SUB AREA 29, LANSDOWNE ROAD

Extent and Justification

Sub Area 29 covers the whole of Landsdowne Road, which lies between Arterberry Road (Sub Area 31) to the west, and The Downs (Sub Area 28A) to the east, the latter being outside the Conservation Area. Most of the western side and the southern end are included within the Conservation Area, but the remainder has now been excluded from it, for the reasons set out below. The northern end is included within Sub Area 15, the Ridgway.

As with most parts of the Conservation Area, the eastern and western boundaries west are defined by the boundaries to the back gardens between this and adjoining roads, and the top of the escarpment creates a physical and visual break between the southern end of the Landsdowne Road and Southdown Drive.

History

Lansdowne Road is one of the series of roads built south of the Ridgway to house the commuters who were moving to Wimbledon in the 1850s onwards following the develop-
ment of railway links to central and south London. However, like the northern part of The Downs, the villas on the east side have since been replaced by blocks of flats and terrace housing, so that the VicSoc report dismissed Lansdowne Road as merely a narrow cul-de-sac, extensively redeveloped. Ten Victorian houses survive (July 1973), of which 16 is perhaps the best.

Character

The VicSoc's implied assumption that the number of period houses would rapidly diminish has proved largely unfounded, since seven still survive on the western side, giving the road a decidedly lop-sided character. This is reflected in the line of the Conservation Area boundary which, although following the boundaries of the back gardens to the houses to the west, originally zigzagged back and forth on the east side taking in those blocks of flats considered to be of some architectural merit while excluding others. This part of the assessment includes a review of the alignment of the eastern boundary in the light of changing attitudes to the merits or otherwise of these modern buildings.

Lansdowne road does not share the benefit enjoyed by The Downs of deep plots fronted by mature trees which conceal many of the buildings, since the plots are shallower and the buildings nearer the road, making the contrast between the east and west sides more pronounced. Although the settings of the villas on the west side benefit from some greenery, most trees that may have matured on the east side have been removed so as not to hinder redevelopment. On balance, therefore, Lansdowne Road is less attractive than the southern part of The Downs, all of which originally lay outside the Conservation Area.

Buildings

Nos. 2 & 3 (High Range) and 4 Lansdowne Road

Sub Area 29 originally contained seven locally listed properties, one other building which makes a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, twenty others whose impact is neutral, six blocks of flats and nine houses which have a negative impact, and two blocks whose impact is seriously detrimental.

East side, consecutive numbers, north to south

No. 1: No. 1 adjoins the Ridgway and is recommended for inclusion in Sub Area 15 of the Conservation Area.

Nos. 2 and 3, High Range: A symmetrical block of 20 four storey flats plus basement built in 1974, with garages at the rear, which lies outside the Conservation Area. Its pale brick and white rendered projecting balconies provide a strong if aggressive rhythm which relieves it of the monotony of other building on this side of Lansdowne Road, but its scale makes it inappropriate for inclusion.

No. 4: A block of 12 four storey flats built in 1974 with a fifth floor penthouse added in 2002, in yellow brick and pale red boarding, the balconies and top storey of which are recessed. It lies outside the Conservation Area and its scale and monotonous character not only make it
unsuitable for inclusion but it also detracts from the setting of the historic buildings on the opposite side of the road.

**No. 5:** A five storey block of ten flats built in 1974 in yellow brick with rendered string courses and rear garages, whose scale and character also detracts from the setting of the buildings opposite and make it unsuitable for inclusion in the Conservation Area.

(Conservation Area boundary)

**No. 6, Beryl Harding House, and No. 8, The Terraces**

**Nos. 6 and 7, Beryl Harding House:** Two symmetrical pitched roofed blocks of eighteen flats with rear garages, built in 1973 in stock brick whose mundane design is slightly relieved by white infill panels above the central entrances and by pleasant landscaping to the front. They originally lay within the Conservation Area and, because they are only three stories high, they do not have such an impact on the buildings opposite, but they are of no better design than other blocks which were originally excluded from the Conservation Area, and since they continue the character of the adjoining buildings in The Downs, their continued inclusion seems hard to justify.

**No. 8, The Terraces:** A pitched roof four storey block of fifteen flats end-on to the road, in stock brick with a white rendered rusticated ground floor, a projecting central section and adjoining balconies, and dormer windows. The articulation of No. 8 relieves it of the monotony of other buildings on this side of Lansdowne Road, but its scale, which is also similar to that of the adjoining buildings in The Downs. It was also included within the Conservation Area, but because of its severely detrimental impact on the buildings opposite its continued inclusion does not seem appropriate.

