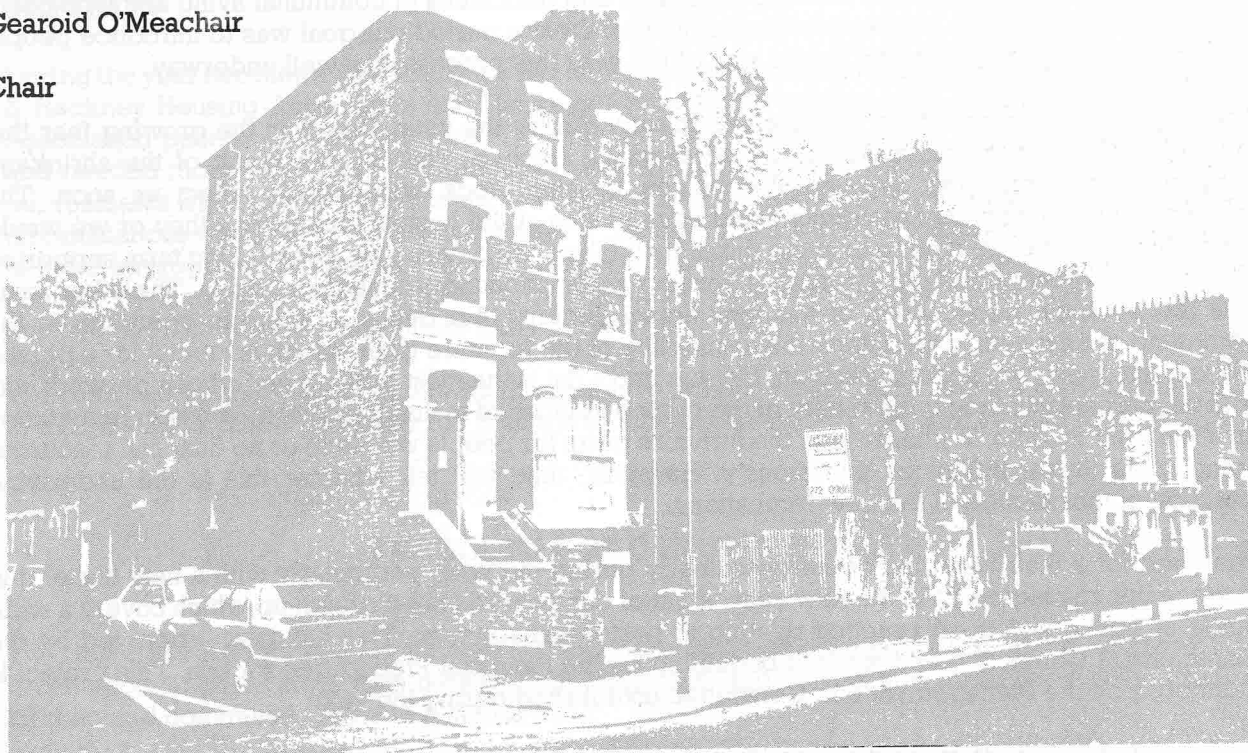
Cara continues to grow and as we examine the implications of the plethora of new legislation which confronts us, its future more than ever depends upon the energy, goodwill and commitment of its voluntary Management Committee, and on the support of local authorities, funding agencies, and of the community whose vulnerable members it exists to serve.

I believe that the report which follows further demonstrates, both the need for Cara's provision, and the agency's ability and willingness to meet that need.

The challenge for Cara and the Irish Community is to convert in partnership with Central Government, Local Authorities and the Voluntary Housing Movement the theoretical concepts of Equal Opportunities and the Irish to a tangible equitable distribution of scarce resources. Only in this way can the damage experienced through discrimination and exploitation begin to be tackled and Irish people maximise their potential within a multi-cultural society.

Gearoid O'Meachair

Chair



CARA — A CHANGE OF NAME

At the Annual General Meeting in 1987 the membership agreed to change the full name of Cara, dropping the word 'rootless'.

While it is felt that very many Irish people who experience homelessness also experience a sense of cultural alienation or rootlessness, the word has come to be associated with a personal disability or failure which is contrary to Cara's philosophy.

It also seems to present some difficulties for the bureaucrats who have occasion to write reports about Cara. A recent report described us as; 'Cara, the Irish Homeless and Restless Project'

Consequently, we have become the shorter and simpler Cara Irish Homeless Project.

HOUSE REPORTS

Introduction

1987/88 was a year of some expansion when the Craven Park Road project for young women came into management. This project was particularly welcomed because it made concrete Cara's commitment to providing accommodation for various sections of the Irish community. With the appointment of Mary Boyle as the Hostel Manager the management team expanded to five members.

