Extent and Justification

Sub Area 18A covers the northern part of Ridgway place as far as the southern boundary of the Conservation Area, and 18B the southern part, outside the Conservation Area. Ridgway Place is the most easterly of a series of parallel roads which echo and continue those on the northern side of the Ridgway. There is a natural separation from the Sub Areas to the east and west along the line of the back gardens, and its simple linear character is entirely different in layout and period from the informal arrangement of Sunnyside and Oldfield Road.

History

As is shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1865, Ridgway Place is the first of the series of streets of spacious villas south of the Ridgway which were laid out to meet the growing demand by the more wealthy professional classes who were finding Wimbledon increasingly attractive. The houses at the northern end of Ridgway Place were built first in the 1860s and the southern section was constructed in the early 20th C., below the steeper escarpment leading down to Worple Road.

Map of Sub Area 18A

The houses in Sub Area 18A were built by the Haberdashers Company and form a unified and well preserved composition of distinguished villas. Those
on the eastern side comprise an outstanding example of their period. As Milward explains:

Many of the larger houses belonged to prosperous middle-class families like the Fells who moved to Ridgway Place in the early 1880s. In their home they had “a very unusual thing, a bathroom”, but all the rooms were still lit by candles, though “there were gas jets in the hall” [1998 p.92].

Character

While the VicSoc report considered that the southern half did not constitute conservation area material, it waxed lyrical about the upper part of Ridgway Place:

The upper half however is highly distinguished and merits statutory listing, particularly in view of its group value. It consists of two rows, one on each side of the road, of yellow-brick villas in the grand manner, flamboyant but austere ....The even numbers (on the East side) are largely separate but of the same type, like giants’ dolls houses. The odd numbers (West side) are more varied, and present a flatter elevation: some are de-tached, while others are joined in pairs. Both the odd and even numbers are evidently from the same drawing board: their hallmarks include, for example, a flight of steps to the front door and a rounded window over it, corbelled eaves, and high-quality moulded ornamentation above upper windows. The whole upper half constitutes a remarkably complete survival, which the Post Office is intent on eroding by demolishing 73 and 75 on the Western side.

The subsequent extension of the telephone exchange on the Ridgway did indeed involve the demolition of the northernmost of this group. Specifically, the Society recommended listing all eleven houses on the west side (Nos. 55 to 75) and ten houses on the east (Nos. 50 to 68). But, despite the VicSoc's enthusiasm, none of the houses are on the statutory list, but most have since been locally listed.

The north end of Ridgway Place, looking south, showing the Villas on the west side

Despite the simple linear layout of the houses in Sub Area 18A, the townscape does not appear boringly repetitive because the distinguished scale and proportions of the houses, particularly on the eastern side, set up a strong and consistent rhythm, while the mature landscaping softens their impact. Because of the change in gradient, the termination of the view south is open to the sky, while that northward continues into The Grange.

Buildings:

Sub Area 18A contains twenty-two properties, eighteen of which are locally listed, and the other four also having a positive impact on the character of the Conservation Area. The houses on the east side appear from their style to have been built earlier than those on the west.

Even numbers, east side, south to north
No. 50: Substantial locally listed classically proportioned detached two storey house which the VicSoc report says was originally built in 1820 and enlarged in “Victorian Times”, but is otherwise dated as 1912. It is in stock brick with ornamental stone surrounds to the windows and a projecting porch, which appears to occupy the site of the southernmost of the 1860 houses.

(The south-western end of the lane from Sunnyside emerges between Nos. 50 and 52. It is a particularly attractive feature which provides a feeling of rural charm to this part of the Conservation Area.)

No. 52, Trochee Hotel: A detached three storey and semi-basement double fronted house dating from before 1898 in stock brick, render detailing and a slate roof. The VicSoc’s assertion that it was originally built about 1820, but was enlarged in Victorian times and bears the same stylistic marks as the other houses above it is not supported by the Tithe Map of 1838, which shows open fields in this locality. Features include a projecting porch with pillars and pilasters, rendered string courses and eaves brackets. It was considered for local listing but, because of an unsympathetically designed major side extension coupled with the house’s conversion to an hotel, it was not considered of sufficient quality.

Nos. 54 to 68: A row of eight locally listed detached houses of two and three storeys plus semi basement, dating from about 1860, designed as a unified composition. All the houses retain most of their original features. The fenestration to the main block of each house consists of single elegant central windows on each floor. The dominant window at piano nobile level is alternately a triple window with triangular portico above, or a more conventional canted bay. Above is a smaller window with a curved portico, and above that a tiny semi-circular arched window under a gabled roof with deeply recessed eaves. The materials are generally stock bricks and slate roofs, white rendered or stone surrounds to the windows and front door. To the side, a two storey block contains the entrance under a round-headed arch at piano nobile level approached up a flight of steps. Later side extensions have generally been carefully designed to blend with the original buildings.

