SUB AREAS 31A AND 31B: ARTERBERRY ROAD AND THE DRIVE

Extent and Justification

Area 31 is in two parts: 31A encompasses the whole of The Drive and the northern part of Arterberry Road, and 31B covers the southern part of Arterberry Road, much of which now included in the Conservation Area. Sub Area 31B was originally outside the Area, and this Assessment includes an analysis to consider how much, if any, is worthy of inclusion 27 years after the boundary of the Conservation Area was determined.

Like the other Sub Areas that run from the Ridgway to Worple Road, Sub Area 31 is self-contained, with the boundaries along the junctions of the back gardens on each side. The Drive is forms part of the Sub Area because the southern leg is linked to Arterberry Road. The north-eastern corner of Arterberry Road lies in Sub Area 15A.

Sub Area 31A: The Drive and the Northern Part of Arterberry Road

Character

Sub Area 31A lies on flat land, immediately above the steep escarpment of which No. 31B forms a part, the boundary between 21A and 31B lying near the top of the escarpment. The Vic Soc report described The Drive briefly as Fine trees and nine Victorian houses of merit, and some more recent buildings, and Arterberry Road as

A hilly winding road in which sixteen Victorian houses at present survive. Towards the upper end on the East side (a part currently of close interest to developers) there are fine oaks and other trees.

Sub Area 31A continues the attractive Arcadian nature of the roads further east, such as the western side of Lansdowne Road and the top part of Edge Hill, with large late nineteenth and early twentieth century properties, a significant number of which have now been replaced or converted into blocks of flats, old people’s homes and educational institutions, etc.

Wim Soc’s environmental assessment of Arterberry Road and the Drive notes that both roads are characterised generally by well set-back building lines, wide gaps between buildings, and dense greenery along roads, although the character of the street has suffered by some of the modern development infringing the building line. Moving from north to south, the buildings along the south eastern part of Arterberry Road divert increasingly from the road alignment, presumably to exploit the original views to the south west.

Road detailing consists of 6” wide granite kerbs throughout, the gutter comprising four courses of granite setts, some of which appear to be covered by the bituminous road surface. The Drive has paved footways and grass verges, and some of the street lights are of an unsuitable design in concrete.

History

The top of the escarpment mid-way down Arterberry Road was the site of Mount Ararat, the home of Thomas Devas, one of the leading Wimbledonians of the late nineteenth century, its grounds stretching as far as the railway line. He laid out The Drive on the line of the driveway to his house, and he arranged the bends in Arterberry Road to help his horses ascend the
steep gradient to that part of his estate. The houses on the east side of Arterberry Road were laid out by Devas between 1873 and 1878. [Milward 1989, p.175]

Map of Sub Area 31A: Arterberry Road, northern section, and The Drive

Buildings

There are no statutorily listed buildings among the sixty or so in Sub Area 31A, although seven of them are locally listed (one of which is recommended for down-grading), fifteen more
make a positive contribution to this part of the Conservation Area (three of which are recommended for local listing), about sixteen have a negative impact, one – 33b Beech Court - has a seriously detrimental impact, and the rest of the buildings have a neutral effect.

THE DRIVE: Even numbers, west and south sides, north to south

No. 2: A substantial neo vernacular detached double fronted house of three storeys plus basement built in 1888 on a wide plot in red brick. Features include a ground floor bay and grey tile hanging to a projecting second floor gable on the north wing, a pitched roofed semi-dormer to the south wing, ornate ridge tiles, gable finials, moulded brickwork and terracotta panels. The house was until recently used as a nurses’ home and a detached three storey wing has recently been built to the north of similar proportions and materials. Most of the front area is devoted to car parking. It was considered but rejected for local listing.

No. 4: A detached house whose design mirrors that of No. 2 and was also rejected for local listing. It was converted to seven flats in 1955, and the grounds to the south of the house are occupied with garages and hardstanding.

No. 6: A substantial neo vernacular locally listed detached double fronted house of three storeys built in 1888 on a wide plot and converted to flats in 1954, with a recently built two storey lean-to wing, all in red brick with ornamental tile hanging to the two projecting gables. It incorporates Victorian gothic detailing and other features including a two storey canted bay to the north wing, a gothic arched entrance porch with a pitch dormer above, curved eaves, ornate ridge tiles, gable finials, ornate wooden bargeboarding, moulded bricks and coloured glass to the front door. The frontages to the north and south are occupied by garages and the front area is devoted to hardstanding.