It was also a year when the staff team continued to examine the resources under our charge and devise policies and codes of practice for the proper and most effective running of the houses.

These discussions were prefaced with the understanding that the people living in the Cara hostels are there primarily because of housing need which is as a result of inadequate resources and not exclusively due to personal disability. Because the relationship between managers and residents is not equal — due to the limited legal safeguards of the licence agreement — we are committed to developing an ethic based on mutual self-respect and the right of residents to personal self-determination. This aspiration demands continuous re-evaluation which occurs informally and formally at staff meetings.

Because our hostels had only recently come into management we agreed in consultation with the Management Committee and the Director to proceed cautiously by initially choosing people who had the personal resources to cope with the pressures and difficulties of communal living and who could help establish a positive atmosphere in the houses. Over a period our goal was to introduce people with greater support needs and by the end of the year this process was well underway.

There were two issues which occupied us greatly during the year. One was the growing fear that the re-housing option for residents would begin to decline. This is as a result of the shrinkage happening in public and Housing Association housing stock which could affect us soon. The consequence of this is that residents could have to stay at the hostels longer than they or we would wish. However, we are hoping to avoid this situation by Cara developing its own long term supported housing and by approaching a range of housing associations for nomination rights. The other issue was the potential implications of the new Social Security Act due to come into operation at the beginning of next year; particularly the availability of the furniture grant which is crucial for a person moving into their own accommodation. Moving into a flat is the most difficult period of a person's stay with us, particularly facing the reality of the responsibilities of maintaining their own accommodation on a reduced income. Withdrawal of the furniture grant for people with little or no financial resources compounds these difficulties enormously. However, time will tell whether this is the underlying intention of that section of the new regulations.

The need for a Staff Handbook emerged clearly during the year, particularly with a new hostel due to come into management in the new year. A list of contents has been drawn up which covers a wide range of policy and good practice relating to hostel management. This has been approved by the Management Committee and work is beginning on the Financial Procedures section. This project is monitored by the Management Sub Committee established during the year.

During the year Cara started a process of evaluating the impact for residents of living in an Irish house. By a series of informal discussions with residents, and debates among the managers and at the Sub Committees, the initial responses seem to indicate that the impact is indeed significant. However, further formal research is needed to justify this claim which will be set in motion in the coming year and reported on in next year's report. However, what is clear is that Irish people coming to Cara are welcomed on the basis that their Irishness will not be prejudiced or attacked and in our experience this has been welcomed by residents.

AMHURST ROAD HOSTEL REPORT

The hostel at Amhurst Road is situated in the London Borough of Hackney. At the beginning of the year we had rooms for eight men between the ages of thirty and sixty years. One of these rooms was a double which we had difficulty in letting. Apart from the difficulty of finding two men to occupy it, of greater concern was the noise generated from the kitchen and communal area adjacent to it. The latter problem made it unacceptable for occupancy. The problem was resolved by turning the original office into a bedroom and using the double room as an office, giving an overall occupancy of seven. Cara successfully renegotiated the lower occupancy with New Islington & Hackney Housing Association.

At the beginning of the year some difficulty was experienced because very few appropriate referrals were being made to the house. The central London agencies who we were in contact with reported to us that most of the men they spoke to were reluctant to move so far away from the centre of the city. This situation was made more difficult by the lack of response from local agencies. However, with persistent approaches full occupancy was achieved and we now operate a waiting list for potential residents.

MOVE ON

During the year two men successfully moved into their own accommodation provided by New Islington & Hackney Housing Association and Hackney Council. The original man nominated to the Housing Association pulled out after one week of occupancy. He felt strongly that he could not cope with it and needed more time. The resident came back to the house and we were able to refer another of our residents who was happy to accept. New Islington and Hackney H.A's flexibility in these particular circumstances was greatly appreciated after a discussion we were able to nominate the first man on to more appropriate permanent accommodation and both men are doing well and keeping in regular contact. By the end of the year three further nominations were outstanding and the indications are that two of these will be made offers early in the New Year.

We have had very few difficulties with the structure of the house. The facilities are being maintained to a high standard and generally the house is much appreciated by the men staying there.

BARDOLPH ROAD HOSTEL REPORT

The Hostel at Bardolph Road is situated in the London Borough of Islington just off the Holloway Road. It can accommodate eight men between the ages of 30 and 60 years. We provide a fully equipped kitchen and communal area and a laundry.

After 13 months in management the house remains in very good condition. This is primarily due to the very high standard of finish and decoration which has contributed towards the men staying here taking good care of the place!

Initially the intention was for the men to stay for nine months to one year with move on accommodation being provided by Circle 33 Housing Trust — the development agency — and the London Borough of Islington. However, because of the overall pressure on public and housing association stock this aspiration has proved to be over optimistic which has resulted in the overall length of stay being extended to up to two years.

