SUB AREA 32: THE DURRINGTON PARK ROAD AREA

Extent and Justification

Sub Area 32 covers an area on the east side of Pepys Road. It includes Nos. 120 to 140 Pepys Road, Nos. 11 to 13, 16 and 18 Durrington Park Road, Nos. 1 and 3 Durrington Avenue, and Nos. 24 to 28 Conway Road. While the original Conservation Area boundary included all but Nos. 24 and 28 Conway Road, they have now been included, while Nos. 120 to 140, 1, 3 and 5 Durrington Park Road, and Nos. 1 and 3 Durrington Avenue are now excluded. The reasons for these changes are set out below.

The houses to the north of Conway Road are included because they form part of the area of “Wild Land” which extends into Sub Areas 31A and 31B, The Drive and Arterberry Road, and considered worthy of inclusion within the Conservation Area in the analysis of Sub Area 31B.

History

Nos. 24 to 28 form part of the early twentieth century development along Conway Road and its environs, and those along Pepys Road, Durrington Avenue and Durrington Park Road form part of the later 1930s development towards Raynes Park. All the properties except Nos. 24 and 28 Conway Road were added to the Conservation Area in February 1988.

Character

Durrington Park Road and Durrington Avenue form a loop of residential development off Pepys Road which is suburban in character, arranged in detached and semi-detached rows along broad pleasant tree-lined roads with well maintained front gardens. By contrast, the three detached houses at the northern end of Conway Road are situated in more extensive grounds on the steeply sloping escarpment below The Downs.
Nos. 128 to 140 Pepys Road, showing the rhythm created by the bay windows

PEPYS ROAD  East side, even numbers, South to north

Nos. 128 to 138: Three pairs of inter-war semi-detached two storey houses in a mixture of red brick, render and pebble-dash with wide two storey canted and curved bay windows, oriel windows over roofed porches and small flat-roofed dormers. They are similar in age and character to the houses in the parts of Pepys Road to the north and south and, together with Nos. 120 to 126, they contribute to a regular rhythm of bay windows stretching down the hill when viewed from the north.

No. 140: An inter-war detached two storey house with two storey canted bays under a steeply pitched “half-timbered” gable.

DURRINGTON AVENUE  South side, odd numbers, west to east

Nos. 1 and 3: Two detached two-storey houses in red brick and render with pleasantly landscaped gardens, typical of their period.

DURRINGTON PARK ROAD  North side, odd numbers, west to east

Nos. 1 and 3: A pair of semi-detached two storey houses dating from 1926 in red brick and white render with two-storey rounded bay windows and oriel windows over the entrances and built-in garages, similar to the houses in Pepys Road.

No. 5: A detached two storey house in cream render with two two-storey rounded bay windows, one at the south-east corner, and large dormers clad in lead.

No. 7: A detached two-storey house similar to those in Pepys Road.

Nos. 9 and 11: A similar pair of semi-detached two storey houses similar to Nos. 1 and 3.
No. 13: An inter-war detached two storey white rendered house similar to the others in Durrington Park Road, set in extensive gardens.

East side, even numbers, south to north

No. 16: A detached two storey house in red brick and cream render, with a ground floor canted bay to the projecting south wing and a red brick panel surround to the window above.

No. 18: A detached two-storey house in red brick with a two-storey square bay under a cream rendered gable.

CONWAY ROAD (northern end)

No. 24: A large detached two storey early twentieth century house in pale brick with tile hanging and fake timber framing, set in attractive extensive wooded steeply sloping grounds.

No. 26: Another large detached two storey house of modern 1920s design, in pale brick and a white rendered first floor, with a flat roofed two storey semi-circular central bay, and also set in extensively landscaped steeply sloping grounds.