(Conservation Area Boundary)

**2 to 14 Cumberland Close, and 1 to 10 Lansdowne Close**

**No. 10 Lansdowne Road and Nos. 1 to 14 (even) Cumberland Close:** A semi-detached pair of three storey houses facing on to Lansdowne Road and a terrace of three storey houses on the south side of a short cul-de-sac. All the houses are in red brick, with pitched roofs and nominal balconies to the first floor. Nos. 2 to 14 have ground floor garages and the semi-detached pair have ground floor bay windows and garages at the rear. The houses are situated outside the Conservation Area and their minimal mundane design makes them unsuitable for inclusion.
Nos. 1 to 10 Lansdowne Close: Nos. 1 to 8 are a terrace of two storey pitched roofed houses on the south side of this short cul-de-sac, with built-in garages and projecting first floors which white painted boarding beneath the windows, while Nos. 9 and 10 form a semi-detached pair of three storey flat roofed houses with built-in garages and first floor picture windows, situated at the north-easterly end of the close. The scale of these houses are more sympathetic to the historic buildings in Lansdowne Road than the blocks of flats and Cumberland Close to the north, and their layout, articulation, proportions and landscaping make them architecturally superior to most of the other modern buildings in the road, so that their inclusion in the Conservation Areas seems appropriate.

A path connects the southern end of Lansdowne Road with the modern development of Southdown Drive, in Sub Area 30, further down the escarpment.

West side, consecutive numbers, south to north (All the buildings are inside the CA)

No. 11: A double fronted detached house of three storeys plus basement in a plain classical design dating from about 1860, in off-white render with white rendered string courses, and an enclosed projecting porch of elaborate classical design including semi-circular arched door and window openings. The house, which has been converted into eight flats, was considered but rejected for local listing.

Nos. 11a, b and c, and Nos. 12a, b and c Lansdowne Road

Nos. 11a, 11b and 11c: A stepped terrace of three two storey flat roofed houses built in 1966 in the grounds of No. 11, in stock brick and dark stained infill panels, projecting garages and deep fascias. Their crisp modern design and modest scale respects and contrasts reasonably with No. 11 and No. 12, a locally listed villa to the north.

No. 12, St. Teresa’s: A locally listed double fronted detached house of three stories plus basement dating from about 1860 in stock brick and rendered string courses, with a projecting roof across the main frontage over the central entrance and canted bays to the principal floor.

Nos. 12a, 12b and 12c: Three three-storey houses dating from 1979, in red brick with steeply pitched gables facing on to the road and first floor projecting balconies over garage entrances.
and recessed front porches. Despite the height resulting from the pitched roofs and the insertion of neo-Georgian glazing to the first and second floor windows, the houses do not conflict seriously in scale or character with the adjoining historic buildings.

No. 13: A locally listed double fronted detached house of two stories plus basement dating from about 1860, similar in design to No. 12, with a projecting roof over the central entrance and canted bay windows supported on timber brackets, and dormer windows to the mansard roof.

No. 14: A locally listed double-fronted detached house of three stories plus basement, similar in design to No. 12, in stock brick with rendered string courses and a prominent projecting entrance porch at principal floor level supported on Tuscan columns.

Nos. 15, 15a, 15b and 15c: The central block, No. 15a and 15b is a locally listed double-fronted detached house of three storeys plus basement very similar to No. 14, but divided into two houses, and with modern extensions in stock brick to the north and south. Although the north extension, No. 15, is of two storeys and No. 15c, to the south, is of three, they have been designed to appear largely symmetrical in an effort to relate sympathetically to the main building by being faced with false timber framing to the upper floors under gabled roofs. However, these pseudo-historic features are far from convincing, and the extensions conflict in character with the main house and adversely effect its setting. The front area is entirely devoted to hard paving without any front boundary, emphasising the institutional impression of the group.

No. 19 Lansdowne Road, flats 1 to 3 on the right and flats 4 to 8 on the left

Nos. 16 and 16a, The Coach House: No. 16 is a locally listed double-fronted house of three storeys plus basement similar in design to No. 14, but with a converted nineteenth century two storey wash house, No. 16a, immediately to the north in white painted brickwork with a gabled roof facing the road and neo-Georgian windows. The juxtaposition of the two houses is unfortunate, and a bright red pair of entrance gates to No. 16a mars their setting.
No. 17: A locally listed double fronted house of three stories plus basement very similar to No. 14 but with a projecting chimney stack to the south of the entrance porch. The front area is largely devoted to hard standing, and to the south there is an attractive wall and arched entrance to the rear garden.