Two men were rehoused in Circle 33 flats during the year. At the time of writing both continue to maintain them successfully and again have kept in contact. A nomination to Islington Council did not materialise due to administrative problems caused by decentralisation in the Borough. In the end the non-priority rehousing scheme for special needs housing projects was suspended for the remainder

of the year. Of the two men rehoused one received a furniture grant under the old DHSS rules plus a decoration grant from Circle 33. This helped him to create a more homely environment in his new flat. The other man is waiting for a decision on his furniture grant application which has been delayed by industrial action at the local office.

During the year three residents left suddenly. One decided to return to his family in Ireland. Another chose to return to the hostel from which he was referred. The third man just disappeared but was thoughtful enough to return his keys by post.

In April one of the residents died. He was a man who had worked most of his life in the building industry and over the years his health had deteriorated. He was taken seriously ill at the hostel and within three weeks of being admitted to hospital he died of heart failure.

We would like to thank Fr. Colm Gallagher of St. Gabriels Parish, Holloway Road for his support during this period.

Throughout the year the volume of enquiries and referrals has remained high.

Applications for Housing to Amhurst Road and Bardolph Road.

Generally speaking, we invite referrals once we have an indication that there is likely to be a vacancy coming up. Given the mobility of many of the men who use the houses it is not helpful to maintain anything other than a short waiting list.

During the year we received 47 completed referrals from a variety of agencies including:

Bondway Shelter
Cricklewood Homeless Concern
Central London Housing Advisory Service
Haringey Irish Community Care Centre
Irish in Islington Project
Prison Chaplaincy
Passage Day Centre
St. Mungo, Endell Street
Local Authorities — Brent, Haringey, Westminster.
Joint Assessment and Resettlement Team.

In addition an average of 12 telephone enquiries were received every month with regard to possible vacancies at the projects.



Amhurst Road Hostel



Bardolph Road Hostel

CRAVEN PARK ROAD HOUSE REPORT

Craven Park Road is Cara's first housing project for young women and also its first scheme in Haringey.

It is situated in South Tottenham, very near Stamford Hill Broadway and is therefore well located for the shopping facilities of the area as well as having a very good public transport system which is very important.

Craven Park Road was developed and built by Family Housing Association and designed by Todd Wakefield, Architects. It was opened on the 11th June 1987 by the Leader of Haringey, Cllr. Steve King. We were also very pleased to welcome Mike Langstaff, Director of Family Housing Association to the event and would like to record our appreciation to him and his colleagues for their support in making the function a success.

The project consists of 6 self-contained bedsits on two levels with a central courtyard and adjoining warden's bungalow. Each bedsit consists of a hall, bathroom, storage cupboard and bedsitting room with a kitchenette.

A special note of thanks should go to the architect, Todd Wakefield for this very individual and unique design. As well as bringing a "touch of the Mediterranean" to South Tottenham, he has designed a building which is not only pleasant to live in, it is secure and allows for the privacy of the residents, yet at the same time has the scope for residents to communicate with each other as each bedsit, although having its own front door, has patio windows leading to a communal balcony. Each bedsit contains good quality simple functional furniture.

I would also like to thank Fr Garvey of St. Patricks Church, Soho Square and Haringey Council for their generous donation and grant, which enabled Cara to purchase the basic furniture necessary to create a homely environment.

This project caters for women between 18 and 30 and the length of stay is 12 months. We feel that this period of time with the right level of support is essential for young "vulnerable" homeless women. It provides a period of support in a secure environment which allows them the opportunity to establish themselves, seek employment or further training and to prepare for living independently in the community. The Warden provides cover at night and at the weekends and I am available to the residents for support, advice etc. Monday to Friday daytime.



Cllr Steve King opens Craven Park Road

Referrals are taken from a wide range of agencies, such as: (in alphabetical order)

Camden Womens Aid	Irish Women In Islington Project
Cecil House	Piccadilly Advice Centre
Haringey Emergency Housing Group	Riverpoint
Haringey Housing Action	Single Homeless Project
Haringey Irish Community Care Centre	The Irish Centre, Camden Town
Haringey Social Services	The Passage Day Centre
Irish In Islington Project	

MOVE ON

In the short time since Craven Park Rd. opened two residents have moved into their own permanent accommodation, this is very encouraging.

