SUB AREA 4: CAMP ROAD (WEST), EVERSLEY PARK AND KINSELLA GARDENS

Extent and Justification

The boundary of Sub Area 4 follows the northern edge of Camp Road and the boundaries of the properties on the south side of the road. The Sub Area forms an isolated promontory to the west of the main “Cannizaro Arm” surrounded by Wimbledon Common and Golf Course on all sides except at its eastern end, where it is attached to Sub Area 3, Camp Road East.

History

No. 19 Camp Road and the rural character of Camp Road

Camp Road adjoins the Royal Wimbledon golf course, the links of which were, until 1907, the fields of Warren Farm. The road forms the northern boundary of The Old Park, the estate of the Grosvenor family, and in 1870 the owner, John Samuel Sawbridge-Erle-Drax leased several of the fields on the south side to a Mr Dixon, who erected three large houses along Camp Road, including Garnet House. The road was to be used by Dixon as the route for building materials and equipment to enable him to develop Caesar’s Camp for housing, but the Commons’ Conservators protected the Scheduled Monument from destruction by restricting the use of Camp Road for anything but “agricultural purposes” [Milward, 1989, p.3]. The only period buildings along this part of Camp Road are No. 19, at the eastern end, No. 29, which has been extended and converted to form the Golf Club House, and No. 31, Garnet House.
Character

This section of Camp Road is particularly rural, being a narrow track lined by trees and undergrowth that isolate it visually from the golf course to the north and the properties along the southern side.

Buildings

The Sub Area contains a couple of dozen properties, the eastern part of which comprises three locally listed buildings and two groups of properties which have a neutral effect on the Character of the Conservation Area. The western section contains three groups of buildings, the eastern group having a positive effect on the Conservation Area, mainly because of the quality of its architecture, and the two western groups having a negative effect.

No. 19, Camp Farm and Camp Farm Cottage: A one and two storey late nineteenth century building in the Victorian vernacular revival style which has been divided into two houses. It is of red brick with blue brick detailing to the window lintels, eaves, chimney and ornamental barge-boarded gables to the north and east. It was added to the local list in February 2000.

Wimbledon Common Golf Club: A late nineteenth century two storey detached industrial building whose original gables, ornamental brick eaves and inset brick panelling have been retained on the south side, but whose north elevation has been suburbanised in its conversion to the Golf Club.

The south and west elevations of No. 29 Camp Road, Golf Club House

No. 19a: Helston Court Business Centre: Situated at the rear of the Wimbledon Common Golf Club, the business centre is a group of single storey buildings of no architectural interest which appear to have been converted from agricultural outbuildings.

No. 29, Camp Cottage: This group of buildings is also known as Golf Club House, and is the clubhouse to the Royal Wimbledon Golf Club. Milward dates it from the 1820s [Milward 1989 p.140] but part of it is thought to date from the eighteenth century, and it was locally listed in February 1991. It is a long low building, the northern side being of two stories in dark brick and tile hanging and a projecting porch, while the south is single storey in white render with a series of first floor gables and a verandah facing the golf course. Although original features have been retained on the western elevation, the original cottage was extensively altered and enlarged in the late nineteenth century, presumably when it was converted to accommodate the Club facilities.

No. 31, Garnet House, East Wing and The Coach House: A large detached two storey house with projecting square and faceted full height bays which probably dates from the later nineteenth century and was converted into two properties in about 1947. The ornamental eaves detail is continued below the parapet walls to the bay windows. The Coach House is a detached dwelling to the east of the main building. The group appears to have retained much of its original character and makes a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.
**Eversley Park**: Most of the extensive grounds to the original Garnet House were developed in about 1982 to accommodate five detached houses. According to a press article:

…..thanks to their mellow clay roofs and weathered cladding of London stock brick, they… look as if they've been on the site for at least 50 years….and the extensive use of glass… means the rooms seem to flow effortlessly into the garden beyond. All the houses have small walled gardens and patios, with the remainder of the site kept as a landscaped communal area. [Sunday Times, 2nd May 1982]

The developers imported mature trees, and after twenty years the landscaping has mellowed to the point where, despite their size, the houses are almost entirely hidden from public view. They are in an unassuming modern style, designed to make the most of the landscaping, and the estate is an outstanding example of integrating houses with parkland which makes a significant contribution to the character of this part of the Conservation Area.

