Nos. 39-41, Hannah Court, and No. 43, Tina Court: Hannah Court is a modern brick-built three storey three bay block of 18 flats in attractive landscaped grounds, constructed on the southern part of the original grounds of the Convent of Marie Reparatrice, on the Ridgway (in Sub Area 15A). Tina Court is a single block of identical design between Hannah Court and the Convent.

No. 37: A modern courtyard house in red brick with mono pitch roofs, behind a high wall.

No. 35, Beaumont Court: A recently completed three and four storey block of flats in pale brick with a rendered ground floor. It is set well back from the road, with the front area devoted to car parking.

No. 33, Donhead Lodge: The locally listed Lodge was built by the same developer and probably designed by the same architect as Charlton House (now redeveloped as Oakhill Court), immediately to the south and outside the Conservation Area, and Ridglands (now Marie Reparatrice Convent) in Sub Area 15A. Its owners included Freeman Oliver Haynes, a Fellow of Caius College from 1867 to 1880, and from 1880 Mary Arnold, a granddaughter of the Headmaster of Rugby. Until 1902 she used the Lodge as a “School of Ladies”, when it was bought by Henry Small, a prominent Jesuit. When his wife died in 1932 he left it to the Jesuits, who opened it in the following year as a Preparatory School for Wimbledon College. [Milward, 1991, pp.7, 15 & 18]

The main block is of red brick with a slate roof, the principle façade facing south over lawns, with two canted bays and ornamental brickwork over the ground floor windows. An elaborate chimneystack, further ornamental brickwork and a classical stone portico to the main entrance dominate the street elevation. It is surrounded on the north, east and west sides by somewhat utilitarian extensions.

Donhead Lodge from the south

Nos. 92, 90 and 88 Edge Hill

Even numbers, east side, north to south

No. 92: A recently constructed two storey detached house in brick and render designed to match the character of Nos. 86 to 90.

Nos. 90, 88 and 86: Three detached two-and-a-half storey neo-vernacular houses built in 1897 on the site of the entrance drive to Wimbledon College, which were originally named “Tarifa”, “Edge Mount” and “Falconhurst”. [Milward, 1991, p.12] They are locally listed for their group value, the list description stating:

The building materials include red brick pebbledash, with details in render, stone and applied timber, and roof tiles…..The most notable features of interest include decorative render panels below the eaves, leaded glass in some of the windows, ornate ridge tiles, the brick detail to the chimneys, the ornate bargeboard at the gables, the classical design of the dormers, and the stone detailing at the porches.

Wimbledon College:
Development: The original 1860 Anglican Preparatory Military Academy was originally known as “Brackenbury’s” because it was established by John Brackenbury, who purchased two large meadows below the Ridgway known as Tree and Boggy Fields. He had originally helped to run the College’s predecessor, Nelson House School, in Eagle House, Wimbledon High Street, and had been so successful that in 1859 he took out a mortgage on the present, larger, site.

The original buildings, including the school hall and family rooms overlooking the valley, were designed by SS Teulon. The area between the College and the Ridgway, now occupied by Ridgway Gardens, was originally the cricket field, and the original formal gardens near the south front and exotic trees and shrubs around the grounds were so attractive that the College used to be opened to the public once a week. [Milward 1991, p.7]

Although initially very successful, “Brackenbury’s” declined under the control of the Revd Charles Wynn, and closed down in 1887. It was purchased in 1892 by the Jesuits and re-opened as Wimbledon College. It became a grammar school in 1944 and a comprehensive school from 1969. The original buildings have been swamped by later additions [Milward 1989 pp.154-6]. To quote Pevsner:

The original ones of 1860 by Teulon consist of the schoolhouse, a picturesque brick Gothic mansion to the rear of the hall, and behind this and to the north, a long, rather gaunt three-storey gabled range with projecting wings, built as dormitories. The hall itself was burnt down in 1977. Its replacement of 1980 by W. Evans makes quite a handsome show, with its splayed plinth and its red brick walls in sympathy with the older buildings, although the abrupt horizontal roof-line is at odds with the rest of the skyline. The wings of the dormitory buildings were extended north west in 1865-7 by Teulon, north east (in a less spiky Gothic) in 1898-8. The Perpendicular Chapel to the south west was added by F.A. Walters in 1910. The courtyard behind completed by utilitarian classrooms and laboratories of 1951 by Hudson & Hammond and by further additions of 1965 by H. Cullerne Pratt. In the north east corner of the courtyard the old gymnasium of 1883, converted to a library in 1980; to the south technical and arts building of 1968-72 by W. Evans [p.453]
The School grounds from Hillside before and after the erection of the Sports Hall

A timber clad flat-roofed sports hall has recently been added as an extension to the gymnasium and pool along the eastern boundary, and is the subject of continuing controversy, particularly from the occupants of the houses in Hillside, to the east.