Family Housing Association have given us a quota of two flats per year for which we are very grateful. Referrals taken from HEG come with their own nominations for local authority accommodation, this also has been helpful. Applications have been made and will continue to be made to other sources of move on accommodation until I have secured permanent accommodation for all the residents of the project. I am aware that resettlement is becoming a problem for many housing projects but as Manager of Craven Park Road I am striving to meet the challenge of securing permanent move-on accommodation for the residents and feel hopeful that I will be successful. As the number of young homeless Irish women grows, it is imperative that the project assists as many people as possible, therefore in order to move women in I must be able to move women on to their own secure permanent accommodation.

In addition to the management of this project, I have been working to develop Cara's links with all the range of agencies which provide services or which might come across young Irish people in need. At a local level in particular I will be looking to develop effective liaison between Cara's youth projects and the Haringey Irish Cultural and Community Centre which has recently opened.

Referrals for Craven Park Road	No of Referrals	Offered Accom.	Accepted Accom.
Haringey Housing Action	1		
Piccadilly Advice Centre	6	1	1
Irish Centre - Camden Town	8	6	6
Cecil House	5	2	2
Single Homeless Project	1	1	
Riverpoint Nightshelter	3	1	1
The Passage Day Centre	1	1	
Irish Women in Islington Project	1	1	
Haringey Community Care Ctr.	3	3	
Camden's Womens Aid	2		
Haringey Social Services	1		
Directorate of Housing Hackney	2		
Haringey Emergency Group	2	2	2
South East Tottenham - Housing off.	1	1	1
From June '87 to present	36	19	13

I have been concerned at the apparent discrepancy between evidence of enormous need amongst young Irish women, and the comparatively small number of referrals which agencies have been making to Craven Park Road. Consequently we will be looking at the possibility of accepting self-referrals into the project.

RESIDENTS COMMENTS

"Most (women) are at the end of their tether when they arrive here and I believe (naturally being prejudiced!) that these flats or similar are even more important for women. The thing that touched me most was, on arriving here, finding someone had cared enough to leave some food. It made me feel welcome.

The move-on programme is vital, not only for us but to allow others the same opportunity that we have had."

"Cara has met my needs in many ways,

1. Security — premises are secure, there are other women in the same building, a warden, phone etc.
2. Location — just off the main road — quiet but close to buses, tubes and shops.
3. Support — Warden on the premises, phone numbers for staff at Cara to contact for assistance, advice re. employment, classes etc.
4. Identity — other Irish women with similar backgrounds.
5. Follow-on — help with moving to new flat, liaising with the Housing Association, DHSS etc."

"There is an overall feeling of security and safety. This is partly due to the design, also to atmosphere of the place — the sense of safety is on two levels — physical and emotional — there is never a need to concern yourself with eg "unwanted guests," interference with possessions etc.

An added bonus is that all my "neighbours" speak the same language as I do. I do not have to concentrate on the phraseology used, therefore I can relax. (Again this is in contrast to my work area — as I am the only Irish person there I frequently have to "think before I speak".

Probably one thing Craven Park Road has offered me is to get back on my feet — when I came here in my opinion I was a "wreck", not able to cope. Now I feel much more confident and capable of dealing with life on a day-to-day basis. Something very important which is not really in the flat but never too far away are the staff. The attitudes of respect-friend-helper allow residents to feel they have a "right to be".

"Cara was a Godsend for me. When I came here I didn't know what I was going to do about a place to live and I was feeling pretty desperate. These little studio flats were like palaces to me! They are ideal in that when you first come here you're usually a bit battered by life and need a safe place where you can feel "this is mine" and know that you're in no danger of losing your new found home".

"I stayed in a very large hostel before coming here. It was very institutional — very impersonal. Although I had my own room there was no privacy. Its great to be able to have your own front door, to be able to bring people over for a cup of tea and a chat.

.....Its nice to have your own kind around you. Not that we are in each others pockets, by any means, but just in case you'd like to have a chat there's people who understand your feelings towards London."

DEVELOPMENT REPORT

The introduction of the Housing Bill posed a challenge to the future of public sector housing in Britain, with serious and wide ranging implications — not least for the development of provision for people with specific housing needs. A shift in emphasis from 100% government finance to mixed funding with an increasing proportion coming from private finance houses leaves small associations like Cara in a vulnerable position. With our stated aim being the provision of housing services to people who may be vulnerable and who will certainly be on low incomes, we do not present a very attractive investment possibility for institutions concerned primarily with profit. While the government has stated its commitment to 'special needs' housing, the problem of realising this with a mixed finance regime remains to be resolved, and Cara will continue to add its voice to calls for a coherent structure which facilitates the development of high quality, user orientated, cheap supported housing for single homeless people.

The winds of change had a direct impact on the schemes in our development programme. At the beginning of the year, two projects which we had hoped would go on site were delayed because of reductions in the capital allocations available to the Associations with which we work. We expect to see these completed next year.