No. 8 The Drive, now a school, and a modern old people’s home to the south
No. 8: No. 8 is a particularly large detached double fronted late nineteenth century house built at an angle to The Drive to exploit its extensive grounds to the south and the view southwest towards the North Downs. The main block is three-storey with two storey canted bays to the garden front and a later two storey wing to the east, the whole being of red brick with white brick and stone details and bracketed eaves. The house’s was until recently used as a school which involved alterations, including the insertion of a lift overrun to the roof. The road frontage is designed as the “rear” elevation and is partly obscured by a later two storey block plus mansard which lies end-on to the road. The grounds are now occupied by an extensive modern one and two storey old people’s home of plain inconspicuous design. No. 8 was considered but rejected for local listing. Enquiries were recently made about the conversion to No. 8 into flats and the old peoples’ home into a school, with houses built into the grounds to the south and west.

Mount Ararat, Nos. 10, 12 and 14: This two storey terrace of three twentieth century properties in white colour wash is located at the southern end of a narrow tree lined access way called "Lane End". No. 12 to the west and No. 14 to the east are later additions. They form a pleasant unified group of simple classical proportions, but are somewhat compromised by extensive hardstanding to the front.

No. 16: A detached locally listed two storey double fronted house built in 1902 of classical proportions in brown brick with red brick, stone and terracotta detailing, including moulded brickwork to the windows, corners and chimney stacks, and terracotta panels below the first floor windows to the two storey canted bay to the east wing. A flat topped dormer detracts from the general character.

No. 18: A detached locally listed two storey attractively landscaped house in white pebbledash built in 1906, with a second floor lit by dominant gables to the front elevation. Features include ornate eaves with modillions, a classical and ornate window surround and moulded detailing at first floor level.
No. 20: A detached two storey house end-on to The Drive built in 1956 in stock brick, the first floor being lit by three large flat-roofed dormers in red tile hanging. Extensive creeper and rustic landscaping softens this rather ungainly late addition to the Conservation Area.

Odd numbers, east and north sides, north to south

No. 121 Ridgway and Ridge End: When built in 1885, this was a detached two-and-a-half storey neo-vernacular house with a red brick ground floor and a mixture of tile hanging and white render to the upper floor and to the numerous gables, but in 1982 it was separated into a pair of semi-detached properties, the northern part, No. 121, facing on to the Ridgway, and the southern half, Ridge End, forming part of The Drive. It is double piled, the elevation on to The Drive being topped by a pair of gables and No. 121 having a semi-circular brick bay to the ground floor of the west elevation. Each half is roughly symmetrical, having similar projecting square bays to the north and south elevations and a cross-gabled bay at the eastern end. Despite its subdivision, most of its many decorative features survive, and it is recommended for local listing.

Mark Terrace, Nos. 1 to 5: A terrace of five three storey houses built in 1982, the two lower floors of brick and the top pseudo mansards tile hung. Despite each pair being slightly stepped back from its neighbour, the overall effect is of bland monotony, with identical pairs of over-large windows to each floor. The terrace tends to detract from the character of this part of the Conservation Area, although the effect is softened by the mature pine trees along the front.

No. 121 Ridgway from the north and Ridge End from the south-west

No. 1 The Drive: A locally listed detached double-fronted two-and-a-half storey neo vernacular house built in 1885, the ground floor being of red brick and the first floor and gables of ornate tile hanging. Features include a two storey sandstone mullioned bay window, Venetian windows to the second floor, ornate ridge tiles and finials, gothic detailing to the porch, moulded brickwork and leaded glass. An ornamental brick wall and elaborately clipped hedges and trees line the front garden, which is largely devoted to car parking.

No. 3: A detached double fronted two-and-a-half storey neo vernacular house built in 1882, the ground floor and tall chimneys being of gauged red brick and the first floor and gables of ornate tile hanging and ornamental brick detailing. It was rejected for local listing, despite good detailing and materials and no apparent alterations. In view of its similar quality to No. 1, which is locally listed, its suitability for local listing should be reconsidered.