Context: Although there are many smaller schools, Wimbledon College and King’s College School comprise the two main educational institutions within the Conservation Area, and their sports fields provide the two largest areas of open space within its boundaries. However, their setting provides an interesting contrast: Wimbledon College has perhaps the finer vista, since (with the noble exception of the Sacred Heart Church) it has a virtually uninterrupted view south-west, whereas the view from King’s College School terminates at the tree-lined southern boundary along the Ridgway. However, King’s College School also has a view north across Wimbledon Common and the Crooked Billet, whereas the buildings along the northern and eastern boundaries to Wimbledon College turn their backs on their neighbours in Ridgway Gardens, Berkeley Place and Hillside.

The Sacred Heart Church from the north, and Wimbledon College from Berkeley Place

The original buildings to Wimbledon College, built in 1860, were arranged so as to gain maximum benefit from their elevated position, and the houses in Ridgway Gardens were not erected until the late nineteenth century. Although the houses in Berkeley Place and Hillside generally pre-date those in Ridgway Place, they were built after the original College buildings, so that the latter presented a fait accompli. The consequent expansion of the College has since been largely dictated by its initial siting and the continuing desire to maintain the vista over the escarpment. However, this expansion has proved un-neighbourly in townscape terms and continues to cause conflict with the residents to the north and east. Because the Conservation Area contains comparatively few buildings of more than residential scale, and because the rear gardens of most houses in the Conservation Area tend to adjoin one another, there are few conflicting relationships of the kind encountered between the College and its neighbours, this being perhaps the most prominent. If the College needs to expand further it may have to sacrifice some of its outlook by building along its south or west boundaries.
The Cottage: An outbuilding of Wimbledon College adjoining Edge Hill, grade II listed for its group value and described in the list as Cottage and cartshed below. It was built in 1860, probably to the design of SS Teulon.

The Sacred Heart Parish Hall: The Parish Hall was designed by W. Evans, dates from 1981-2 and lies on the steep escarpment immediately below the sports fields to Wimbledon College an area originally known as Boggy Field. In contrast to the Church it is a typically modern plain rectangular building in pale brick with a flat roof and is surrounded by an asphalt car park. Its mention in Pevsner [p. 453] indicates his predilection for modern buildings of the period which may now be considered as less than outstanding.

DARLASTON ROAD

The Sacred Heart Church: A late nineteenth century grade II listed church on the corner of Edge Hill and Darlaston Road. The VicSoc report acknowledged that views about the architectural merits of the Sacred Heart Church vary, but it is impressively sited and rich in careful detail, while Milward stated that the Sacred Heart is thought by many good judges to be the finest of the four churches on or near the Ridgway. It was built on land purchased from John Brackenbury by Edith Arendrop, a member of the Courtauld family and a dedicated Jesuit, and it was designed by Frederick Walters in the late Decorated Gothic style. When the church was opened in 1887 only the nave had been built, and the rest of the building was not completed until 1901. [Milward 1989 pp.157-160]. Pevsner describes it as

Large, tall, and long, without any special vertical accent. Flint and stone. Nave and isles and polygonal apse. Dec, with pinnacles on the buttresses. Flying buttresses for the apse. Interior with much figural decoration. [p. 453]

The strong vertical emphasis of its highly decorated facades is accentuated by it steep roof and projecting buttresses to both the nave and lower surrounding isles. Its pale grey knapped flint is decorated by stone crenulations, dressings, checkerboard panels, and particularly ornate window tracery containing stained glass.

The Sacred Heart Church from the western entrance gate, and No. 16 Darlaston Road

The Church is perched dramatically on the steep escarpment within pleasantly landscaped grounds and makes a strong impact when seen from the west through the ornamental arched entrance from Edge Hill, from below along Darlaston Road to the south, and from the north across the sports fields to Wimbledon College. The only other building in the Conservation Area to provide a comparable impact is the Great Hall to King’s College School.

The wall and three gateways to the churchyard are also separately grade II listed for their group value. They are built in a similar style to the Church, of knapped flint and stone dressings.
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.