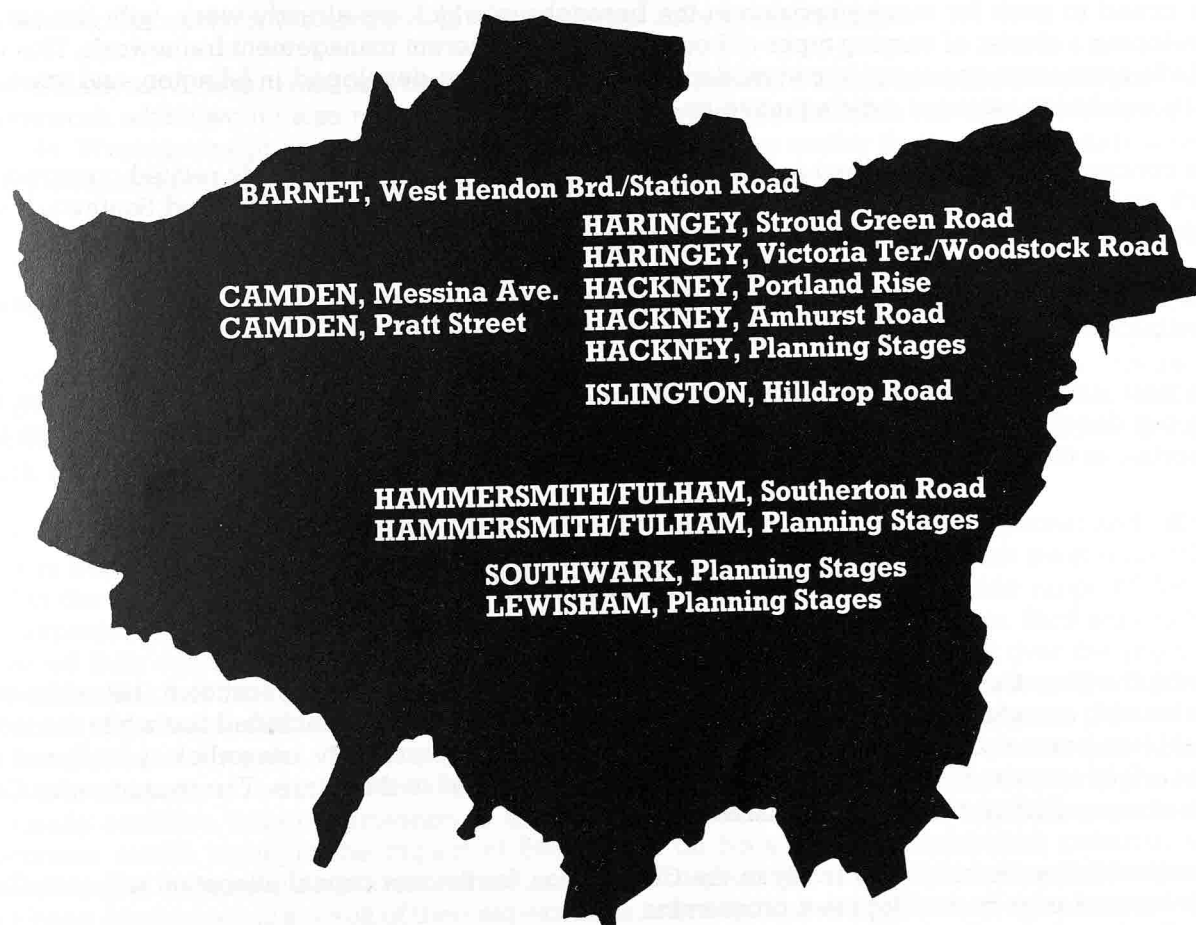
Nevertheless, 1987/88 was a positive one for the Association; in June we opened our first scheme for young women; we added two new schemes to the development programme; and we were approached by an association keen to work with Cara towards the development of provision for vulnerable Irish people. This latter, I believe represents an important step forward in the work to win wider recognition of the extent of homelessness experienced by single Irish people.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

BOROUGH/ ADDRESS	BEDSPACES	GENDER	AGE	HOUSING ASSOC.	DUE
HARINGEY Stroud Green Rd.	8	Male	30+	L&Q H.T.	1990
HARINGEY Victoria Ter./ Woodstock Rd.	4	FEMALE	17-26	CIRCLE 33	1989
	4	MALE			
HACKNEY Portland Rise	13	FEMALE/MALE	17-26	N.I.H.H.A.	1991
HACKNEY Amhurst Road	8	MALE	30+	CARA/ N.I.H.H.A.	1990
ISLINGTON Hilldrop Road	9	MALE Move-on	30+	CIRCLE 33	1990
CAMDEN Messina Ave.	8	FEMALE	30+	P.C.H.A.	1991
Pratt Street	4	FEMALE	30+	ST. PANCRAS	1991
BARNET West Hendon Brd./Station Road	8	MALE	30+	M.H.T.	1989
HAMMERSMITH/ FULHAM Southerton Rd	6	MALE	30+	N.H.H.T.	1989

