SUB AREA 14: THE PEREGRIN WAY AREA

Extent and Justification

Sub Area 14 consists of the area between Kings College School (Sub Area 13) and the western boundary of the Conservation Area, and comprises the houses around Peregrine Way, along the east side of Woodhayes Road, and those on the north side of the Ridgway between Woodhayes Road and the Kings College School playing fields, including Rydon Mews.
History

Sub Area 14 consists largely of modern development and is of little historic interest. The Peregrin Way estate stands on the grounds of a house shown on the maps from 1772 to 1890 as Woodhayes, after which Woodhayes Road was named, and Rydon Mews now occupies a field shown on the 1772 map as West Woodhaws and designated as parkland on the 1880 map. Thomas Hinde gives a brief history of the sad demise of Woodhayes in his history of Kings College School.

In 1930 Woodhayes and its extensive grounds were offered to the School, and they were able to purchase it for £11,000 thanks to a gift of £7,000 from Colman, the mustard king, who suggested making it the Junior School. Instead, work started in 1931 converting it into a boarding house with a new house for the Head Master in the grounds, but had to stop because of objections from the Board of Education. A revised scheme to convert part of Woodhayes as a Head Master’s House and the rest, including the house’s magnificent Octagon library, into either flats or a sanatorium, was only partly completed, and much of the house was left unused. Hinde then states briefly:

*Subsequently the house was found in 1934 to have dry rot, set alight by a bomb in 1940, turned into staff flats after the war, and eventually sold in 1976 for £150,000, the money being used to build today’s music school. Not until 1946 were its old kitchen gardens levelled to make a Junior School playing field.* [pp. 75-76]

The most historic features are the few surviving from the Woodhayes estate, including the remnants of the original landscaping and the boundary wall to the north-western section of Woodhayes Road. Some features of archaeological interest may also survive. The present houses are mostly post war, the earliest being No. 9 Woodhayes Road and Nos. 104 and 110 Ridgway. The Peregrin Way development was erected in 1977, and Rydon Mews was completed in 2001 on the site of an old people’s home. A semi-detached pair of houses, No. 8d, has recently been constructed immediately north of No. 9 and another detached house has been built east of No. 110.

Character

The character of the Sub Area is basically suburban, with Rydon Mews of higher density than Peregrin Way, reflecting the increased desirability and subsequent development pressures on this part of Wimbledon.

Buildings

The quality of the buildings in Sub Area 14 makes the justification for its inclusion in the Conservation Area distinctly borderline. Of the thirty-five or so properties, one is locally listed, two make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, a dozen may be regarded as having a neutral impact, and the remaining twenty tend to have a detrimental effect on the character of the Conservation Area as a whole.
PEREGRIN WAY,
Nos. 1 to 20

Fifteen houses are grouped around Peregrine Way, five to the east (Nos. 1 to 9 odd), and ten to the west and south (Nos. 2, 8a, 8b, 8c and 10 to 20 even). The front gardens of Nos. 2, 8a and 8b face on to Woodhayes Road. All the houses are of two storeys, of stock brick and detached, although Nos. 1 and 3, and 10 and 12 are linked by their garages.

The two types of houses in Peregrin Way: the pseudo-classical (Nos. 2 and 8a) and the more straightforward modern (Nos. 9, 18 and 20)

There are two basic house types: The six adjoining Woodhayes Road and the two at the entrance to Peregrin Way are of pseudo-classical box-like double-fronted design, with hipped roofs, a pedimented front door and false shutters to the first floor windows. They appear to be an example of standard developer’s pattern book design selected with no regard for the special character of their surroundings, and this is reflected in the way the three whose front gardens face on to Woodhayes Road (Nos. 2, 8a and 8b) are perched uncompromisingly on elevated ground. The other three backing on to Woodhayes Road (Nos. 8c, 10 and 12) are largely concealed behind a high stock brick wall that appears to form part of the earlier estate.

The remainder, (Nos. 5, 7, 9, 14, 16, 18 and 20) have gabled roofs whose strong horizontal emphasis is reinforced by the roofs to the front porches which continue across the fronts of the garages. The houses are well proportioned and of straightforward design with some period details. Although they are unrelated to the character of the surrounding area, they do not conflict with other buildings because they are in a secluded position in the south-east corner of the estate.

No. 8d Woodhayes Road and No. 110 Ridgway

WOODHAYES ROAD, consecutive numbers, east side, north to south

No. 8d: A pair of semi-detached symmetrical two storey houses in yellow brick with projecting end gables containing canted ground floor bay windows, recessed entrance porches and small dormer windows, constructed in 1998 on the northern part of the grounds to No. 110
Ridgway. Previous schemes for the site include two two-storey detached houses with parking spaces fronting on to the Ridgway, in 1996 (approved); and a terrace of three three-storey houses, in 1998 (withdrawn).

