

BERTRAM COTTAGES CONSERVATION AREA

DESIGN GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

The cottages were commissioned by Miss Keziah Peache over the period 1867 to 1872. Miss Peache was a major benefactress in Wimbledon Parish and as one of the chief supporters of the Cottage Improvement Society in the 1850's and 1860's she built Bertram Cottages and the cottages of Belvedere Square off Church Road and Courthope Villas off Worple Road in Wimbledon for people of limited means. These cottages were designed and built by Henry Charles Forde, architect and engineer. Mr Forde was a leading citizen of Wimbledon, with an international reputation in the field of submarine telecommunications.

Bertram Cottages have for many years been known as cottages of unique character and charm on the edge of the busy commercial centre. This special character was recognised by the Council when it declared the Bertram Cottages Conservation Area in February 1984.

This booklet has been produced by the Development Department of the London Borough of Merton, and it draws from the previously produced booklet which was prepared in conjunction with the Bertram Cottages Resident's Association. Its purpose is to inform residents of matters concerned with the conservation of the cottages, and in particular, to provide information on the maintenance and repair of the cottages, in a manner consistent with the Conservation Area status. This will ensure the preservation of the cottages for the enjoyment of the present and future residents.



THE CONSERVATION AREA

The special character of Bertram Cottages results from a number of carefully designed elements

- ❖ the small, intimate scale of the buildings
- ❖ the small, intimate scale of the external spaces
- ❖ the ‘rural cottage’ style of architecture
- ❖ the colourful patterned brickwork
- ❖ the decorative style of windows
- ❖ the decorative detailing to the slate-work on porches in the Hartfield Road cottages
- ❖ the decorative detailing to the barge boards of gables
- ❖ the finely detailed street furniture

The most important aspect of the area’s special character is that the design of the cottages uses a comprehensive approach, incorporating all of the above elements in a uniform manner. It is this use of uniform element that needs to form the basis of conservation and repair work.

The retention and restoration of these features, combined with regular maintenance of properties, will help to preserve the character of the area and hence the value of the properties.



It is when repairs are done to the cottages that the special character of Bertram Cottages is at risk. It is important, in order to preserve this special quality, that all such work respects the existing character and restores or re-creates original design and detailing.



REPAIRS TO BUILDINGS

ROOFS

Every effort should be made to replace slates which have slipped and to generally maintain the roof in good order. It is when water penetrates into the battens and rafters that damage is done, which leads to the need to repair timbers and replace the roof. The replacement of the roof is an expensive item which leads people to choose the cheaper materials. In Bertram Cottages, it is essential that roof repairs should be carried out in a uniform manner. Where possible, matching slate should be used as the roofing material. A substitute synthetic slate is available with a moulded finish and moulded edges, which has the appearance of original slates. These are being recommended as a reasonable alternative to genuine slates.

Roofing materials which are not slate or the recommended synthetic slate, should not be used. The use of cement tiles as a replacement material would detrimentally affect the character of the cottages, and seriously detract from the special character of the Conservation Area. Synthetic coatings should not be applied to the slates, as they would seriously detract from the roof's appearance. A further problem with these synthetic coatings is that after a certain period, the waterproofing will fail, and this will require the total replacement of the roofing material. All opportunity for selective repairs would thus be lost.





REPAIRS TO BUILDINGS

WINDOWS

Every effort should be made to maintain and keep in good repair the wooden window frames. When replacement is necessary, the replacement windows on all front elevations should be in quality hardwood to match the existing window design and proportion. Though there are maintenance advantages in replacing wooden window frames with metal or UPVC windows, this would, nevertheless, adversely affect the visual character of the cottages. The most suitable colour to use for painting window frames and the stone window surrounds, is white.

Casement windows at Nos. 100-110 (even numbers) Hartfield Road and Nos. 7-14 (consecutive numbers) Bertram Cottages.

