SUB AREAS 16A AND 16B: GROSVENOR HILL

Extent and Justification

Grosvenor Hill is a short cul-de-sac south of the Ridgway at its eastern end. It is somewhat isolated from the rest of the Conservation Area, since it faces the south-west arm of the Wimbledon Village Conservation Area to the north, the backs of the properties on the east side of Wimbledon Hill Road to the east, the backs of the houses along Raymond Road to the south, and the rear of the houses on Sunnyside to the west. It is further separated from the housing in Raymond Road by a significant drop in level along its southern boundary. Since Grosvenor Road lies east-west, the description of the Sub Area is based on its true orientation instead of the convention adopted for the other Sub Areas.

History

Grosvenor Hill is presumably named after Thomas Grosvenor MP, who leased Westside House between 1765 and 1769, and whose family lived in the area during the early nineteenth century [G.Hawton p.111]. Until the 1860s this area adjoining the Village was open fields, but the 1865 map shows a short road lined by large, presumably detached, villas. Two
of these survive, No. 3, which is divided into four apartments, and No. 4. The remainder date from the 1890s to the 1970s or later.

Character

Grosvenor Hill from the west and from the east

Although Grosvenor Hill is pleasantly landscaped, only about half the buildings are of architectural or historic interest. The VicSoc report recommended Nos.3 and 4 for local listing, but although they were considered, they were thought to fall slightly short of the required standard. In fact, the historic character of this part of the Conservation Area has been so eroded by modern alterations and infill that justification of its inclusion appears marginal.

Grosvenor Hill is a wide straight road with a mixture of large late nineteenth century houses alternating with modern terrace houses and blocks of flats, mostly behind high walls and tree screens. The road's main visual interest stems from the sharp bend near the Ridgway end which creates a feeling of (largely unfulfilled) expectation as one enters it, and closes the vista when viewed the other way.

Buildings

Of the 20 or so properties in Sub Areas 16A and 16B, six make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, nine are neutral and five (plus the extension to No. 9a) tend to make a negative impact.

SUB AREA 16A, within the original Conservation Area
Consecutive numbers, south side, west to east

Nos. 14, 12 & 11: One detached and one pair of semi-detached houses built in 1920-21, much altered with large modern windows and a false timbered gable to No. 11. Because most of their original character has been lost they fail to contribute positively to the character of the Conservation Area.

Mulberry Cottage: A detached two storey house set back from the street frontage in white render with slated hipped roof extended as a cat slide at the northern end.

Clare Court: A five storey block of 19 apartments built in 1963 which are out of scale with the earlier buildings on each side. The grounds are well landscaped and the garages are discreetly placed against the rear boundary.

Nos. 3: A semi-detached three storey house which may have formed the servants’ wing to Nos. 3a to 3d, in blue painted render with white window surrounds and string course. The forecourt is devoted to hardstanding.

Nos. 3a to 3d: A semi-detached 2/3 storey white rendered house dating from 1863 and incorporating classical and regency details. Features include a pedimented front door and window architraves with bracketed cills. Converted into flats and rejected for local listing.

No. 4, Langley House: A three storey six bay wide detached villa dating from 1863. Described by the VicSoc report as in a very consistent style with Ruskin type details, it has
been converted into apartments and much altered and extended to the north and south. The central three bays, with their central ground floor recess and vertically proportioned wings topped by dormers, appear to form the original villa. The paved forecourt is used for car parking and is separated from the street by a high ornamental brick wall and gates. It was rejected for local listing.

No.4, Langley House, and Clare Court from the rear

No.4a, Langley Lodge: A two storey house in stock brick, dating from 1946 as an east wing of No.4 and built at a lower level with a stepped approach off the forecourt of No. 4.

Consecutive numbers, north side, from west to east
(Regent Court lies within Sub Area 15F)

Nos. 9 and 9a, and No.7

Nos. 9 and 9a: A four storey detached Edwardian house built in the 1890s of red brick and white window surrounds. The first floor piano nobile is approached up a flight of steps through a white rendered classical porch. The building’s architectural integrity has been impaired by a large four storey extension projecting beyond the front façade in a pastiche of the original design. The front garden is paved and used for car parking. An application for redevelopment was submitted in the summer of 2003.

No. 8: A three storey double fronted detached house plus basement in red brick, with bay windows each side of the central entrance, and white rendering to the corner quoins, the projecting entrance porch and windows. The front area is devoted to hardstanding.

No.7: A four storey cream rendered block of ten apartments built in 1957, with canted bays, a pseudo-classical entrance portico and the top storey built as an imitation Mansard of grey slates. The weak design fails to enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

SUB AREA 16B, outside the original Conservation Area boundary

Nos. 6a to 6e: A terrace of five plain three-storey houses of red brick built in the 1970s.
**Grosvenor Court**: Two blocks of four storey apartments built in the 1920s in red brick, the top floor being within a red tiled Mansard roof. They are sited at the east end of Grosvenor Hill and screened from it by mature trees, and have two blocks of garages at the rear.

### Positive and Negative Features

**Nos. 6a to 6e and Grosvenor Court**

**SUB AREA 16A**: There is little justification for including Sub Area 16A in the Conservation Area, the building with the most architectural integrity, No.1 Grosvenor Hill, being located in Sub Area 15E. Nos. 8 and 9, on the north side, and Nos. 3, 3a to 3d, and 4 on the south, are of some architectural and historic interest, although Nos. 3a to 3d was rejected for local listing. Of the period buildings on the south side, the character of Nos. 11, 12 and 14 have been eroded, and No.4 has also suffered alterations and infill and is now separated from the streetscape by a security gates and a high wall. The modern buildings, Nos. 4a, 7, Clare Court and Mulberry Cottage, are of insufficient architectural merit to enhance the justification for including Sub Area 16A in the Conservation Area.

**SUB AREA 16B**: The buildings in Sub Area 16B, outside the Conservation Area, although of no great architectural or historic interest, are of no less interest than the modern buildings within the Conservation Area.

### Preservation and Enhancement

Grosvenor Hill has lost much of its original historic interest and now has the character of a pleasant if undistinguished suburban street, which can be preserved through careful maintenance and ensuring that unsympathetic alterations and extensions do not erode its character further.

### Possible Extension or Reduction

Since the modern buildings in Sub Area 16A are of no greater architectural distinction from those in 16B, there is little justification in excluding the eastern end of the Grosvenor Road from the Conservation Area, and because of the marginal architectural or historic interest of the other buildings in Sub Area 16A, the choice has therefore been between including or excluding the whole of Grosvenor Hill from the Conservation Area. On balance, the Sub Area’s pleasant character and its position at the logical culmination of the eastern end of the Conservation Area marginally justify the road’s inclusion, and therefore the boundary has been realigned to include all the properties in Grosvenor Hill.

The re-aligned boundary therefore continue along the northern boundary of the rear gardens to Nos. 6a to 6e Grosvenor Hill, and along the northern and eastern boundaries of Grosvenor Court.