Nos. 5, 5a, 7 and 7a: Two pairs of two storey semi-detached houses built in 1971 of red brick and white painted windows with fake shutters. The houses are bland, monotonous and badly proportioned, their horizontal emphasis conflicting with the elaborate subtlety of No. 3, next door, so that they have a negative influence on this part of the Conservation Area.

No. 9, Rosemary Lodge and Rosemary Cottages: An old people’s home in a complex of period and modern buildings on the east and south sides of The Drive and the west side of Arterberry Road. The original building, a two-storey house in red brick and tile hanging with
box dormers and tall chimneys, faces westwards on to The Drive. A modern three-storey block to the south echoes the massing of the original, but with a less subtle rhythm of full height canted bay windows. Rosemary Cottages, to the east, consists of an L-shaped building on the corner of The Drive and Arterberry Road, the two storey central section (units 6 to 13) having tile hanging to the first floor, with single storey wings to the west (units 1 to 5) and north (units 14 to 16). Although somewhat bland, the modern extensions have a neutral effect on the general character of this part of the Conservation Area.

Nos 3, 5 and 5A showing the conflict of scale and proportion  
Rosemary Lodge and Rosemary Cottages from the south-east

ARTERBERRY ROAD:  
Odd numbers, western side, south to north

No. 33B, Beech Court: A detached double-fronted two-and-a-half storey block of modern flats built in about 1990 in dark brown brick with a heavily overhanging tiled roof containing larger box dormers. The building contains features which are presumably intended to reflect those of No. 35, next door, but it is an illiterate design of pseudo classical architecture, from its solid central “pediment” containing a tiny “thermal” window on top of its canted central turret fronted by the semi-circular roof of its projecting entrance porch, to its fake “mansard” roof and its top hung pseudo sash windows. Beech Court therefore detracts significantly from the character of this part of the Conservation Area and, in retrospect, permission appears to have been an error. The paved forecourt is entirely devoted to car parking.

No. 35, the Westminster Wimbledon Beaumont Hospital: A substantial locally listed two-storey house dating from 1910 in red and brown brick and brown render with tall box dormers echoing the proportions of the windows below. Features include a round-headed top to the projecting entrance porch, moulded brick detailing and quoins, terracotta spandrels and ornate wrought ironwork to the ridge. It was originally designed as a single dwelling but was divided into five flats in 1971, and has recently been converted into a nursing home by being considerably enlarged at the rear and extended to the north. The northern extension is a single storey block with box dormers in a fake mansard roof. In view of these alterations the buildings should be reconsidered as eligible for local listing.

(No. 20 The Drive, entrance to The Drive and Rosemary Cottages)

No. 35a: A detached one-and-a-half storey house largely covered in creeper and surrounded by mature trees, which give it a particularly rural air. It was built in 1952, but its original character appears to have been seriously impaired by the addition of three large flat roofed box dormers.

Nos. 35b to 35f: A row of modern two storey pseudo classical houses similar in design and probably built at the same time as Nos. 5, 5a, 7 and 7a The Drive, on to which they back. Nos. 35b and 35c are semi-detached, 35d is detached, and 35e-f are semi-detached. Although approached from a separate driveway and screened from Arterberry Road by a row of mature trees, these properties suffer from the bland monotony and ill proportions of those in The Drive and also detract from the character of this part of the Conservation Area.
Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Carlton Mews: A terrace of two-storey houses dating from 1990 in stock brick. They form a symmetrical group, with No. 2 comprising a dominating central gable which is reflected in smaller gables at the ends of Nos. 1 and 3. Although undistinguished, the group is reasonably proportioned and has a neutral effect on the character of this part of the Conservation Area.

No. 39: A charming two-storey cream painted brick cottage built in 1927 with a central projecting porch, three pitched roof gables forming semi-dormers and a single storey wing to the south with a box dormer. Features include ornamental tiles to the main ridges, dormers and porch. The small forecourt is concealed behind a high cream painted brick wall.

No. 39 Arterberry Road and the central landscaped courtyard to Roskeen Court

Roskeen Court: An L-shaped group of modern three-storey flats in four sections, Nos. 1-5 and 45 facing on to Arterberry Road, and 13 to 15 and 16 to 21 facing on to the Ridgeway. Although they are of simple uncompromisingly modern rectangular design in red brick with large picture windows, they are carefully detailed and proportioned, and have a neutral effect on the character of this part of the Conservation Area. The landscaping, particularly to the inner court, is well designed, although somewhat compromised by the need to provide two rows of garages.