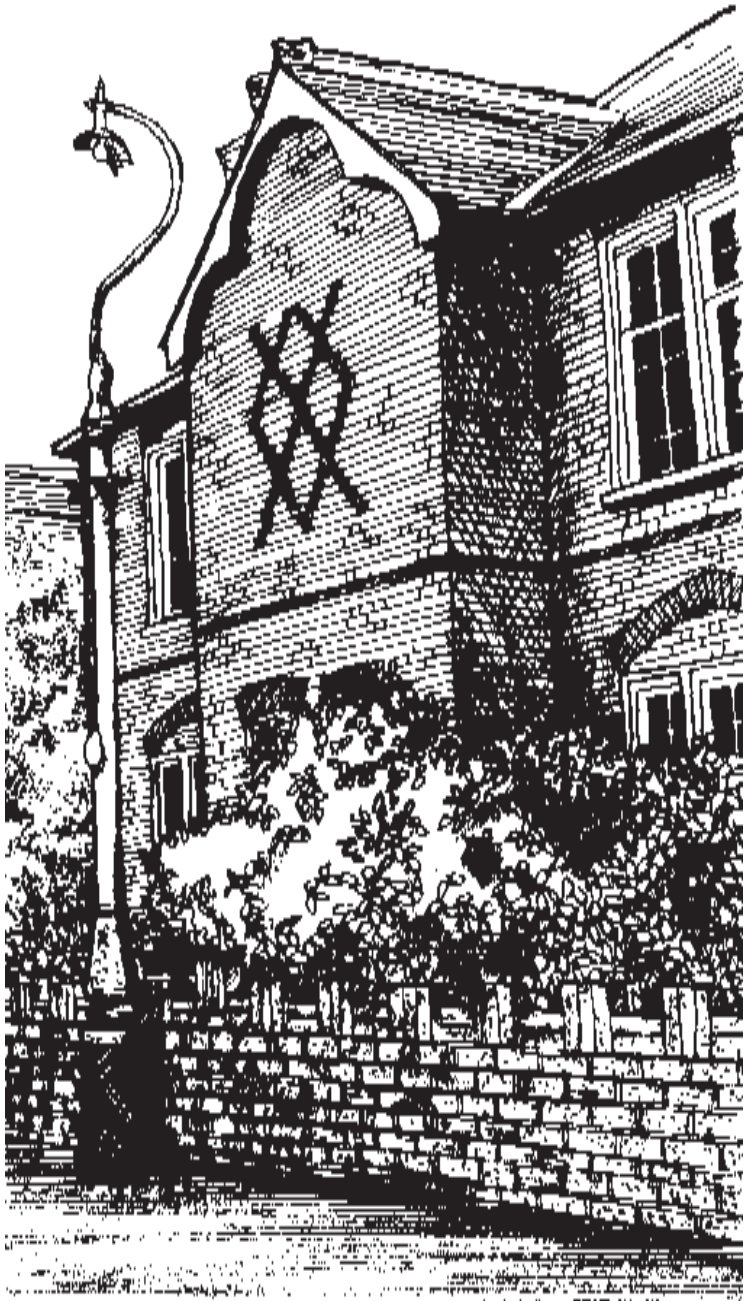
The windows in these cottages are fully outward opening casement windows divided into three lights by thin horizontal glazing bars. All replacement windows to the front elevations should replicate faithfully this window type. Where it is desired to improve the insulation of the cottages by double glazing, secondary glazing should be in the form of horizontal sliding windows, where the frames line up with the vertical stone mullions of the window surround.

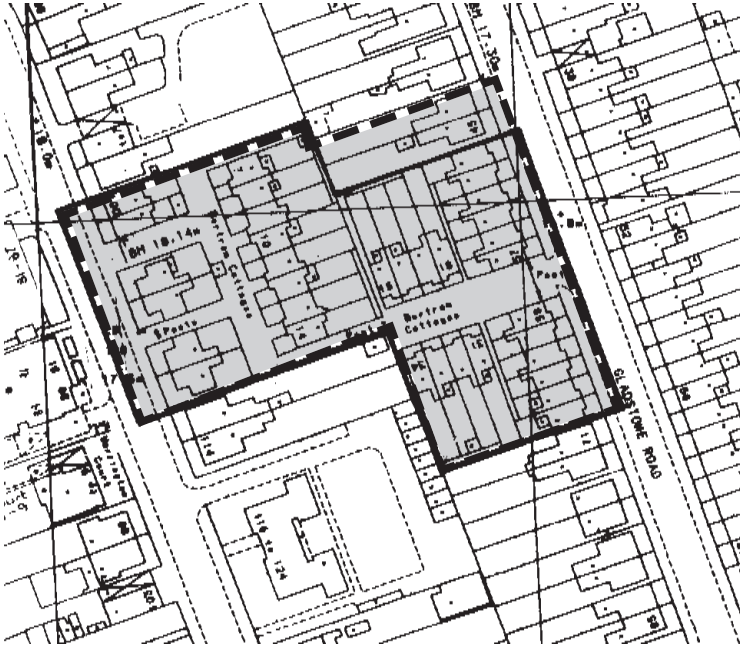
Vertical sliding sash windows at Nos.15-18 and Nos.31-34 (consecutive) Bertram Cottages, and Nos.47-69 (odd numbers) Gladstone Road.