No. 28, Cote Cottage: A grade II listed detached two storey house built in 1926 by John Sydney Brockelsby in a late example of Vernacular Gothic style in flint, with a loggia on timber piers to the front. The front elevation has a relief depicting waves, sunrays and a flash of lightning. The interior is of particular interest, containing Persian and Turkish antiques, including oriental ceramic tiles, posts shaped in imitation of Moorish columns and beams reported to have been salvaged from the keels of Norfolk wherries [list description].

Left, Nos. 128 to 138 Pepys Road, originally inside the Conservation Area, and right, similar houses at Nos. 120 to 126 Pepys Road, outside

Durrington Park Road from the eastern end
Exclusion or Inclusion

Durrington Park Road, Durrington Avenue and Pepys Road

As mentioned above, except for the houses off Conway Road, this part of the Conservation Area contains tree-lined roads of suburban early twentieth century housing which, although pleasant in character, are of little architectural or historic interest.

In considering the possible extension or reduction of this Sub Area, this Assessment needed to consider of the reasons for the original decision in 1988 to extend the Conservation Area. It resulted from a petition by the Durrington Avenue and Durrington Park Road Residents’ Association and a large number of letters from individual residents, with the support of the Wimbledon Society. Three of the reasons given concerned the architectural and historic merits of the houses:

- The area comprises a pleasant group of buildings, open spaces and trees (including an avenue of five ancient oaks), as described in the 1971 Act.
- The north side of Durrington Park comprises an attractive row of substantial (Edwardian c.1905) detached and semi-detached houses.
- The remaining houses in the proposed area, most built just after the Great War by the well-known Wimbledon architects, Mr. AJT Able and Mr. L Wendon, form a balanced and harmonious whole.

The degree of architectural and historic interest of the houses, as described above, does not appear sufficient to justify designation. The houses in the extension to the Conservation Area are not of significantly greater architectural or historic interest than the ones in those parts of Pepys Road, Durrington Avenue and Durrington Park Road which were not included in the Conservation Area. For example, Nos. 120 to 126 Pepys Road, immediately to the south of the designated extension, are virtually identical to Nos. 128 to 138 as well as all but one of those along the north side of Durrington Park Road. Also, the post-war houses along the north side of Durrington Avenue, beyond the boundary, are similar in character, period and setting to Nos. 1 and 3, while those along the south side of Durrington Park Road are also similar in period, if not of such consistent character, as those along the north side. The houses further south, along Hunter Road, Devas Road, Dunmore Road and the rest of Conway Road, are also of similar or greater architectural or historic interest as those in the extended Conservation Area, and the streetscape along these roads is at least as attractive, while roads of roughly similar quality can also be found further west.

Another two reasons for requesting designation were concerned with the nature conservation value of the Conservation Area extension and adjoining areas:

- The area comprises the last remnants of an ancient wood which originally stretched from what is now Worple Road to the Ridgeway and which, according to local historians, dates back to before the Black Death.
- It is one of the few pieces of truly wild land in the Borough. It is a valuable sanctuary for the local wildlife (including foxes and badgers). Its tall trees provide shelter for
woodland and migrating birds (eg turtle and ring necked doves, blue winged jays, woodpeckers, gold finches and the Scandinavian redwing).

This description does not appear to refer so much to the area covered by the houses in the western part of the extension, as to the eastern part covered by the back gardens of No. 26 Conway Road and Nos. 11, 13, 16 and 18 Durrington Park Road. These gardens – particularly the first two - form part of the woodland that does indeed appear to be all that remains of the “Wild Land” which originally covered the escarpment as far as Wimbledon Village, the eastern section of which falls within Sub Areas 31A and 31B and which are now included in the Conservation Area.

The sixth reason for requesting inclusion in the Conservation Area was:

- Since the area adjoins the boundary of the existing conservation area, extension is a logical and obvious step.

Location adjoining a conservation area is not normally sufficient justification for inclusion unless the area itself is of sufficient architectural or historic interest to merit designation, and the above analysis indicated that only the part at the eastern end of the 1988 extension to the Conservation Area is of sufficient historic interest to be considered for inclusion, together with the adjoining areas of woodland in Sub Areas 31A and 31B.