HAMMERSMITH/ FULHAM Planning stages	6+	MALE	17-26	CARA/ N.H.H.T.	1991
HACKNEY Planning stages	6+	FEMALE	30+	ISLINGTON & SHOREDITCH	1991
SOUTHWARK Planning stages	8	MALE	30+	to be identified	
LEWISHAM Planning stages	6	MALE Move-on	30+	to be identified	

Summary: 13 Schemes : 98 Bedspaces : Seven London Boroughs



Within Cara the year has been one of progress in developing our expertise and knowledge of housing development in a considered and cautious way. A standard design brief has been developed which forms the basis for discussions on any new scheme. This helps us to ensure that what is developed conforms to what the people who will live, and work in a Cara scheme want and need. At the same time we are always responsive to the knowledge and expertise offered by the Architects engaged on a scheme. Below are reproduced the drawings for a scheme in Islington for men moving on from Bardolph Road who want a continuing element of support in their housing. This represents a good example of how 'ordinary' housing stock can be sensitively and imaginatively designed to respond to the very different needs which people have.

1988/89 and beyond

We look forward in the new financial year to one or two new schemes finally going on site, probably a mixed scheme for young people and one for older men.

We intend to push for more provision in the boroughs in which we already work, with the aim of developing a cluster of varying types of housing within a coherent management framework. This will include permanent 'move on' accommodation of the sort being developed in Islington, and which is badly needed to augment existing move-on resources.

The concentration of large direct access hostels and the burgeoning docklands-related construction work makes it likely that the south east London boroughs Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark will form a focus for Cara action research over the coming months.

And of course the issue of Housing Corporation registration would bring with it new development possibilities and internal changes for the organisation which will require attention.

The year gave us a further full twelve months experience of housing management and this has fed into our development brief and knowledge of the process. We look forward to building upon this expertise in the coming year.

HOUSING ASSOCIATION REGISTRATION

During the year Cara, after careful consideration of the issue made an application to be registered as a housing association with the Housing Corporation. The Committee concluded that while the move would bring new responsibilities and a new level of public accountability, nevertheless it offered the most effective means of promoting the work of Cara now, and in the future. The reasons why Cara is seeking registration may be summarised as follows;

- * Responsibility for bidding directly to the Corporation for its own capital allocation will give Cara more control over its development programme.

- * Owning the property we manage will give Cara greater long term financial security and flexibility in raising funds for development.

- * Registered status will stream line the procedures by which we receive deficit grants from the DoE towards hostel running costs.

- * Finally, registration would help to give Irish homelessness the recognition and status which it requires if it is to be effectively tackled.

Cara is mindful of the weight of responsibility which would come with a substantial allocation of public funds. To that end a great deal of work is being done to strengthen the Association's policies and

procedures. A part-time book-keeper has been recruited, and work has started to transfer Cara's accounts onto computer. In addition funding has been secured from the London Borough of Haringey for a Development Manager to be recruited in 1988/89. This post will assist the existing central team of three to respond effectively to an expanded development programme and management stock. We wish to record our thanks to Haringey, Islington, Camden, Hackney and Hammersmith for their support for the development of Cara as a specialist ethnic housing association.

As the year ends there are still a number of stages in the registration process to be negotiated, but we hope that 1988/89 will see a positive outcome to the bid and a landmark in the provision of services to vulnerable single Irish people.

RESEARCH AND POLICY WORK

The main focus of the Cara Research Programme from April 1987 to April 1988 has been the continuation of the study of the homeless Irish finding shelter in Westminster hostels. Cara originally undertook this study in Westminster in 1986 with two objectives in mind.

The first objective was to measure the extent of Irish homelessness within a structured hostel population framework which would also make it possible to assess gender factors in the use of hostels by Irish people. Westminster provided such a hostel framework and the earlier findings of the study showed that the most representative groups among Irish hostel users were;

- 1) young Irish women between the ages 18-26 and
- 2) middle-aged to elderly Irish men.

These findings, together with other data relating to the more recent accommodation history and employment patterns of the respondents were released to the ethnic press in November 1987 and appeared in "The Irish Post" and "The London Irish News". In addition, and as part of wider education work the report also appeared in "The Irish Times" and "The Sunday Tribune".