A typical pair of houses on the eastern side of Ridgway Place: Nos. 58 and 60

No. 54: Triple window to the piano nobile, but a utilitarian two storey garage block to the side. Walled front garden.

No. 56: Bay window to the piano nobile and a sympathetically designed two storey garage block to the side with Palladian window to the first floor under a gable of similar pitch and scale to that of the main block. The fenced paved forecourt is softened by generous planting.

No. 58: Triple window to the piano nobile, and a sympathetically designed two storey garage block to the side with a broken pediment to the gable and a five-centre arch over the garage door. The paved forecourt is largely given over to car parking.

Nos. 60a and 60b: Bay window to the piano nobile. The house was converted into two dwellings in 1951.

No. 62: Similar design, but of red brick with a plainer triple window to the piano nobile. The house was converted into four apartments in 1981.
No. 64: Triple window to the piano nobile. A two storey side extension with a pitched roof and first floor window proportioned to reflect the main block, but with a garage entrance out of keeping with the overall composition.

The view south from the Ridgway showing how Nos. 70 and 72 Ridgway Place have been designed to blend with the earlier properties.

No. 66: Bay window to the piano nobile and a small sympathetically designed side extension containing a garage at semi-basement level. The walled paved forecourt is largely devoted to car parking. The house was converted into two apartments in 1952.

No. 68: Similar design, including a bay window to the piano nobile, but with a Mansard roof, pitched dormer window and dominant chimneys to the side. The forecourt is devoted to car parking.

Nos. 70 and 72: A pair of recently built semi-detached three storey houses of stock brick carefully designed to echo the character of Nos. 54 to 68. Each house has a gable and two storey bay windows to the three storey section, and two storey side extensions with lean-to roofs. The forecourts are devoted to car parking.

Odd numbers, west side, south to north

Nos 61 and 63 Ridgway Place, No. 53 and St John’s Passage, and St John’s Passage. The southern boundary of the Conservation Area follows the line of St John’s Passage, an attractive country lane between Ridgway Place and St. John’s Road.

No. 53: A substantial detached locally listed house of two and three storeys built before 1895 displaying some Arts and Crafts influence, and extended to the front and side. The main block is of stock brick with red brick detailing and tile hanging under a slate roof. The
extensions comprise a complex of single and double roofs which obscure the simple composition of the main block, although the three storey front extension may form part of the original composition because it continues the ornate tile hanging and brick chimney dominating the gable end. The VicSoc report refers to it as Rickfield House:

Originally it was a (pre-1840?) house in yellow brick, thought to be a farmhouse, but it was rebuilt and much enlarged in Victorian times in red brick and hanging tiles. Though different in style from the houses above it, and presumably later in date, it is of good quality and makes an interesting contrast to its companions.

No. 55: A locally listed detached three storey house plus basement with two storey side wing and tall chimneys, built of stock brick with a rendered basement, and a covered cast iron entrance veranda. The projecting gabled main section has a two storey cantilevered bay, giant order quoins, and a rendered first floor string course, soffit and ornamental window surrounds. The fenced forecourt is entirely devoted to car parking.

Nos. 57 to 63: Two pairs of semi-detached locally listed houses dating from 1876 (or possibly 1857-8). Each pair consists of a central section of three-and-a-half storeys plus basement with two-and-a-half storey side wings, with hipped slate roofs. The fenestration generally reflects that of the detached houses opposite, with single central bay windows on each floor of the main block, dominated by either a triple or bay window to the piano nobile and a smaller triple window with a flat cornice above. The top floor windows to each house project above an elaborate cornice and eaves, and are capped by small dormers. The side entrances at piano nobile level are approached up a generous flight of steps and both it and the first floor windows to the two storey side wings are topped by semi-circular cornices. Each pair is dominated by a particularly high range of chimneys along the party wall.

Nos. 57 and 59: A semi-detached locally listed pair with front railings. No.59 has a three storey side extension housing a semi-sunken garage.

Nos. 61, 61a and 63: A semi-detached locally listed pair without garden fences or walls but with extensively landscaped gardens. In 1981 No. 61 was significantly enlarged to form two dwellings.

Nos. 65 and 67: A semi-detached pair of locally listed three storey double fronted houses in stock brick with rendered semi-basements. Features include three storey canted bays each side of a central entrance at piano nobile level approached up a generous staircase, and pitched dormers of various kinds in a Mansard roof. The entrance details, stairs and central chimney stacks are similar to those of Nos. Nos. 57 to 63. No. 65 has an extensively landscaped front garden and No. 67 has a garage inserted at semi-basement level.

Nos. 69 and 71: A semi-detached pair of locally listed three storey houses in stock brick with rendered lower floors, side entrance wings, two storey canted bays and hipped roofs with pitched dormers. Similar entrance details, stairs and central chimney stacks. The extensively planted front gardens have no walls or fences. No. 71 has been significantly extended.

