Rusholme Road
Conservation Area Appraisal
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INTRODUCTION

This document identifies and appraises the special architectural and historic characteristics of the Rusholme Road Conservation Area and it also gives practical guidance on the implications of conservation area status. It is in two parts: a Character Statement and a Management Strategy. The Character Statement provides factual information regarding the Conservation Area. The Management Strategy gives specific planning guidance and enhancement advice.

Conservation areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967 to safeguard areas of “special architectural or historic interest.” Rusholme Road Conservation Area was designated a Conservation Area in 1989, and extended in 1992 to include a section of Putney Heath Lane.

This Appraisal has been produced in accordance with government guidelines in PPG 15, and the English Heritage Guidance notes of August 2005. These state that local planning authorities need to define and record the special interest, character and appearance of all conservation areas in their care. The intention of this Appraisal is to provide clearly defined analysis of the character and appearance of the Rusholme Road Conservation Area, which is defensible on appeal, and can be utilized in development control decisions. In addition, the Management Strategy addresses issues, which have been identified in the character appraisal, for the enhancement and preservation of the conservation area. The Appraisal has been through public consultation, amended accordingly and approved by the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on 20th March 2006.

It is important to note however that no appraisal can be completely comprehensive and the omission of a particular building, feature or open space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.
CHARACTER STATEMENT

1.0 Character analysis

Rusholme Road Conservation Area is characterised by its distinctive late Victorian and early Edwardian residential architecture. The area consists of a range of prestigious houses built for the aspiring middle classes of the age. Although West Hill is a busy main road leading into London, the remaining conservation area has a quiet residential air with open space and greenery contributing to the suburban ambience. At the centre of the conservation area is the triangular green that has some fine mature trees. From this green the architectural styles of various developers of the Clock House Estate can be seen and the true character of the area can be appreciated.
2.0 Location & Context

The area is within a predominantly residential part of East Putney. West Hill links westward to Putney Heath and eastward to Wandsworth Town Centre. Lytton Grove connects with Putney Hill, leading to Putney Town Centre.

3.0 Topography

The area is laid out on a spur of the high ground leading up to Putney Heath/Wimbledon Common, the whole sloping up to the South and South West. There is a noticeable steep slope on the northern side in the rear gardens of Holmbush Road. This northern boundary coincides with the parish boundary of Wandsworth/Putney. The sloping and undulating site gives a picturesque quality to the street vistas, enhanced by the sweeping and subtle curves of some of the streets; Putney Heath Lane in particular has impressive views up to the Heath, and southwards to the spire of Holy Trinity Church on West Hill.

4.0 History

In the late C18 the landowners laid out an estate plan and divided these fields into separate lots of land. As was normal at the time, these lots were bought and developed by different builders whose work is readily identifiable today. Historical records show that development had begun by 1895 and was largely completed by 1906. The drainage records show that the main builders were Joshua E Parnell of Fordwych House West Hampstead, John Tuckett of Chapter Road Willesden and W.W Courtenay of Clifton House Fulham. Other developers were also apparent from the records including J.P.Simmons of Benson Road, Croydon and E. Parson and Co of Putney and Wandsworth.

4.1 At the time of development Rusholme Road Conservation Area was known as the Clock House Estate named after The Clock House - a late C18 house built upon a small area of land taken out of Earl Spencer’s estate (occupied in 1796 by Jacob Bell). The two agricultural fields in between the Clock House and Colebrook Lodge, another large house located at the western end of the area, form the basis of most of the Conservation Area today.

4.2 The small triangular section of Conservation Area in Putney Health Lane was developed by W.Tucker of 3 High Street, Putney a little later than original Clock House Estate in 1906.