Even numbers, east side, south to north

Nos. 28, 30 and 30a Arterberry Road

No. 28, the Norwegian School: A substantial detached two-and-a-half storey house built in 1874 and converted to educational use, first as an American Community School and now as a school for the children of Norwegian residents. Designed in Victorian Gothick with German or Swiss chalet overtones, features include a rustic style verandah along the southern side, steeply pitched tiled roofs, canted bays topped by pitched dormers with finials, and variegated stock brick with red brick banding and arched windows. The extensive grounds are attractively landscaped, with children's play equipment etc adding to the charm, although its setting is marred by a recently built two-storey flat-roofed extension to the north. Since it is similar in design and as architecturally distinguished as No. 32, which is locally listed, No. 28 is **recommended for local listing.**
No. 30: A substantial locally listed detached three-storey house built in 1875 in extensive grounds similar in style to No. 32, of pale stock brick with rusticated stone quoins at the corners and windows. The heavily projecting eaves on ornamental brackets fail to counteract the strong vertical emphasis which gives the house a somewhat stark appearance. It was divided into four flats in 1947, and in September 1996 planning permission was refused on appeal to erect an octagonal two-storey four bedroom house in the south-eastern part of the grounds. This case is considered further under Preservation and Enhancement, below.

No. 30a: A small two-storey house of simple design built in 1959 in the grounds of No. 30, which appears somewhat incongruous between the tall stately Victorian villas on each side. In August 2002 an application was submitted to replace the house.

No. 32: A substantial detached locally listed three-storey house dating from 1875 and since converted into six flats, similar in design to No. 30. However, the vertical emphasis of No. 30 is counteracted in No. 32 by prominent red brick quoins to the corners and window surrounds, and an attractive verandah with a curved lead roof on rustic style wooden supports.

No. 34, Victoria Lodge, and No. 36a Arterberry Road

No. 34, Victoria Lodge: A three-storey block of ten apartments built in 1990. The planning permission, which was granted on appeal in 1988, is considered under Preservation and Enhancement, below. Although the design attempts to reflect the character and massing of Nos. 30 and 32 by being built of stock brick with red rubber quoins and window surrounds, ground floor canopies along the west elevation, canted bays, a pitch roof and a pedimented central projecting bay, these features tend to emphasise the artificiality of the design, and the building tends to detract from the character of this part of the Conservation Area.

No. 34a: A substantial three-and-a-half storey double fronted house built in 1878 in red brick with ornamental brick and stone banding. The full height bays projecting each side of the gothic style entrance porch project above eaves level. The house and a coach house at the rear were converted into six flats in 1973. No. 34a was considered for local listing but fell slightly short of the standard required.

No. 36a: A small modern detached one-and-a-half storey house built in what presumably were the grounds of No. 36, with a steeply pitched tiled roof and heavily projecting eaves supported on unusual brackets which pass in front of a small box dormer. Like No. 30a, the house appears incongruous between the bulk of Nos. 34a and 36. In 2001 an application was refused for a pair of semi-detached three storey houses on the site, and in 2002 and 2003 applications were submitted for the demolition of the house and its replacement with a detached two storey five bedroomed house.

No. 36: A substantial three-storey detached house built in 1878 and since converted into seven flats, in pale stock brick with a slightly projecting front bay and second floor windows projecting above the eaves line. It is distinguished by particularly elaborate tall brick chimneys.

No. 38: A substantial three-and-a-half storey late nineteenth century detached double fronted house of pale stock brick with a projecting south wing and a large canted bay to the north.
No. 40, Chimneys Court, is included in Sub Area 15A.

**Positive and Negative Features**

Originally these two roads appear to have consisted of large nineteenth century villas in spacious well landscaped grounds with wide frontages, of which sixteen were extant when the Vic Soc carried out its survey. They all appear to have survived, although most have been converted into flats or some institutional use, many extended, and the spaces between them filled by more modest and often discordant modern development.