No. 19, Aston Court: Two blocks of flats built in 1962-4. The southern one (flats 1 to 3) is a three-storey block of stock brick and central rendered panels between the windows, under a gabled roof, which both mundane and starkly aggressive in its proportions. The northern block (flats 4 to 8) is of two three storey wings with gabled roofs separated by a two storey link, mainly in white render. It appears to be an unfortunate conversion of a pair of semi-detached nineteenth century houses and, although it attempts to acknowledge its historic setting by such details as deep eaves to the gables and a continuous projecting roof over the central entrances, its fails because of its starkness and the lack of any cohesion resulting from later alterations to the central section. Both these buildings not only detract seriously from the setting of the historic buildings to the south, they are considerably inferior architecturally than the modern blocks of flats on the opposite side of Lansdowne Road, and should be excluded from the Conservation Area.

Nos. 19c and d: A two storey detached house built in 1964 in stock brick and stained timber boarding with projecting gabled wing and a projecting single storey entrance and garage, which has a neutral impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

Positive and Negative Features

The positive character of the west side of Lansdowne Road, with its six locally listed buildings, contrasts with the negative impact of the seven substantial blocks of modern flats on the eastern side, plus the two blocks in the north-west corner and the houses along Cleveland Close towards the south-eastern end. The setting of two of the locally listed villas, Nos. 15 and 16, have also been eroded by modern extensions, particularly No. 15, so that their local listing appears justified only because of their group value and the unity they give to the street scene. The inclusion of any of Lansdowne Road is finely balanced, and any further encroachment of poorly designed or inappropriately scaled modern development would be liable to justify excluding Lansdowne Road entirely from the Conservation Area.

Reduction of the Conservation Area

As a result of this Assessment, all the buildings on the east side, except Lansdowne Close, have been excluded so that, instead of the boundary cutting backwards and forwards to include or exclude blocks of flats which vary slightly in architectural quality, the boundary now follows the junction of the back gardens between Lansdowne Road and the Downs. The blocks at No. 19 are also excluded because their attempt at historicism has result in buildings of significantly lower architectural quality than those on the east side.

Preservation and Enhancement

Any further encroachment of modern development in Lansdowne Road should be most strongly resisted, and any proposals to replace the existing blocks of flats should be taken as an opportunity to provide development which is of good modern design as well as being more sympathetic with the scale and character with the historic buildings on the western side. The wide frontages to four of the seven villas on the west side have been exploited with infill development, and there are still gaps in the street frontage wide enough to accommodate minor development or even to provide rear access to plots in Arterberry Road; such proposals should be resisted or at most considered only if they are extremely modest and of exceptionally high architectural quality, to prevent the further erosion of the historic buildings.
SUB AREAS 30A, 3B AND 3C: CRESCENT ROAD AND SOUTHDOWN DRIVE

Map of Sub Areas 30A, 3B and 3C
Extent and Justification

Sub Area 30 is divided into three parts: Sub Area 30A covers the western part of Crescent Road, which was originally included in the Conservation Area, although separated from it; Sub Area 30B covers the eastern side of Crescent Road, which lies outside the Conservation Area; and Sub Area 30C covers Southdown Drive, which is situated between Crescent Road and Lansdowne Road (Sub Area 29), to the north, and was also outside the Conservation Area but has now been included within it. The eastern half of Crescent Road was included in this Assessment in case any of it was found to be worthy of including in the Conservation Area, and Southdown Drive was considered because it links Crescent Road with the Conservation Area boundary.

History

Crescent Road is one of the most recently developed parts of the Conservation Area, all the houses having been built since 1885. Except for Nos. 24 to 26, they are all located along the western side of the road, and until recently they all enjoyed unobstructed views eastwards towards The Downs. Nos. 1 to 7 date from 1885, Nos. 8 to 11 were built in 1893, and Nos. 12 to 17 two years later. No. 20 and the three houses on the eastern side, near Worple Road, appear to be more recent, and Southdown Drive and the various buildings which form the Ursuline Convent - covering the rest of the eastern side and still being developed - date from the latter part of the twentieth century.

Sub Area 30A: Crescent Road, West Side

Character

Sub Area 30A follows the boundary line of the Conservation Area and is limited to the 19 houses on the west side of Crescent Road. Although on superficial inspection these houses appear to be similar to many other late 19th C rows of houses in south London, some are distinguished by ornamental brickwork and other features which justify their protection.
The need to protect their architectural quality was not fully recognised until several years after the boundaries of the Conservation Area were agreed, so that when this part of the road was designated in May 1990 it effectively formed a separate conservation area, the houses in Southdown Drive isolating it from the main CA. However, since it is so closely linked to West Wimbledon CA it has been given the same name.