Positive and Negative Features

Although the extensions to some of the houses are quite substantial they are mainly of reasonable quality and do not seriously erode the original architectural integrity of the houses. The extensive hardstanding of some of the houses undermines their setting, while some are enhanced by extensive landscaping.

Preservation and Enhancement

Further car parking within the front gardens should be resisted by the use of Article 4 Directions and owners be encouraged to reinstate soft landscaping where possible. Development in the extensive gardens to the side of No. 50 and the rear of No. 53 (off St. John’s Passage) should be resisted to help preserve the area’s Arcadian character.
SUB AREA 18B, Outside the Conservation Area

The possibility of extending the Conservation Area further down Ridgway Place was considered but rejected, as explained below.

*No. 31 Ridgway Place and the south end of Ridgway Place*
Character

The Conservation Area boundary occurs on or about the point where the road changes abruptly in character. The gradient suddenly steepens south of the boundary and the tree-lined sense of enclosure to the north changes to an open vista lined with inter and post-war houses of suburban density, making this an suitable position for the boundary. Also, on the west side St John's Passage forms a natural historic break at the top of the steep gradient, and to the east the heavily treed southern boundary of No.50 forms a visual break just below the change in gradient.

Buildings

Two of the thirty-eight houses have a positive impact on the character of Sub Area 18B, and the effect of the remainder is neutral.

Odd numbers, west side, south to north (There are no Nos. 23, 25 or 27)

Swallow Court: Swallow Court is a modern three storey block of flats, the second floor being clad in tiles to form a false Mansard roof. It lies on the corner of Ridgway Place and Worple Road and, although facing on to Ridgway Place, it is more closely associated with Worple Road in scale and character, and is therefore excluded from Sub Area 18B.

Nos. 1 to 19: Nos. 1 to 11 consist of three pairs of two storey semi-detached houses, the first three pairs being typical inter-war hipped roofed houses in white render with square bay windows, Nos. 13 and 15 having tiled gables facing the road, and Nos. 17 and 19 being an equivalent modern version in red brick with projecting side wings and hipped dormers. They are typical of suburban estates throughout south London and are not Conservation Area material.

Nos. 21 and 29: These two houses are conventional modern detached two storey brick houses with gabled ends.

No. 31: A well proportioned distinctive flat roofed house typical of the 1960s with metal windows and white painted vertical timber cladding.
Nos. 33 to 47: The remaining houses on the west side as far north as the Conservation Area boundary consist of 10 two storey detached properties in various styles.

- Nos. 33 to 41 consist of detached versions of Nos. 1 to 11, in white render with hipped roofs and square bays topped with “half-timbered” gables.
- No. 43 is another well proportioned post-war house with shallow pitched roofs.
- No. 45 is a conventional hipped-roofed post-war house in pale brick.
- No. 47 is an inter-war or possibly earlier house of some distinction, with hipped gables, vertical tile hanging to the first floor and a projecting “half-timbered” single storey porch.

East Side (even numbers, from south)

Nos. 2 to 36: 19 detached and semi-detached inter or post-war houses in various styles.

- Nos. 2 to 8: Two pairs of semi-detached two storey inter-war houses of similar design to Nos. 1 to 11.
- No. 10: A similarly designed two-storey detached house.
- No. 12: An inter-war two storey detached house with square bays dominated by a “half timbered” gable.
- Nos. 14 and 16: A pair two storey semi-detached of similar design to Nos. 2 to 8.
- Nos. 18 to 28: Six conventionally designed post-war houses of varying styles.
- No. 30: An inter-war brick built bungalow.
- Nos 32 to 36: Three conventionally designed post-war houses, No. 36 having a wide raised terrace to exploit the view south-west from its elevated position.

Possible Extension or Reduction

The VicSoc acknowledged that the lower end of Ridgway Place did not merit inclusion in the conservation area, and the present boundary forms a natural break both historically and topographically. Although Sub Area contains a couple of houses of some distinction, particularly Nos. 31 and 47, as a whole they are not worthy of inclusion in the Conservation Area. The only recommended adjustment is to include No. 47 and the adjoining attractive raised pavement on the west side of the road, the raised pavement on the eastern side already being included.

SUB AREA 19: MURRAY ROAD (SOUTH)  

Extent and Justification

Sub Area 19 takes in the part of Murray Road south of the Ridgway as far as its junction with Spencer Hill and St John’s Road, the northern section of Murray Road being covered in Sub Area 10.

History

The southern part of Murray Road continues the infill between Sunnyside and Denmark Road which was commenced along Ridgway Place, most of the houses being built between 1906 and 1911.

Character

Like Ridgway Place, the southern part of Murray Road is basically suburban in character, most of the houses being detached, with six pairs of semi-detached properties on the western side, and the more imposing houses lying to the east. The houses display an interesting eclectic variety of styles and compositions typical of the early years of the twentieth century