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**Kinsella Gardens**: Kinsella Gardens is a group of nine large houses that were recently constructed on the site of an old people’s home, No. 33, White Chester, and its rear extension, Oak Tree House. No. 1 is a converted coach house, Nos. 2, 3 and 4 form a symmetrical terrace of three houses at the northern end of the site, and Nos. 5 to 9 are detached. Despite the pseudo classical decoration and proportions, all the houses lack any architectural distinction. In contrast to Eversley Park, the minimal landscaping fails to soften their stark box-like profile, so that their lack of architectural integrity has a detrimental effect on the character of this part of the Conservation Area.

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**Nos. 35 and 37**: This site is occupied by a group of office buildings accommodating the Institute of Personnel Management. The original house, No.35, may date from the turn of the century but has been so altered and extended that it is no longer recognisable. No.37 is a modern extension, and the grounds to the rear are partly occupied by a large recently constructed two-storey extension. A planning application was recently received for a housing development on the site.
Positive and Negative Features

Camp Road has considerable rural charm: the two locally listed buildings, Nos. 19 and 29 Camp Road, retain their architectural and historic integrity, and Eversley Park is of high landscape quality. But recent development and unsympathetic conversions have undermined much of whatever architectural or historic interest other parts of the Conservation Area may have possessed. The modest agricultural character of the buildings which make up the Helston Court Business Centre has been eroded, as has the northern part of the nineteenth century Wimbledon Commons Golf Club and the southern section of Golf Club House. White Chester has been replaced by Kinsella Gardens and Nos. 35 and 37 Camp Road appear void of architectural or historic interest.

Possible Reduction

Nos. 35 and 37 Camp Road

This part of the conservation area encloses Camp Road and the buildings on its south side as far as Caesar's Camp. The area is surrounded by the Common. Also, the western end adjoins Caesar's Camp which, being a scheduled monument, enjoys greater protection than the buildings in the Conservation Area.

In view of the diminished quality of Sub Area 4, consideration needs to be given as to how much of it is still worthy of inclusion in the Conservation Area. Although its exclusion would result in it being the only developed area within the Common that was not protected by designation, this in itself would not justify inclusion. The historically most important - and most attractive - part of this Sub Area is the rural isolated character of Camp Road and its surrounding vegetation, and the greatest threat to this character is the increasing pressure to widen this country lane. De-designation would weaken arguments for preserving its rural charm, but this also does not in itself justify its continued designation, and Camp Road would still be protected by being part of an area of Metropolitan Open Land and a Site of Importance to Nature Conservation, as well as by other Open Space Policies and its close proximity to a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Unlike the rest of the conservation area, de-designation would not weaken the protection afforded to other designated parts, because of the isolation of this sub area from the main body of the conservation area.

The two locally listed buildings, Nos. 19 and 29, should of course be retained, and the Helston Court Business Centre and Wimbledon Common Gold Club do not detract so much from the character of the Sub Area that they should be excluded from the Conservation Area.

West of No. 29 all the properties date from the latter half of the twentieth century, and therefore have little historic interest. Retention therefore depends on their architectural and landscape merit. Since Eversley Park makes a positive contribution, it should be retained, but further west the buildings generally have a detrimental effect on the Sub Area, so that their exclusion would increase the integrity of this part of the Conservation Area. The exclusion of Kinsella Gardens and Nos 36 and 37 Camp Road therefore appears appropriate, but it would be advisable to check the quality of any new development proposed for Nos. 36 and 37 before excluding these properties and Kinsella Gardens from the Conservation Area.

The rural character of this part of Camp Road, and the woodland and historic buildings adjoining it, should be preserved. Any further development should be designed to a high modern standard to ensure that the character of this part of the Conservation Area is not further eroded.

SUB AREA 5: CHESTER ROAD (WEST), SYCAMORE ROAD AND BEECH CLOSE