Buildings West side, consecutive numbers, south to north (there is no No. 16)

Nos. 1 to 7: Seven detached two storey houses dating from 1885 in red brick, with two storey canted bays and side entrances, distinguished by double swags in carved brick panels under the first floor windows. The houses appear to be largely unaltered, although the brickwork to No. 4 has been painted white, and the front gardens of most of the houses are largely devoted to car parking.

Nos. 8 to 11: Two pairs of semi-detached two storey houses dating from 1893 in red brick, with side entrances and projecting side wings containing stone banding to the gables and crenulated parapet walls to the ground floor canted bays. The ground floor of the recessed central section to Nos. 8 and 9 has been converted to garages and the front gardens are largely devoted to car parking.

No. 12 to 15: Four detached two storey houses built in 1895 in red brick. They are similar to Nos. 1 to 7 but lack the attractive ornamental brick panels, having rusticated quoins at the corners and stone banding to the sills and window heads. Nos. 12 and 13 have been painted white, although the rusticated quoins to No. 13 have been left exposed. Again the front gardens are mostly devoted to car parking.

No. 17: A more substantial two storey detached house built in 1895 in red brick and rusticated corner quoins in stone, with a side entrance and square ground floor bay.

Nos. 18 and 19: Two detached two storey houses of similar design to Nos. 12 to 15.

No. 20, Southbank Cottage: A modern detached two storey house end on to the road in red brick with decorated chimneys, behind a high brick wall.

Inclusion or Exclusion: The houses on the western side of Crescent Road vary in architectural quality, the decorative details of Nos. 1 to 7 being the main justification for the inclusion of the road in the Conservation Area. However, its unified character justifies the inclusion of the whole of this side of Crescent Road.

Sub Area 30B: Crescent Road, East Side

Character

Because of the generous distance between Crescent Road and The Downs, the houses on the east side of the road presumably enjoyed extensive views eastwards over open countryside or playing fields, but this substantial area has been steadily developed for educational purposes.

Buildings

Ursuline High School: The east side of Crescent Road is mainly occupied by the buildings and playing fields of the Ursuline High School. This side of Crescent Road has been omitted from the Conservation Area presumably because the modern buildings that occupy the northern part of the school grounds were considered to be unsuitable in scale and not sufficiently architecturally distinguished to merit their inclusion. This review of their character supports that decision and is reinforced by the additional buildings which are at present under construction, particularly the barrel-vaulted sports hall which is sited towards the south end of the grounds and impinges on the views east from the houses at this end of Crescent Road.
Nos. 24 to 26: Three detached mid twentieth century houses of suburban design, Nos. 24 and 25 being of two storeys and having applied timber framing to first floor projecting gables, and No. 26 being of one-and-a-half storeys with large dormers in the sloping front roof. They are not sufficiently distinguished architecturally to be included in the Conservation Area.

Nos. 10 and 11 Crescent Road

Sub Area 30C: Southdown Drive

Character

Southdown Drive is a small modern estate of houses around an attractively landscaped green that has been inserted into the steeply sloping escarpment at the north end of Crescent Road.

Buildings

Numbered consecutively, anti-clockwise

Nos. 1 to 6: Six two storey houses linked by single storey garages on the south side of the estate, with their gable ends facing the road. The cross walls are of red brick and the gable ends are of white render to the ground floor and blue/grey tile hanging above. The small front gardens are attractively landscaped.

Nos. 7 to 9: Three three-storey terrace houses on the eastern side of the estate with red brick cross walls and white boarding to the projecting first and second floors.

Nos. 10 to 15: Six three-storey terrace houses on the northeastern side of the estate of similar design to Nos. 7 to 9.

Nos. 16 to 21: Six more three-storey terrace houses on the northwestern side of the estate of similar design to Nos. 7 to 9.

Nos. 22 to 25: Four two-storey houses of similar linked design to Nos. 1 to 6 but with projecting porches and first floor gable ends in white boarding.

Inclusion in the Conservation Area

Southdown Drive is an attractively landscaped modern estate surrounded by modern buildings whose architectural quality varies from pleasant to outstanding. The linked houses are well articulated and provide a satisfactory rhythm to the south and west sides of the estate, while the three terraces of three-storey town houses are particularly well proportioned and crisply detailed. Overall, the houses compare well with those in Lansdowne Close, immediately to the north in Sub Area 29, inside the Conservation Area. Therefore, because of their architectural quality and their attractive setting, Southdown Drive merits inclusion in the Conservation Area. The inclusion of Sub Area 30C also links Sub Area 30A with the rest of West Wimbledon Conservation Area.

16-21 Southdown Drive and, above, the main buildings of the Ursuline High School