4.3 Unfortunately the two large houses were lost to make way for new development in the early years of the C20. The Clock House itself was demolished in 1906 during the development of the Fulham Railway Line (now the District Line). Colebrook Lodge was demolished some time between 1916 and 1930 to make way for Colebrook Close.
5.0 Buildings and Townscape

The central spine of the Conservation Area, Rusholme Road forms a Y-shape with Holmbush Road, echoing the original field boundaries into which the estate was laid. Other roads lie at right angles to this Y-shape with rectangular development plots lining each of these streets.
5.1 Houses are set out in parallel groups and adhere to a relatively constant building line. The development plots are relatively large and rectangular and afford generous gardens both front and rear. All houses are well set back from the road with 30 feet setbacks along West Hill and 20 feet in the remaining area. Houses fit snugly within the width of their plots and this provides for a compact townscape. However large front garden areas and deep set backs help to create a sense of space and openness. Each of these features help to create a coherent character and orderly appearance within the area.

5.2 Corner plots are generously proportioned and the buildings located upon them reflect this. They tend to be more architecturally flamboyant and detailed than their neighbours. Turrets are a common feature in these locations.

5.3 The Conservation Area comprises three main house types, these are large detached houses often located upon corner properties, grand semi-detached pairs and a small amount of terraced houses along Putney Heath Road. Many of these properties utilise the roof space and a few have original basements. Buildings were predominately built as single-family dwelling houses. However, some flatted developments were built such as Heath Mansions on Rusholme Road.

5.4 Today the Conservation Area remains a predominately residential area the majority of buildings remaining single-family dwelling houses. However there are a few exceptions, some large houses (especially along West Hill) have been converted into flats with some utilised as offices.
5.5 The Clock House Estate Developers

The Edwardian era was a period of revivalism, taking ideas from the mediaeval and Georgian periods among others. House builders of this time mixed many architectural influences and this is especially evident across the Rusholme Road Conservation Area. The mix of different developers within the Clock House Estate has also contributed to the wealth of design features.

5.6 The original houses of the Estate vary according to the development lot they are in. This block-by-block variation adds interest to the area. Although the plan forms and building materials used by each of developers are constant and relatively similar within their lots, the wide range of different architectural detailing creates a busy and interesting appearance and gives each property its individuality.

5.7 In this section each of the main developers are featured and specific examples of their work given in order to provide an understanding of the area as a whole.

5.8 W Courtney

The drainage records for 1897 indicate that the developer W. Courtney built many of the large three storied houses along the northern side of West Hill. The majority of these have a similar plan form and materials, however there are slight differences in the detailing that provides interest and individuality.

5.9 Courtney’s properties have an abundance of windows of differing styles; large square and castellated double-decker bays and dormer windows adorn his properties. All of the windows were originally timber and the majority are sliding sash with top lights on lower floors and timber casements above. Unfortunately due to the division of single houses into flats and the differing ownership of sections of large properties, some windows have been replaced with unsuitable materials and styles. This can create a higgledy-piggledy appearance that is detrimental to the appearance of the house as a whole.

5.10 Prominent gables are also a recurring feature in Courtney’s design, these gables situated symmetrically at either end of the front elevation are reminiscent of the cross wings of a medieval country house. The gables make each house unique, be they crow-stepped, pedimented or Dutch.
5.11 J Parnell

Much of the northern end of Rusholme Road (including Heath Mansions) and the majority of Holmbush Road was built by the Parnell family. These houses are closely spaced detached and semi-detached square houses of red stock brick with some white rendering to upper floors. Each has plain tiled hipped roofs and bay windows, with very simple detailing, relying on variation of a few repeated motifs for effect, but all virtually identical in their red brick rear elevations. Many of these properties benefit from retaining their original timber panelled and glazed doors. Windows are a mixture of timber casements and sashes. The timber sash windows with pretty arched Georgian glazing bars and top lights on the ground floor are essential to the character of the area and apparent throughout.

On the left is an example of a semi-detached pair on Holmbush Road built by J Parnell.
Three storey soft red brick.
Gable fronts with plain bargeboards.
Bay windows with lintels.
Timber sash windows with toplights and decorative arched glazing bars.
Casement windows used in the roof space.