The windows in these cottages are vertical sliding sash windows. The ground floor windows are single pane sash



windows, while the upper floor sash windows are divided into four equal lights by a single vertical and single horizontal glazing bars. All replacement windows to the front elevations should replicate faithfully this window type. Where it is desired to improve the insulation of the cottages by double glazing, secondary glazing should be used either in the form of horizontal sliding windows or vertical sliding sash windows. It is important that the frames of the secondary glazing should line up with the vertical stone mullions of the window surround, and with the frames of the external windows.





ADDRESSES WITHIN THE BERTRAM COTTAGES CONSERVATION AREA

100-114 (even) Hartfield Road

47-69 (odd) Gladstone Road

7-18 (consec) Bertram Cottages

31-34 (consec) Bertram Cottages



REPAIRS TO BUILDINGS

DOORS

Many of the original front doors have been replaced by a variety of door types, which have tended to detract from the original character of the cottages. The original doors were framed and ledged with vertical tongue and groove boarding with a clear glass fan light above. Replacement doors should replicate this door type. Individual door furniture and a small single decorative door light are appropriate where the owners wish to express individuality. Door frames should be painted white, while the door itself can be painted in a colour complimentary to the buildings character.

PORCHES

Cottages at Nos.104-110 (even numbers) Hartfield Road, have porches over the front doors. These are particularly decorative and should always be faithfully restored in any repair work. The design of the porches is such that it is not really possible to close them in without seriously damaging the character of the building.

The remaining cottages were not fitted with porches, and it is generally felt that porches should not be added. However, Nos.9 and 10 Bertram Cottages have jointly added a porch which is in a sympathetic style to the dwellings, although the roofing material should be of slate.

BARGE BOARDS

Cottages at Nos.100-110 (even numbers) Hartfield Road,



have a simple gable barge board which should be faithfully copied if a replacement is needed. Nos.7-14 (consecutive numbers) Bertram Cottages, have a shared decorative barge board on their gables. If replacement is necessary, the boards which make up the gable should be faithfully reproduced, and preferably the two boards which make up the gable should be replaced together. Barge boards should be painted white.



REPAIRS TO BUILDINGS

GUTTERING AND PIPE WORK

Where the guttering has to be replaced, it should be done using aluminium or cast iron guttering whose profile matches the original. The guttering, box gutters and down pipes should be painted black. Where soil vent pipes and other pipes have been fixed to the rear external walls, these should be painted in a uniform colour.

BRICKWORK

Repairs to the brickwork would most likely only require re-pointing of mortar joints. Re-pointing is a time-consuming job, and therefore costly. Where exterior brick walls are in need of complete re-pointing, there is a temptation to paint, render, or pebbledash the walls. Under no circumstances should brick walls be rendered, painted or surfaced in any way, because of the serious detrimental effect that this would have on the character of the cottages. Any form of surfacing to the brick walls would lead to later expensive maintenance work.

FENCING & BOUNDARIES

The original front cast-iron railing fence was dismantled as part of the war effort, and no examples remain. A variety of types of replacement fences have been erected over the years. It is generally felt that the white picket fence and gate is the most appropriate. A number of vertical close-boarded fences have also been erected, and are generally satisfactory. The open horizontal fence does not appear appropriate to the



cottage style of architecture, so that when the opportunity arises, these should be converted to the white vertical picket fence and gate. It is suggested that picket fences should be 900mm high to a horizontal line, that the vertical boards should be 100mm x 10mm and that they be spaced 20mm apart along the horizontal rails. All side and rear boundary fences should be to a uniform height to match the existing, and should be constructed in vertical feather edged boarding, and should be creosoted.



REPAIRS TO BUILDINGS

CHIMNEY STACKS AND POTS

The chimney stacks should only be re-pointed if repairs are needed, and they should never be rendered or painted. Where the chimney stacks are capped, the white clay chimney pots should be reinstated, because they make a considerable contribution to the character of the cottages. Where chimney pots are damaged, they should be replaced with white clay chimney pots.

TV AERIALS AND BURGLAR ALARMS

TV aerials should be placed so as to be as little obtrusive as possible, when viewed from public spaces. Burglar alarms should not be placed on the front walls of the cottages. They could be placed on the small side wall of the projecting gables, which contain the front doorways. This is the small side wall between the front door and the large ground floor front windows.

PUBLIC SPACES AND RIGHTS OF WAY

The external spaces outside the private gardens are public. The roadways are adopted, but are gated under the provisions of the Countryside Acts. The footpaths are public rights of way. All of these public spaces are the responsibility of the London Borough of Merton. Now that Bertram Cottages is a Conservation Area, the borough will carry out its responsibilities for maintenance and repairs in a manner consistent with its status as a Conservation Area.

EXTENSIONS

Generally there is no scope for side extensions in this area.

Rear extensions may be acceptable in some instances as long as they are sensitively designed, small in size, and have no adverse effects on the amenities of the adjoining properties

Any rear extensions should be subordinate to the main house. All new additions to the houses should respect the original design in terms of windows, proportions, building materials and details.

