SUB AREA 11:
LAURISTON ROAD AND WILBERFORCE WAY

Map of Sub Area 11

Extent and Justification

Lauriston Road forms a clearly defined phase in the development of the area west of Wimbledon Village, with the adjoining back gardens to the houses in Murray Road to the east and Clifton Road to the west forming natural boundaries to the Sub Area.

History

The development of Lauriston Road occurred as a result of the demolition of the seventeenth century estate of Lauriston House at the beginning of the twentieth century, and Wilberforce Way involved the further subdivision of plots in the 1930s.

Character:

The VicSoc report regarded Lauriston Road as one of the classic approach roads to the Common. It is the best local showcase for the neo-Dutch and “Queen Anne” styles of architecture widely practised around the 1880s and thereafter – Dutch gables, flat arches and similar William & Mary features, and with such an embarrasse de richesse the Society found it difficult to decide which houses to recommend for listing.

In fact, three of the houses, Nos. 9, 15 and 17, are listed grade II, at least one other (No. 1) might also be considered eligible, and eight are on the local list. Almost all the buildings of architectural merit and historic importance are in the south part of Lauriston Road - the northern section, particularly around Wilberforce Way, being far less distinguished than adjoining parts of the Conservation Area. However, much of Lauriston Road continues the lush Arcadian character of the roads further east, with a fascinating variety of buildings set in mature landscaping.
Buildings

There are about twenty-six properties in Lauriston Road and a dozen in Wilberforce Way. While the impact of all of those in Wilberforce Way are somewhat neutral, three of those in Lauriston Road are grade II, eight are locally listed, eight make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, No. 15b and the extensions to No. 13 tend to have a negative effect, and the impact of the remaining two are somewhat neutral.

Odd numbers, west side south to north

No.1 Lauriston Road lies within Sub Area 15 B.

Nos. 3, 5 and 7: Three similarly designed detached double fronted two and three storey houses built in 1893 and added to the local list in October 1998. The southern section of each house is three stories with a two storey canted bay and the top floor being in a front facing gable. Each house also has a projecting bay on the north side, that to No.3 being square, No.5 being canted and No.7 square single storey. The houses are all of stock brick with the bays, window surrounds, quoin and arched porches in red rubber brickwork. The stock brickwork to No. 5 is covered in white render.

Nos. 7 and 11 Lauriston Road

No. 9: A substantial detached two storey grade II listed house built in 1892-4 to the design of Sir Ernest George described by the VicSoc as a house of exceptional quality and by Pevsner as very handsome….a long front with wooden mullion-and-transom windows, bracketed eaves below a big hipped roof, and a porch with bulgy balusters, entered from one side. The avoidance of total symmetry is again noticeable [p.457]. It has ornamented eaves and substantial chimneys project from a hipped roof. In 1996 the Secretary of State dismissed an appeal against refusal of an application for a substantial extension.

No. 11: A substantial detached house built in 1998 (replacing a 1955 bungalow) which is basically traditional in design but with faceted oriel windows within a wide deeply overhung gable and other carefully proportioned features. The paved forecourt is separated from the road by railings and brick pillars.

No. 13, Hereford House: A substantial detached three storey house plus basement in stock brick built in 1891 and later extended and converted into a total of eight flats in 1933 and 1961. It is described by Pevsner as a solitary stucco example from an earlier generation and which the VicSoc report recommended for local listing. The white rendered ornamental window surrounds and central projecting porch are attractive features, but the setting of the house has been marred by two-storey box-like extensions to the north and south in stock brick with white painted horizontal boarding which were presumably built in 1961. It is likely
that such development would today be considered as detrimental to the character of the conservation area. The front gardens are almost devoid of landscaping and boundary fencing.

Nos. 13, 15 and 17 Lauriston Road

Nos. 15, 15b and 17: Nos 15 and 17 are detached two storey grade II listed houses built in 1891 to the design of James Ransome with what Pevsner describes as irregular Dutch gables [p.457] in a very individual Dutch style according to the VicSoc report.