The second objective of the Westminster study was to investigate how both situational and cultural factors interrelated in the experiences of representatives from the groups of Irish people identified within the Westminster hostels being researched. This entailed gathering a wide range of data on the experiences of respondents before leaving Ireland and since coming to Britain. Such experiences covered their employment and accommodation histories, the state of their health over the years and any difficulties they may have encountered relating to prejudice or other cultural factors. The fieldwork involved in gathering this information was completed early in January 1988. The data was then collated over a period of 6 weeks. At that stage it was decided that attention should be focused on a policy document based on findings from the study that had clearly pointed to the necessity of providing culturally sensitive housing provision to answer the overall needs of homeless Irish people. This document would highlight the impact of being Irish on housing and employment patterns while underlining at the same time evidence showing that the respondents self-image and sense of self worth had been diminished as a result of their experiences in Britain. The document was to be entitled "Irish Homelessness — The Hidden Dimension" and targeted to be published and formally launched in the summer of 1988.

I would like to record our thanks to Dr Paul Corrigan for his valuable advice and support in bringing this work to a conclusion.

As of April 1988, two papers providing a solid nucleus of data for this summer report were approaching completion. Once this report is launched priority will be given to organising quantitative data from both phases of the Westminster study into an accessible and comprehensive data bank. It is also planned to commence a project in Caras' houses to examine what impact living in an Irish resettlement project actually has on Irish people who have experienced homelessness. In addition action research will start in other boroughs targetted in Caras' development programme.

FINANCE

Cara's finances continue to be controlled from central office. During the year the amount of finance work doubled. This was due to the opening of Craven Park Road in addition to Amhurst Road and Bardolph Road. The need to appoint a finance worker became apparent. In January '88 Charles Scalpello was appointed as Cara's bookkeeper. Prior to Charles being appointed the hostels' financial procedures were reviewed and changes were implemented. Mary Boyle made an enormous contribution to the setting up of the present system of hostel accounting, and is thanked for her contribution to the finance work.

Cara was successful in recruiting an Accountant onto its Management Committee. Tom Gately was co-opted onto the Committee in March 1988. Tom will be working with Catriona and Charles to transfer Cara's accounts on to the computer during the coming year. Toms' expertise will be of enormous benefit to Cara particularly during the application for registration to the Housing Corporation.

Cara gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the following agencies.

- * London Borough Grants Scheme — revenue plus one-off capital costs for furniture
- * Dept. of Health and Social Security — topping up under the Camberwell Replacement Scheme.
- * Dept. of Environment — Hostel Deficit Grant
- * London Borough of Haringey — capital grant for furniture for Craven Park Road.

Donations received from:

The Royal Jubilee Trust Bishop of Westminster
Kings Trust St. Patricks Church, Soho
Beatrice Laing Trust Family Housing Association

Contributions towards the Youth Report came from a wide variety of individuals and we wish to thank all of these people.

AUDITORS: Sayer Vincent Chartered Accountants
20-24 Eden Grove
London N7 8ED

BANKERS: Allied Irish Bank
629/635 Holloway Road
London N19 5SU

BALANCE SHEET & INCOME EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

	Notes	£	£	1987 £		Note	£	1987 £
FIXED ASSETS	5		17,385	17,504	INCOME			
CURRENT ASSETS					Grants and Donations	2	116,548	73,729
Debtors		2,558		9,682	Residents Charges		58,500	7,498
Cash at Bank and in Hand		34,861		3,440	Bank Interest		920	1,297
		37,419		13,122	Total Income		175,968	82,524
CREDITORS					EXPENDITURE			
AMOUNTS PAYABLE WITHIN ONE YEAR	6	29,648		8,279	Employee Costs	3	104,174	55,322
Net Current Assets			7,771	4,843	Other Operating Costs		75,201	26,704
Total Assets less Current Liabilities			25,156	22,347	Total Expenditure		179,375	82,026
CREDITORS					(Deficit)/Surplus for the Year	4	(3,407)	498
AMOUNTS PAYABLE AFTER ONE YEAR					Accumulated Surplus at Beginning of year		2,565	2,067
Provisions	7		(6,580)	(245)	Accumulated (Deficit)/Surplus at end of year		(842)	2,565
Deferred Income			(19,418)	(19,537)				
			(842)	2,565				
CAPITAL AND RESERVES								
Accumulated (Deficit)/Surplus			(842)	2,565				

The Accounts were approved on 22nd September 1988

Gearoid Meachair (Director)
Tom Gately (Director)



Projects in development for CARA

Hilldrop Road — Circle 33

CARA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND STAFF 1987/88

Name

Position

Gearoid O Meachair
Sr Joan Kane
Bairbre Foreman
Fr. B. Gilmore
Breifne O'Reilly

Chair
Secretary
Treasurer
Vice-Chair
Member

Breege Brandon
Brenda McLoughlin
Tom Gately
Mary Connolly

Co-Opted Member
Co-Opted Member
Co-Opted Member
Observer, Irish Liaison Unit

Ada Burns
Noel Clarke
Catriona Kelly
Charles Scapello

Director
Researcher
Administrator
Bookkeeper

Con O'Shea
Don Magee
Tony Nolan
Mary Boyle
Liz Blanche

Hostel Manager, Amhurst Road
Hostel Manager, Bardolph Road
Hostel Manager, Bardolph Road
Hostel Manager, Craven Park Road
Hostel Deputy Manager — Resigned January 1988.

