No. 16 (Nerys or Neri House): A substantial locally listed detached house on the north side of Darlaston Road, with a double fronted three storey central section and single storey side wings, plus basement, ornamental bay windows and porch to the upper ground floor and a weathervane on the gable to the projecting bay to the central block. It was built by Alfred Crocker in 1885 and named Neri House after the Italian saint, Philip Neri, by the first owner, Archibald Donaldson, a Jesuit. It has since been divided into flats. [Milward, 1991, pp. 10, 17 and 20]

Positive and Negative Features

The attractive nature of the upper part of Edge Hill is set out under “Character”, above. The area is largely unspoilt, although the large expanse of tarmac provides a somewhat bleak setting to the Sacred Heart Parish Hall. The development of the southern part of the grounds to Convent of Marie Repartrice has also somewhat eroded the rural nature of the Sub Area.

Preservation and Enhancement

Any further encroachment into the open areas, such as the lawn to Donhead Lodge, should be strongly resisted, as should any more intense development of Oakhill Court and Edge Hill Court, outside the Conservation Area. For the reasons set out above, serious consideration should also be given before contemplating further development along the boundaries to Wimbledon College.

Possible Extension or Reduction

The possibility of extending the Conservation Area westwards was carefully considered. To the west Oak Hill Court and Edgehill Court, in Sub Area 26B, are visually continuous with the part of Edge Hill within the Conservation Area, and beyond that is Worple Avenue, forming Sub Area 26C. To the south-east are the houses in Thackery Close, in Sub Area 27C, where the Conservation Area boundary is clearly defined because of the lack of historic interest of these houses and the change in level along the boundary. The most likely extension was therefore into Sub Area 26B and possibly 26C.

SUB AREAS 26B: EDGE HILL COURT AND OAKHILL COURT; AND 26C, WORPLE AVENUE

Extent and Justification

Sub Area 26B covers the area west of Edge Hill, and is occupied by two modern housing estates, Oakhill Court and Edge Hill Court. It is included in Sub Area 26 because it is visually continuous with Sub Area 26A.

Sub Area 26C covers all except the southern end of Worple Avenue, adjoining Worple Road, and is included in this Sub Area because of its visual link with Sub Area 26B, Edge Hill Court dominating the culmination of the view north from Worple Road.
Sub Area 26B consists of terraces of attractively landscaped modern flats set into the slope of the escarpment leading down to Worple Road, reducing their impact on the nearby historic buildings and landscaped spaces within the Conservation Area.
Buildings

Edge Hill Court: A three and four storey “U”-shaped block of 88 flats with alternating bands of grey brickwork and white render and typical 1930s “Crittal” windows. The strong horizontal emphasis is relieved slightly by occasional full height bay windows.

The site of Edge Hill Court was originally called Coppins Shaw Wood, and in the late 1860s became the site of Ivyhurst, a large detached house which was pulled down in 1935. The only surviving remnant is The Lodge, adjoining the northern boundary, and now the caretaker’s house. [Milward, 1991, pp. 7 & 19] The VicSoc report called it intriguing: It is in a warm red brick with a tile hung turret, characteristic roof tiles, and stable at one end, and details like a cruciform door knocker. It certainly merits listing, and is proposed for the statutory rather than the local list. It is not statutorily listed, but is recommended for local listing.

The Lodge, Edge Hill Court, and Worple Avenue, looking towards Edge Hill Court

Oakhill Court: Three blocks of typical three storey 1950s flat fronted housing set in landscaped grounds. The site of Oakhill Court was originally known as Upper Coppins Field. Its predecessor, Charlton House, was built in 1866 by the same developer, and probably designed by the same architect as Donhead Lodge and Ridgelands (now Marie Repartrice Convent), to the north. It was renamed Ingarsby and in 1930 it opened as a school for girls under the name Oakhill (pupils included Dorothy Tutin and Pat Smythe). It closed after the Second World War and was used for a time as a boarding house for Wimbledon College, and then re-opened as the Ridgway Co-Educational School, in conjunction with No. 113 Ridgway. However, the School closed in the late 1950’s and was pulled down ten years later to make way for 39 town houses and maisonettes arranged in four blocks. [Milward, 1991, pp.7, 19, 22 & 23]

Possible Inclusion

When the Conservation Area was designated the area covered by Sub Section 26B was excluded because much of its historic interest had been lost when the two mid nineteenth century villas, Charlton House and Ivyhurst, were replaced a hundred years later by Edge Hill Court and Oakhill Court.

Although Oakhill Court and Edge Hill Court are pleasant examples of their kind, blocks of flats of the 1930s and ‘50s are not as yet regarded of sufficient historic interest to merit conservation area protection unless they are of particular architectural interest. It may be appropriate in a few years time to reconsider if the earlier estate, Edge Hill Court, merits inclusion as attitudes to buildings of this period change. Although The Lodge is situated fairly close to the boundary of the Conservation Area, it forms an integral part of the landscaping to Edge Hill Court and would be better protected by local listing than extending the Conservation Area to include it.

SUB AREA 26C: WORPLE AVENUE

Odd numbers, west side, south to north

Character
Worple Avenue is a **cul-de-sac** off Worple Road lined with rows of architecturally undistinguished early twentieth century detached and semi-detached houses with mature landscaping to the front gardens. Environmentally it forms a continuation of Worple Road, its only visual link with the area to the north being the view of the flats in Oak Hill Court from the south.

**Buildings**

**Map of Sub Areas 27A, 27B and 27C**

**Nos. 3 to 19:** Four pairs of c.1930s semi-detached houses and one detached house (No.7), of two storeys with large two storey square bay windows and first floor bays over the entrances, and gabled roofs with tall chimneys to which large dormers have been inserted. The finishes are a mixture of red brick and white render with tiling to the bay windows.

Even numbers, east side, south to north

**Nos. 2 to 14:** Three pairs of c.1930 houses of similar design to Nos. 3 to 19, opposite.

**Nos. 18 and 20:** A pair of white rendered two storey houses with their gables facing the street, probably of a later date.

**Possible Inclusion**

Sub Area 26C was originally excluded from the Conservation Area because the early twentieth century houses along each side of Worple Avenue were not considered to be of sufficient architectural distinction to make them worthy of inclusion. They are typical of the detached and semi-detached estates built in great numbers in London in the early twentieth century, and it is unlikely that they will be regarded as of sufficient interest to merit protection in the foreseeable future.

**SUB AREAS: 27A, EDGE HILL (SOUTH); 27B, DARLASTON ROAD; AND 27C, THACKERY CLOSE AND SAVONA CLOSE**

**Extent and Justification**

**Location map of Sub Areas 27A, 27B and 27C**

Sub Area 27 is in three parts: 27A consists of the southern end of Edge Hill within the Conservation Area as far south as Worple Road; 27B covers the northern and eastern arms of Darlington Road, originally outside the Conservation Area, and almost as far south as Worple Road; and 27C encloses the recent developments further north in Savona Close and Thackery Close, outside the Conservation Area.

Sub Area 27B is placed in the same Sub Area as 27A because of the their similar character and close proximity, and areas 27B and C were considered to assess if they compared sufficiently well to be included within the Conservation Area.