5.12 J Tuckett

Many of the properties that lie along Dromore and Rusholme Road (to the South and East of the green) were built by J Tuckett. All are built in red stock brick with terracotta detailing. Tuckett built substantial houses that are generally symmetrical in design with prominent Dutch gables. Tuckett uses timber sash and casement windows with large panes of glass and few glazing bars that add to the elegant simplicity of the design. Tuckett’s corner properties are less symmetrical in plan form and have more applied ornament such as a mixture of turrets and gables. The building below is situated on a prominent location on the green at Rusholme Road with shaped gables and hipped roofs and bay windows with casement windows and toplights.
The conservation area was extended in 1992 to include the section at Putney Heath Lane. The entire terrace was built in 1907 by one local developer, W. Tucker. These properties are typical examples of Edwardian terraces built for the aspiring middle classes of the age that combined a mish-mash of differing architectural styles including Tudor influences seen in the timber magpie work adorning the front gables. Porches are recessed with ornamental timberwork in the classical style. There are a multitude of window styles and designs, with timber-sliding sash with glazing bars on the ground floor, and timber casement windows on the first floor and even some oriel windows. These oriel windows and ornamental white timberwork are reflective of the Queen Anne Movement. These properties benefit from retaining many of their original features including their front boundaries and gardens. This contributes enormously to the character of the area.

**5.13 W. Tucker (Putney Heath Lane)**

An example of a prominent detached house built by J Tuckett

Red Stock brick and red roof tiles.

Hipped roof.

Shaped gables.

Gothic turrets

Timber sash and casement windows of differing simple styling.

An example of a prominent detached house built by J Tuckett

Red Stock brick and red roof tiles.

Hipped roof.

Shaped gables.

Gothic turrets

Timber sash and casement windows of differing simple styling.

Terrace built by W. Tucker in 1907.

Mock Tudor magpie work to front gables and decorative timber bargeboards.

Large square bay windows with sash windows with intricate small panes and glazing bars on the upper half on the first floor. Timber casements beneath.

Oriel windows

Classical style recessed porches with timberwork.

Prominent corner property with turret.
6.0 Infill development

Various infill developments and later additions have either filled the gaps between the original Clock House Estate houses or have used some of the garden areas of the original properties. Lytton Grove has some such developments, such as 52 Lytton Grove developed in the 1980’s in rear garden section of the large corner plot of 142 West Hill.

Far right: Abundance of original features – tiled pathway, glazed panelled door with fanlight, timber gates and a recessed porch with ornamental timberwork.

Right: Oriel window with leaded windows.

Some infill properties along Lytton Grove

A typical 1930’s semi detached property – with white render and bay windows with inter side addition.
7.0 Windows and doors

The advances in glassmaking techniques along with the abolition of the window tax in 1851 made larger and larger panes a possibility and encouraged creativity in design. The developers of the Clock House Estate took advantage of this. Although the majority of windows within the area are timber sash and casement windows there are a few examples of Crittal framed windows evident along Lytton Grove. There innumerable styles of window design and arrangements of glazing bars throughout the area. These windows styles are hugely decorative and an explicit element of the character of the conservation area. Wherever possible the retention and restoration of these original features should retained and restored.

The area also benefits from retaining many original door and doorframes.

Original door (left) Victorian timber panelled door with stained glass, toplights and transom.

Original door frame (right) Georgian style fanlight and fitted light well with a classical canopy.
8.0 Front gardens and boundary treatments

There are a variety of boundary treatments throughout the area. Most streets now show a great variety of brick walls, hedges and gaps. There are good examples of surviving fences in Rusholme Road, east of the junction with Dromore Road, with excellent moulded posts and gates, and again in the Putney Heath Lane terrace. Brick panel walls, some with burr bricks, are linked to the group of Flemish gabled houses south and east of the green, built by John Tuckett. Brick front boundaries appear to have been popular with W.Courtney in Lytton Grove, and most noticeably along West Hill, where the regimented building line of the houses is reflected by the serried ranks of moulded brick piers and brick walls. Where gaps in frontages do occur, they are always unsightly and disproportionately noticeable. This is especially evident in the group of openings at the west-end of West Hill.
9.0 Joinery features

Many front elevations throughout the Conservation Area are decorated with original timber work and fret work. These decorative timber features are usually painted white and are reflective of the Queen Anne movement. This is especially evident along the row of terraces in Putney Health Lane. Many porches, canopies and even balconies throughout the area are adorned with turned timber ballustrates or fretwork brackets. Some houses also feature decorative bargeboards. These features are a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area, especially when accompanied by original timber boundary treatments, windows and doors.