The projecting southern wing to No.15 is particularly elaborate, with a side-facing projecting entrance porch behind a curved parapet which slopes back to form the base of a tapering chimney dominating the ornamental parapet to the first floor gable end. The profile of the main gable is repeated on the rear elevation and is reflected in that to the south facing dormer. The profile of a semi-circular gable to the northern wing is repeated in a central single storey porch which projects as far as the back of pavement and lines up with a boundary wall of varying height. The general composition is reminiscent of a small mid-Victorian school building. However, the two storey central section appears to have been altered in the 1920s, with unsympathetic windows and box dormer, and a standard modern conservatory added to the south elevation.

No. 15b: A two storey flat roofed garage extension and first floor flat to the south which appears to have been built in the 1930s, mars the setting of No.15.

No. 17 is dominated by a large semi-circular gable containing a window at second floor level which is reflected in a lower north wing. Both sections have canted bay windows at ground floor level supported on curved brackets. No. 17, with its low wall surmounted on white painted fencing, is fortuitously positioned to form the culmination of the view westward from the southern arm of Wilberforce Way.

Nos. 19 and 21 Lauriston Road

No. 19: A detached two storey house built in 1924. The broad front contains Tudorbeathan features, including an ornamental chimney and stone surrounds to the windows and arch to the central entrance porch. The “medieval cottage” character is emphasized by the rendered first floor, with its small windows in dark stained frames, the semi-hipped roof to the projecting two storey bay and the projecting single storey bay at the southern end. Despite a new high
wall in a rather inappropriate brick, the consistent character and carefully considered proportions, it justifies its addition to local list in February 1991.

**No. 21:** A detached two storey house built in 1938, also designed in the Tudor style, with rendered projecting wings and brick central section, and a single storey projecting entrance section behind a high boundary wall. By contrast to No. 19, the house has been superficially historicized by the application of mock timber framing to the first floor.

Even numbers, east side, south to north (There are no Nos. 22, 24 or 26):

**No. 4:** A detached two storey double fronted house of red brick built in 1892 with a two storey canted bay south of the entrance topped by a gable with applied timber framing. It was converted into three flats in 1965.

**No. 6:** A detached three-storey double fronted house of stock brick built in 1896 to the design of PB Freeman in a free interpretation of Queen Anne (VicSoc) with grey brickwork with stone details and green slates to the main roof and front bay. It was converted into flats in 1970, recommended by the VicSoc report for statutory listing in 1973, and was added to the local list in October 1998. It was described by Pevsner as having narrow Queen Anne windows, and a projection with canted bay and segmental gable on one side [p.457]. The projecting northern side, with its semi-circular gable, two storey curved bay and Palladian second floor window, contrasts well with the southern section, with its second floor mansard roof containing its three dormer windows.

**No. 6A:** A detached bungalow to the rear of No. 6 built in 1970 on the rear section of the back gardens of Nos. 55 to 59 Murray Road, and approached from Lauriston Road down a narrow driveway.

**Nos. 8 and 8A:** A detached house converted to two houses in 1955. The central section, of stock brick and red brick quoins and window heads, has a projecting gabled wing to the north and a two storey canted bay to the south of what may originally have been the central entrance. A two-storey wing has been added to No. 8a and No 8 has been extended to include the original coach house.

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**Nos. 6, 10 and 12 Lauriston Road**

**Nos. 10 and 12:** A carefully detailed semi-detached pair in William and Mary style (VicSoc) built in 1892 and added to the local list in February 1991. Each of the three storey plus basement houses are of stock brick with a dominant round-topped gable accommodating the top floor and corner entrances through attractive arched colonnades. Both houses are in single family occupation except for self-contained basement flats.

**No. 14:** A detached two storey double fronted house of red brick built in 1891 with single storey canted bays each side of the arched entrance porch.
Nos. 16 and 18: A pair of two storey semi-detached houses in harsh red brick with a double projecting porch under an open gable. Although they are designed in the manner of late Victorian artisan dwellings, they appear to be of recent construction. No. 18 was extended in 2000 and its front garden, behind a low picket fence, is given over to hardstanding.