**No. 9:** A large detached rendered house built in 1907 which appears to have undergone many alterations and extensions and now accommodates six apartments. A projecting gabled southern wing contains a square first floor bay, the central entrance is accommodated in a projecting single storey porch and a large dormer has been added over the entrance. The north wing appears to be quite recent. The house is built very close to its rear boundary, the mature garden being to the south, on the corner of Woodhayes Road and the Ridgway.

RIDGWAY, north side, west to east

**No. 110 Ridgway:** A modern two storey detached house in yellow brick with a projecting first floor and a high pitched roof accommodating a second floor lit by windows in the gable ends.

**House to the east of No. 110:** A two storey detached house in yellow brick with a projecting two storey gabled central bay accommodating an entrance porch under a heavy curved lintel. Small dormer windows light the roof space. High metal security gates guard the recessed vehicular drive.

These properties in Woodhayes Road and the Ridgway are grouped together because their relationship appears to reflect the order in which the area of land at the junction of these two roads was developed. A clue to the area’s history lies in the unusually narrow rear space behind No. 9 Woodhayes Road, the rear boundary coinciding with the side boundary of No. 110 Ridgway. This indicates that No. 110 was built first, the plot possibly covering the whole area, and the part on which No. 9 built later. However, the present house at No. 110 is a recent redevelopment, its footprint being different to that shown on the current ordnance survey map. Therefore, except for the core of No. 9, all the houses on this part of the Sub Area appear to have been built very recently.

**RYDON MEWS AND NO. 104 RIDGWAY:**

Nos. 1 to 7 and Nos. 2 to 16 Rydon Mews

The Rydon Mews development consists of a total of 15 houses plus a block of flats in the converted No. 104 Ridgway. The houses consist of two parallel rows each side of a garage court. The estate, which is well landscaped, is bounded by high railings and red brick piers, and is approached through security gates.

No. 104 is a substantial two-and-a-half storey locally listed property which until recently formed part of a Home for the Elderly at Nos. 104, 106 and 108 Ridgway. The main block of No. 104 has been converted into flats and the northern wing has been demolished and replaced with a terrace of three two-and-a-half storey houses (Nos. 18, 20 and 22 Rydon Mews). The three houses, in rather harsh red brick to match No. 104, have been designed to give the impression of a single dwelling. The second floor window of the central house is set in a gable with a broken pediment supported on brick pilasters; the first floor windows are pedimented and the ground floor recessed to provide a porch. The houses on each side are less ornate, with ornamental entrance canopies and dormer windows.
Nos. 1 to 7 (odd): Nos. 1 to 7 form two pairs of semi-detached double-fronted houses of two storeys plus basement and attic designed in a pseudo-classical manner in bright red brick with rusticated quoins, stone window surrounds with artificial key stones, ornamental pilasters and canopies to the entrance doors, and dormers set in steeply sloping walls under flat roofs. The general impression is of harsh, bland four storey buildings squeezed on to the site in the hope that they will look like a two storey terrace of classical design, but the minimal basement areas, the extensive paving to the front parking area, and the blocks of similarly styled red brick garages at the rear further defeat any indication that this is anything but a modern speculative development.

Nos. 2 to 16 (even): A terrace of eight two storey houses plus an attic storey lit by dormers, in yellow brick, with rusticated quoins, ornamental window boxes and flat arches of red rubbers and artificial key stones to the windows, and ornamental canopies over the front doors. The detailing indicates an attempt to provide a period flavour but, whereas Nos. 1 to 7 have sash windows of approximately Georgian proportions, no attempt at classical proportions has been made with Nos. 2 to 16, resulting in an ill-proportioned terrace of modern box-like houses.

The design of the Rydon Mews estate bears no relation to the adjoining buildings or to the general character of the Conservation Area. It is the type of development which is inappropriate in an historic area such as West Wimbledon.

Positive and Negative Features

Sub Area 14 is no doubt a much sought after residential area, with attractive landscaping, but it would hardly merit conservation area designation in its own right, despite the surviving features of Woodhayes house. Its continued inclusion within the West Wimbledon Conservation Area has therefore relied largely on its location. It stands at the western end of the Conservation Area, and could therefore be omitted without creating a “hole”. However, it adjoins the Wool Road Conservation Area, to the west of Woodhayes Road, and its omission would therefore result in a gap between the two conservation areas and a break in the continuous protection of this part of West Wimbledon. De-designation would also remove protection from the attractive landscaping along the northern side of this part of the Ridgway. On balance, therefore, Sub Area 14 has been retained within the Conservation Area.

Preservation and Enhancement

No. 104 The Ridgway

Because of the extent of new carefully landscaped suburban development, there are few opportunities, if any, for enhancement. With the exception of the garden at the junction of the two roads, the gap sites along Woodhayes Road and the Ridgway have now been filled. The development of this area is unlikely, since it is the only garden to No. 9, and should be resisted, because of its mature planting and prominent position.