10.0 Green elements

The main green element, and indeed a focal point of the whole conservation area, is the green between Rusholme/Dromore/Holmbush Roads. This simple triangular grassed area has 8 large trees: 7 Horse Chestnuts and 1 Lime. Views both into and out of this central are important. From this point one can see the work of many different developers within the area and these views sum up the character of the conservation area.
10.1 Although there are some mature street trees located along West Hill they are generally small and irregularly spaced. However, these trees whether young or old are of importance to the character of the conservation area. Their simple greenery boosts the ‘garden city’ character.

10.2 Soft surfaced front gardens with their original boundary treatments are still evident within the area and are an enormous benefit to its character and appearance. Some front gardens have medium sized trees, hedges and mature shrubs. All of these features contribute to the suburban character of the area.

11.0 Streetscape

The road surfacing throughout is of tarmac, with scorria block guttering, except on West Hill and Lytton Grove where it is has been covered in tarmac. Paving is of standard grey concrete slab with red brick feature panels. Crossovers are relatively few and in all cases, except along West Hill, they are later alterations and are usually concrete with one or two stable block bands. West Hill has been treated with a mix of pink and grey concrete slabs, red brick panels and crossovers providing vehicular access.

11.1 There are no historic streetlights within the conservation area, all streetlights are modern and unobtrusive in design. Signage is kept to a minimum and this is beneficial to the character of the area.
12.0 Negative features

Despite all of the positive features and characteristics of the area outlined above, there are naturally negative features and problems. These problems are highlighted in this section.

• Unfortunately there are a few poorly located satellite dishes upon the front elevations of properties within the Conservation Area. These dishes detract from the character of the property as a whole and do not preserve the character of the conservation area.

• Some pavements have been spot repaired in places using different materials and styles.

• The loss of original front boundaries and front garden areas to provide ‘cross overs’ for vehicular access has occurred in places throughout the conservation area. This is perhaps the single most detrimental change to the character of the area and should be avoided.

• The replacement of original windows with unsuitable designs in the whole or part of certain properties serves to create messy facades, especially detrimental when upon the front elevation of properties.

• Infill developments that are unsuitable in terms of design and materials are few but still apparent across the conservation area.

• The over use of additional roof dormers spoils the roofline of prominent properties especially along West Hill and causes them to look over-developed.

Replacement windows with unsuitable opening mechanism – should be sliding sash.

Loss of front garden and boundary treatment to provide unsightly crossover.

Four satellite dishes erected upon the front elevation detracts from the character of the house.
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

13.0 Introduction

This document is not just about the council preserving the special character of your conservation area through planning controls, but is also about how you as a resident or a business can make it a more attractive place.

14.0 Enhancement and design guidance

14.1 Repair & Reinstate windows

To the benefit of the conservation area many of the original windows and doors survive unharmed today. However, some have been lost and replacements are often unsympathetic to the original design or material. It would enhance the Conservation Area enormously if when replacing windows, replicas of the original in terms of material and design are reinstated. It is very difficult to replicate some of the intricate timber window styles evident across the conservation area in uPVC and where possible one should replace windows in the original material – timber.

When replacing windows and doors one must consider the following, does the replacement window match the original in terms of the: -

• Opening mechanisms
• Profile and proportions; and the
• Pattern and design of glazing bars

Those living within a semi-detached pair, terrace or a large house converted into flats should consider the effect of their replacement windows upon the property or the terrace as a whole. When making changes to your property please be aware of the effect these changes upon the wider conservation area. Where windows, doors or other joinery features have been replaced with inappropriate designs, these can be restored to the original appearance, both enhancing the street scene and adding value and character to the individual house.