If you are considering extending your property you should consult Merton Council's published guidelines on residential extensions.

Loft conversions should not alter the shape of the roofline as seen from the street. Small dormer windows may be acceptable on the rear elevation providing they are sensitive in design. Any dormer should be set back from the line of the rear elevation with the window sill forming the base of the projection from the roof. Flat roof dormers should be avoided and rooflights should be restricted to the rear roof slopes.

A greater appreciation of the distinctive visual qualities by all residents would result in gradual improvement of houses where they have been insensitively treated in the past, and the maintenance of those that have survived largely in their original form.



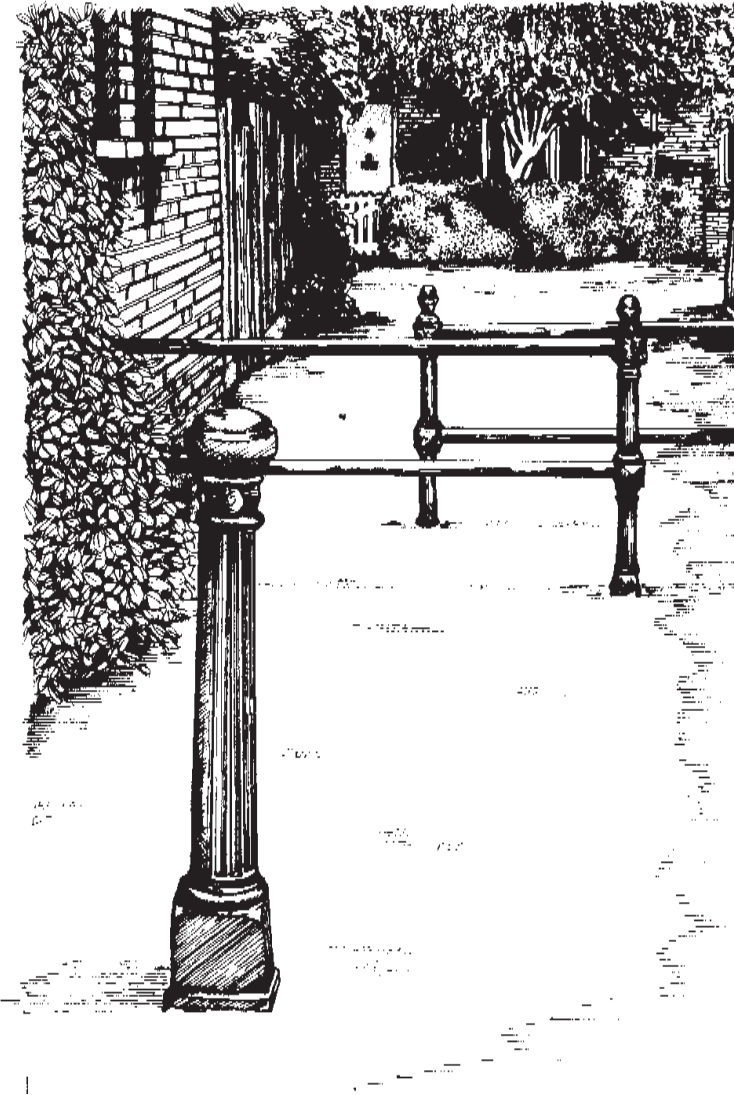
The Borough Council will give consideration to the following items, when carrying out its responsibilities for maintenance and repair

- ❖ enhancement of public areas
- ❖ the appropriate surface treatment to roadways and footpaths
- ❖ the repair to lamp-posts, plus additional lighting where necessary
- ❖ replacement of damaged cast-iron bollards with similar patterned street furniture
- ❖ installation of additional bollards to protect the amenity of public space
- ❖ the careful siting of sign posts

FURTHER ADVICE

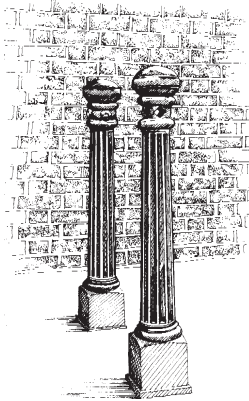
If you require further information regarding the contents of this booklet, please do not hesitate to contact the Development Department of the Council at the following address

Development Department
London Borough of Merton
Crown House , London Road
MORDEN
Surrey SM4 5DX



Tel: 020 8545 3074 or 020 8545 3055

Although many of the recommendations included in this guide are advisory only, they provide a reference for good design practise and as such will be taken into account when planning applications are considered.



Environmental
Services Dept.

London Borough of

M E R T O N

020-8545 3055