Because of the lack of architectural or historic interest of the buildings within this part of the Sub Area, the retention of that part of the extension to the Conservation Area west of that which forms part of the historically important “Wild Land” appears hard to justify and this assessment therefore recommends that all the properties to the east of the eastern section of Durrington Park Road (Nos. 7, 9, 11, 13, 16 and 18) as well as No. 26 Conway Road, should be retained within the Conservation Area. Retention of the remainder would also tend to justify including substantial areas of similar housing to the south and west, which, if worthy of designation, might more appropriately form part of a separate conservation area which could also include Pepys Road, Durrington Avenue as well as Durrington Avenue and Park Road.

Conway Road

The historic importance of this part of the historic “Wild Land” has already been mentioned, and much of its original character has been preserved within the extensive plots occupied by these houses. In contrast to those further west, the houses themselves have been individually designed and are of greater architectural interest.

The architectural and historic interest of Nos. 24 and 28 Conway Road, and the woodland surrounding them, appear to justify the inclusion of this part of the Sub Area within the West Wimbledon Conservation Area.
**Part 2.6: COPSE HILL**

**Location Map of Sub Areas 33A, 33B & 33C**

**SUB AREAS 33A and 33B: COPSE HILL**

**Extent**

Sub Area 33 forms an extension to the west of the main bulk of the Conservation Area along the southern side of Copse Hill, and extends from the western boundary of Sub Area 31, The Drive and Arterberry Road, as west as Cottenham Drive. Sub Area 31A encompasses those buildings originally within the Conservation Area, and 31B those parts of the backland to the south which have access off Copse Hill and were not included in the Conservation Area. Sub Area 33C consists of a pair of houses in Cotton-ham Park Road.

**History**

West of the Conservation Area the southern escarpment which stretches from Wimbledon Village gradually dies away to form an easily navigable route, and Copse Hill is a continuation of the Ridgeway, following this route down towards the western end of the area now known as Cottenham Park and linking up with Coombe Lane and the road to Kingston. The escarpment is also a continuation of the "Wild Land" which from "ancient times" had been arable but, as a result of deaths from the bubonic plague, became overgrown from the mid 1300s onwards [Milward 1998, p.15].

Until 1891, while development took place elsewhere, the area had largely been by-passed. Situated between the two ancient highways to Kingston – the one from Merton, the other from Wimbledon village – it had for centuries been covered by ‘bramble, thorn and furze’. Only after 1757, when the owners of Prospect Place began to tame the northern part of the future Park, and after 1871, when trains began to stop at Raynes Park station in the south, did the district begin to attract attention. Until then it seemed an intimidating area which travellers had to pass through on their way to market in Kingston. [Milward 1998, p.90]

This is reflected in the 1838 map, which shows a farm to the west of the junction of Copse Hill and Cottenham Park Road, replaced on the 1865 map by Christ Church and housing stretching westwards. Prospect Place, which in the early nineteenth century became notable for its gardens by Humphrey Repton, lies to the west of Cottenham drive, within the Copse Hill Conservation Area [Milward 1998, p. 37]. The Church and many of the houses in Sub Area 33A date from the mid nineteenth century while those to the south, in Sub Area 33B, are mostly modern.

**Character**

The importance of Copse Hill as an historic thoroughfare is reflected in the scale and architectural quality of the villas lining the south side, whose well landscaped gardens would originally have stretched down the south-facing escarpment at least as far as Cottenham Park Road. The VicSoc report reflects this character:

There is a short section on the South side of Copse Hill, ie, to the junction with Cottenham Drive, which is an integral part of Victorian Wimbledon and should form part of the proposed Conservation Area. It consists of six substantial Victorian houses on the main road, immediately west of Christ Church by Teulon, of which the three most westerly (nos 15 – 23) are large semi-detached pairs.