The house on the right hand side has retained its original features including sliding sash windows with glazing bars and top lights on the first floor and a small sliding sash gabled dormer window.

The property on the left has replaced its windows, yet it has failed to replicate the original glazing bar pattern. The original door has also been replaced. It has also been painted. These changes are detrimental to the appearance of the semi-detached pair as a whole. Numerous developments such as these have a potentially harmful affect to the character of the conservation area.
In order to help preserve the character of the area, the council encourage home-owners to replace original windows that are beyond repair with replicas in matching materials and design. For a list of contractors & specialist dealings with timber window repairs and replacement see Appendix 1.

14.2 Reinstall front boundary treatments, front gardens and tiled pathways.
Some houses (especially along Holmbush Road) still retain their original tessellated tiled front pathways. These decorative features are of enormous benefit to the character of the conservation area, especially when they exist alongside the original front boundary treatments and a soft surfaced front garden. However some of these features have been lost and not been replaced. In places, hard standing has been implemented to provide vehicular access. There is great potential to improve the streetscape here by restoring or reinstalling tiled front pathways, soft surfaced front gardens and front boundary treatment (fences, gates or walls). The council can offer advice on appropriate designs and varieties and specialist contractors (see Appendix 2).

Loss of front boundary treatment, pathway and soft surfaced front garden has changed the appearance of this property enormously. This has had a detrimental effect upon the character of the property and the wider conservation area. There is enormous potential to enhance and improve the appearance of this property.

Original front boundary wall with metal gate.  
Tessellated tiled pathway  
Soft surfaced front garden with mature trees.  
Original front door and porch with ornamental fret work.  

Each feature is beneficial to the character of the conservation area.

For advice on the restoration or reinstating of front gardens, boundary treatments and tiled pathways, please contact the Conservation and Design Team.
14.3 Porches, fret work and ornamental timber work

The conservation area boasts a wealth of different original porches, joinery features typical of the period, but less common today. These should always be kept in good repair through thorough maintenance and if replacement is necessary, and decorative exact copies made. Please contact the Conservation and Design Team for advice regarding the maintenance, repair or replacement of these valuable features.

15.0 Grants and advice

The council offers grant assistance to help with the cost of certain enhancement work, particularly restoration of lost features. The council can also offer advice and give details of specialist contractors. Painted brickwork can now easily be cleaned and even render and pebbledash can be removed.

16.0 Design guidance

The council offers advice on a range of works frequently occurring in areas like this (please see list of supplementary guidance). Of particular relevance, given the importance of front gardens to the pleasant character of the area are vehicle hard standings and front boundary treatments. The creation of basements, not an original characteristic feature of this area, should also take full notice of the council’s guidelines. It is essential that the green, softening effect of front gardens is not lost by the removal of greenery and the introduction of excessive hard surfaces. Front boundaries are also important.

17.0 Supplementary guidance

The following supplementary guidance has been produced by the council and is available on the website www.wandsworth.gov.uk or on request please call (020) 8871 6646.

Do it in Style – a guide to the care, repair and adaptation of your home.

Hardstandings for cars – what to do when you want to create a car-parking space in your garden.
Making more of your loft space – design guidance on altering your roof
What is a Conservation Area? – information on Conservation Areas in general
Tree Strategy for the Borough – the action plan for trees in the borough
Residential Basement Extensions – best practice design guidance

Government Guidance
This has been published by central government and is available on the planning portal www.planningportal.gov.uk or on request from the council.
Planning A Guide for Householders -What you need to know about the planning system; a guide to permitted development rights.

18.0 What will I need permission for?

18.1 Works to any tree in the Conservation Area
Before carrying out any work to any tree in a conservation area it is necessary to serve a notice to the council six weeks before you intend to do the works- this includes any kind of work whether it is just minor pruning through to complete removal. If you want to remove a tree completely, be sure to give full reasons.
The notice period is six weeks. To serve a notice you can fill out a form entitled ‘Application to carry out work to a tree in a conservation area.’ Please see 19.0, or you can write a letter or an email. This must include; the address of property where tree is located, the proposed works to the tree, the type of tree (if known) and whether it is in the front or back garden.