No. 20: A substantial two storey plus basement detached house in stock brick built in 1891 in a neo-vernacular style and added to the local list in October 1998. Features include two storey canted bays to the west and north elevations, timber detailing to the central porch, a large leaded oriel window to the side elevation, and terracotta panels at first floor level. The well landscaped garden, which extends to the north, lies behind a high wall of London stock brickwork.

No. 28: A detached two storey house, possibly dating from the 1930s, with tiled projecting gables at ground and first floor. The mature garden lies behind a high stock brick wall to the front and a fence along Wilberforce Way.

(south entrance to Wilberforce Way)

No. 30: A conventionally designed detached two storey double fronted white rendered house dating from 1936 with a projecting north wing, concealed behind a high wall of stock brick.

Nos. 32, 34 and 36: Three detached two-storey houses built between 1955 and 1958 with projecting north wings, whose somewhat suburban design appears to be based on that of No. 30. Minor variations include tiled or white rendered upper floors and gables, and a half-hearted attempt at mock timber framing to the gable of No. 36. They are also concealed behind a high stock brick boundary wall and, because of their modest size, they have recently been the subject of several applications for significant extensions.

(north entrance to Wilberforce Way)

No. 38: A detached two storey double fronted house with a projecting gable to the north which follows the same pattern as Nos. 30 to 36.

No. 40: A detached two storey double fronted house of similar style to Nos. 30 to 38, but with discordant extensions and Velux type rooflights.

WILBERFORCE WAY

Extent and Justification

Wilberforce Way is a crescent of ten post war houses which form an integral extension on the eastern side of Lauriston Road.

History

Nos. 1 to 10 were inserted into the grounds of Lauriston House in 1958, at about the same time as the construction of Nos. 30 to 36 Lauriston Road and the erection of Mannermead, Greenways and Mullards on the Southside Common frontage.

Character

The houses in Wilberforce Way form a disappointing suburban intrusion into the varied historic character of this part of the Conservation Area. Since they were erected before the advent of conservation areas, the sensitivity of their setting appears to have been disregarded. All but No. 10 are subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

Buildings

Consecutive numbers, south to north
Nos. 1 to 10: The ten detached two storey double fronted houses continue the design of Nos. 30 to 40 Lauriston Road. They include minor variations and, being smaller than many of the other houses in the vicinity, several of them have been extended in various ways. For example, Nos. 6 and 9 have similar timber framing to that of No. 36 Lauriston Road, and No. 2 has had an extension added over most of the front elevation which includes an asymmetrical hipped roof surmounted by a tiny timbered gable. Applications for extending and/or rebuilding continue.

Positive and Negative Features  Looking north past Nos. 10 and 12 Lauriston Way

The contrast between the southern and northern ends of Lauriston Road indicate the way in which a road’s overall character can be seriously diminished if care is not taken to ensure that new development is of the highest architectural standard. “Safe” design is unlikely to be adequate, and imaginative flare is required to continue the high standards of such an area. However, much of the original distinguished character of Lauriston Road remains.

Preservation and Enhancement

Great care should be taken to preserve the part of Lauriston Road southwards from No.17 on the west side and 20 on the east from unsatisfactory development, and because of the density of accommodation attempts at redevelopment are unlikely. The only weaknesses to this section are on the west side, where the 20th C. extensions to Nos. 13 and 15 break the high architectural consistency; replacement of these extensions with more sympathetic and imaginative buildings provides a planning opportunity.

The northern section of Lauriston Road, together with Wilberforce Way, is already undergoing development pressure in the form of assorted and sometimes inappropriate extensions, and the pressure to replace these modest houses with something larger is likely to increase, as has already occurred in Southside Common and to the rear of West Side Common. Alterations and replacement should not be allowed to occur in a haphazard manner, and a design brief is recommended to guide development in this area.