CARA makes headway in helping homeless

Words by Rachel Downey
Photos by Connor Kelly

LACK of safe, secure housing is the main problem facing the thousands of young Irish emigrants in London.

It also affects a large number of Irish people who came over to London during the '40s and '50s and never set down roots, living in bad accommodation or lodging houses.

The struggle on housing in the capital is intensifying and many Irish people are finding themselves sleeping on the streets, living in squats or in large institutions without privacy and from which many other people find it difficult to leave.

It is a mammoth task to attempt to rectify a worsening situation but one body, Cara Irish Homeless Project, has begun to make headway.

The Project already has three properties housing a total of 21 people. The first, a men's hostel, in Bardolph Road, Islington, was opened in January of last year and was followed by another men's hostel in Amhurst Road, Hackney in February.

NEXT WEEK: CARA's plans for more hostels.

Hundred seek hostel places

The third property for six young women at Craven Park Road, Hammersmith, was opened in January of this year following the success of the first two.

Cara's recently published report on the housing needs of the Irish in London points to the urgent need for more accommodation for young Irish people.

Cara's policy is to provide accommodation for young Irish people who are in need of a place to live and who are unable to find one elsewhere.

Instead of the Project providing hostels which are referred to as "shared houses" where the residents have their own rooms, giving them much needed privacy and a sense of independence, there are also communal living rooms and plenty of bathrooms and their own front doors. There is a warden living beside the units.

Cara decided to establish a house for young women in Stamford Hill, because the Project saw the gap in housing provision for young women. It was also worried about the vulnerable and insecure position many young Irish women find themselves in when arriving in London.

Research done by the Project into the situation of Irish women in the borough of Westminster — the first part

Emigrants needs

CARA's research has pointed out the groups most in need — the newly-arrived emigrants who are often forced to live in squats, staying in crowded flats with friends or sleep rough and the older male Irish population, who find after years in

lodging houses that they're out on the streets.

Research done by the Project into the situation of Irish women in the borough of Westminster — the first part

Shelter for vulnerable women

THE latest of a six-unit house for young women between the ages of 18 and 30. Each has their own bed with the bathroom and their own front door. There is a warden living beside the units.

Cara decided to establish a house for young women in Stamford Hill, because the Project saw the gap in housing provision for young women. It was also worried about the vulnerable and insecure position many young Irish women find themselves in when arriving in London.

Research done by the Project into the situation of Irish women in the borough of Westminster — the first part

Cara aims to open more hostels



Cara's director, Ada Burns, with manager Mary Boyle at the Craven Park Road hostel.

Cara does not receive any funding from the Irish Government but has applied for money from the National Lottery. It relies completely on funds from statutory bodies in London. This is a policy decision. Cara believes that the responsibility for the homeless Irish lies with the British Government.

Money to cover the running costs of the properties comes from the Department of the Environment, the London Borough Council Scheme and one property is subsidised by the HHS. The Project also gets an annual grant from the London Borough of Islington through the Housing Scheme in all of its properties.

The Project operates its own fund-raising scheme to ensure that the residents of the houses are able to pay, for example, those living in Amhurst Road, who are working pay a third of their weekly income. If unemployed they are charged the HHS rate for board and lodging — £45 per week. The rate is slightly below the market rate.

Unfortunately, the financial situation means that the one of the houses means that the Project is unable to take in more than a few people.

Cara is not even the largest of the housing projects in London. There are many other projects, some of which are run by private companies and some by voluntary organisations.

If they are not given the correct advice and support they will end up in the same situation as the men and women who are in the Project.

Most are around 25 and have never had a job. They are in a very difficult situation and need a lot of support. They are not just looking for a place to live, they are looking for a way of life.



Cara's researcher Neil Clarke with administrator Catriona Kelly in the Islington Way office.

Cara's director, Ada Burns, says there is a need for specialist housing for young emigrants who require counselling. Mary Boyle, who is in charge of the Project, says that the men and women who are in the Project are not just looking for a place to live, they are looking for a way of life.

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Features on CARA in the London-Irish News

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