

ENDERBY HOUSE is one of the least known buildings in the architecturally interesting borough of Greenwich. Standing on private property, it has never been easily accessible. In contrast with its grander near neighbours, the classical creations of Inigo Jones and Christopher Wren, it is a modest building. Due to its low height and the high frontier sea-wall even the architecturally conscious on a river cruise could easily fail to notice it. Twice in its history it has been damaged badly and restored. Its present cement facing conceals a building of greater character than is immediately apparent.

It was originally built about 1830 as a private residence, probably for a member of the Enderby family. The family carried on a cooper's business founded in the City of London in the mid-century by Samuel Enderby. Later it moved into the shipping business. At the time Enderby House was built on the bank of the Thames local records show that various members of the family lived in other parts of Greenwich and on the edge of Blackheath. It is only with the first damage to the house in 1845 that we have proof of an Enderby living there. By that time Samuel's grandsons had changed the family business.

The Illustrated London News recorded in its issue of Saturday, March 8th, 1845:

DESTRUCTIVE FIRE AT EAST GREENWICH

About 8 o'clock on Sunday evening, the extensive premises belonging to Messrs. Charles, Henry and George Enderby, patent rope, twine and canvas manufacturers, at East Greenwich, were discovered to be on fire . . . It was not till daybreak on Monday morning that the firemen could extinguish the flames, when a scene of the utmost desolation presented itself. Of the main factory, which faced the Thames, and was the most prominent object on that bank of the river between Greenwich Hospital and Woolwich, nothing remained but its lofty walls, which in the course of the day were blown down with tremendous force by the wind . . . The dwelling-house of Mr. Enderby, on the north side of the factory, is much damaged by fire, and most of the furniture and its contents destroyed, as also are the stores at the back, and part of the rope manufactory . . . The loss to the worthy proprietors, we are happy to add, is well covered by insurances.' The house was then restored to the original design.