Sub Area 31A therefore consists of a hotchpotch of buildings of varying styles and contrasting scales. The inclusion of this part of West Wimbledon in the Conservation Area is therefore far from automatic. The quality of the area stems partly from the merits of its buildings, but more so from the retention of many of its mature trees and the survival of other traces of original landscaping, particularly along the eastern side of Arterberry Road, plus other attractive features such as grass verges, dense greenery along the street frontages, and areas of granite setts and other remnants of historic streetscape.

**No. 35, Westminster Beaumont Hospital**

**Preservation and Enhancement**

The Drive and west side of Arterberry Rd.

The buildings within Sub Area 31A have long suffered from development pressure. This has led to the severe erosion of its historic character, although designation in 1976 has played a part in preserving those villas which survive, and to a lesser extent their setting:

- Nos. 5 to 7a The Drive were erected in 1971;
- presumably Nos. 35b to 35f Arterberry Road were built at about the same time;
- Emma Terrace dates from 1981;
- and Mark Terrace from the following year;
- the listed building at No. 40 Arterberry Road (within Sub Area 15A) was replaced by Chimneys Court in 1988;
- Carlton Mews and the extensions to No. 35 Arterberry Road were built in about 1990
- and the adjoining No. 33a not long after.

Recent infill development includes the old people’s home south of No. 8 The Drive, Ruskeen Court, Rosemary Cottages and the extensions to No. 9 The Drive to form Rosemary Lodge, and numerous garages alongside or at the rear of historic buildings. Most of the original properties that remain have been preserved by being converted into flats etc.

There now appear to be few open spaces left for possible development, the land in the south west corner of the Sub Area perhaps having the greatest potential. Future applications may also involve the replacement of the recent infill housing of modest density with more intense development. While replacement in principle may be acceptable, great care should be taken to ensure that it is not of significantly greater density and that it enhances the character of this part of the Conservation Area by being of as high or higher architectural standard than the existing dwellings.

Because the landscaping makes such a crucial contribution to Sub Area 31A, every care should be taken to ensure that it is preserved in its entirety. Also, streetscape features such as the continuous high brick walls and the grass verges and other details such as granite setts and timber bollards, should be retained and maintained.

**The east side of Arterberry Road**

The eastern side of Arterberry Road has been particularly under threat from redevelopment. No. 34, Victoria Lodge was granted consent in 1989 partly because the original 1930s house...
was considered to make little contribution to the Conservation Area, and because the inspector considered that the proposed building would both preserve and enhance the appearance and character of the Conservation Area. However, five years later attitudes appear to have changed, since the more modest house proposed for the grounds of No. 30 was refused consent in 1996 because the inspector considered that

the cumulative effect of the impact of the new house on the setting of the existing one and the serious risk to important trees, coupled with a less than satisfactory outlook, loss of privacy and noise and disturbance from existing and potential residents, to be sufficient to outweigh any benefits the scheme may have [Council ref. 9453, para. 13].

Since then there has been an application to demolish No. 30a in August 2002, and applications in July 2002 and February 2003 to replace No. 36a with a larger detached house. The character of this side of Arterberry Road was summarised by the Council in its report on the application relating to No. 34 as follows:

The special character of the stretch of Arterberry Road that includes the appeal site derives largely from the Victorian pattern of development that remains essentially intact on its eastern side. This original pattern comprised large detached dwellings set well back from the road frontage in spacious grounds. While all of these attractive Victorian properties remain, separate dwellings have over the years been erected within their original grounds, involving the creation of some new plots.....This building and other later development along this stretch of the road have all been set back behind the building lines of their Victorian neighbours and in no case exceed two storeys in height. In consequence the attractive character that derives from the Victorian pattern of development has been largely preserved.

The escarpment at the junction of Sub Areas 31A and 31B, looking north

As well as the architectural and historic interest that these Victorian buildings provide, their spacing and set back from the road frontage, augmented by the presence of many and varied mature trees, give rise to a sense of openness along this part of Arterberry Road that is considered an essential ingredient to the character of the area. [Rule 7 Statement, paras. 5.3 and 5.4]

The historic integrity of this part of Arterberry Road has therefore been preserved, despite its erosion by modern infill, but any further change would be likely to tip the balance by seriously undermining its character, making further development and redevelopment increasingly hard to resist. The process of erosion must therefore be strenuously resisted