18.2 Works to trees with Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)
To carry out works to tree covered by a TPO it is necessary to complete the form entitled ‘Application to carry out work to a tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order.’ It is an 8 week process. If you want to remove a tree completely, be sure to give full reasons.
For a list of specialists to carry out the works see Appendix 2

18.3 Placement of a satellite dish
For information on the regulations governing the size and location of satellite dishes please see, ‘A householder’s Planning guide for the installation of Antennas, including satellite dishes’. If you require any guidance regarding the appropriate siting of satellite dishes in conservation areas please contact the Conservation and Design Team. Should there be properties in your area that do not adhere to the satellite dish regulations you may wish to report this to the Planning Enforcement Department.
18.4 Demolition

You will need to apply for Conservation Area Consent to demolish the front walls or any building bigger than 115 cubic metres. Permission to demolish any of the burr brick boundary walls is unlikely to be granted, as they are so fundamental to the character of the Conservation Area.

The proposed redevelopment of the site will be a material factor in deciding whether to give consent for demolition.

19.0 Planning applications - Council policy

19.1 Application Forms

All application forms are available on the website www.wandsworth.gov.uk/Home/EnvironmentandTransport/PlanningService/Planningapplications/plapplforms.htm or on request, just contact the planning department (see contact details below). To apply for a planning application it necessary to complete the form and submit scale drawings showing the existing and the proposed. For applications to replace doors or windows, it is possible to include a photograph to show the existing, but the drawing for the proposed must be to scale of either 1:50 or 1:100. It must show how the window will open and close – this is best shown in a cross section. For an example of the drawings required please see Appendix 3.

19.2 Planning Applications – Council Policy

Any development, large or small, should be carried out in a way that does not harm the area’s special character. This means understanding and respecting what makes Rusholme Road Conservation Area an area of special significance.

To help with this we welcome and encourage discussions before you submit your application. A planner will be available at the One-Stop reception on the 5th floor of the Town Hall to discuss, with any resident of the borough or local business, proposals to alter or extend their property and, if planning permission is required, how it can be obtained. Simple enquiries can be dealt with by telephone. Confidentiality within the council will be respected.

Planning applications are determined using national and local policy. Wandsworth Council’s Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted in 2003 sets out the local policies used to determine planning applications. Policies TBE10 & TBE11 apply specifically to Conservation Areas. Policy H4 is also important as it relates to proposals to extend or alter residential properties.

19.3 How long does a planning application take?

It takes eight weeks to process a householder planning application or conservation area consent listed building consent.

When the application is received it is allocated to a planning officer in Development Control, this planning officer will be your case officer. You the applicant or your agent can contact your case officer at anytime. If you have an agent correspondence will be automatically conducted with the agent unless otherwise requested.
If the correct information is not provided the application will not be validated, your agent or you the applicant will be notified of this within 10 days of the case officer receiving the application.

The 8-week period starts on the date of validation. Within this time the application will be advertised and anyone can comment on your application, if applicable other departments of the council will also be consulted this often includes Conservation and Design.

19.4 Building Control

If you want to do new building work you will probably need building regulations approval. If you want advice on this, phone (020) 8871 7620.

20.0 Contact list

Development Control (020) 8871 7657
Conservation and Design (020) 8871 6646
Building Regulations (020) 8871 7620

Website: www.wandsworth.gov.uk/planning
Email: boroughplanner@wandsworth.gov.uk

Address: Wandsworth Council
Technical Services Department
Town Hall Extension
Wandsworth High Street
London
SW18 2PU
This character statement is intended to give an overview of the development and current character of the conservation area; it is not intended to be prescriptive, nor to be a summary of planning constraints or an inventory of individual buildings or other features whether listed or otherwise.