

# Wandsworth Town Conservation Area Appraisal (Draft)

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## 1 Introduction

**1.1** This document identifies and appraises the special architectural and historic characteristics of the Wandsworth Town 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.

**1.2** The Character Statement provides factual information regarding the Conservation Area. The Management Strategy raises issues and gives specific planning guidance and enhancement proposals.

**1.3** Conservation areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967 to safeguard areas of "special architectural or historic interest." Wandsworth Town Conservation Area was designated in September 1984 and extended in May 1989 (see map).

**1.4** The intention of this Appraisal is to provide a clear analysis of the character and appearance of Wandsworth Town Conservation Area, which can assist in development control decisions, and which can help to support the Council's decisions in the event of appeals. 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 Planning and Transportation Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10th January 2007.

**1.5** 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.

## 2 Character Analysis

**2.1** The special character of Wandsworth Town Conservation Area is derived from its being one of the oldest and most important settlements in the borough. Evidence of its historic development and street pattern remains and this, together with an attractive townscape and its wealth of listed buildings means that it is an area which is of both historic and architectural importance.

## 3 Location and Setting

**3.1** Wandsworth Town is situated between the town centres of Clapham Junction in the east and Putney to the west.

## 4 Topography

**4.1** Wandsworth lies in a valley at the lowest bridging point of the River Wandle, a few hundred yards upstream from its confluence with the Thames. The town is based on an historic road pattern focused on the river crossing and reinforced by the river itself and later developments such as the Surrey Iron Railway. The dominant feature of the town centre is the sweeping curve of the ancient main road (current A3) rising up the valley sides.

## 5 Historic Development & Archeology

**5.1** This topographic framework has affected the historic development of the area and its current character and appearance. Since the Middle Ages the town has been one of the principal industrial centres around London, based on the power generating capacity and water quality of the Wandle. Huguenot émigrés were attracted here in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century & 18<sup>th</sup> Century, and by the 19<sup>th</sup> Century industries included drug grinding, snuff milling, silk printing, felt making and the world's largest calico bleaching works. The heart of the town

**5.2** centre is still dominated by the now redundant Ram Brewery complex, and there is still an extensive industrial hinterland to the immediate north and south of the area. The town was centred on the ecclesiastical focus of All Saints Church in the High Street. Largely because of its manufacturing history, there was also relatively early development of non-conformist communities. This strong tradition is still visible in the central area, with the oldest chapel site in Chapel Yard (16<sup>th</sup> Century, rebuilt 19<sup>th</sup> Century), the Quaker Meeting House (18<sup>th</sup> Century), and with Baptist (demolished 1995), Methodist and United Reformed Churches on East Hill. Catholics were represented on the edge of town in Putney Bridge Road and at either end of East and West Hills.

**5.3** The connection between manufacturing and non-conformity was associated with a desire to live and work (and worship) close together. As a result most of the historic buildings are grouped and sited in very specific relationships, with houses and industry cheek-by-jowl, for example at the Ram Brewery and 70 High Street, and at Wentworth House in Dormay Street. This is further reflected in the network of alleys and small roads linking the central area with its industrial hinterland. For similar reasons the Huguenots built a number of quality houses on East Hill (nos.174-178 still survive) as well as the burial ground.

**5.4** The buildings of the area reflect its historic and continued significance as a centre of civic life - the municipal function (Book House, the Town Hall, Civic Suite, Old Courthouse and police station); leisure (numerous large pubs, Palace Theatre, Assembly Rooms); and shopping and commercial (High Street).

## 6 Buildings and Townscape

**6.1** There are four components or sub-areas to the Conservation Area, each with a distinct character; 1) the town centre commercial and civic core area, where the main road crosses the Wandle flood plain; 2) Armoury Way/Fairfield Street area; 3) Dempster Road area; and 4) the Putney Bridge Road area.

### Town Centre Core Area

**6.2** The most important area is the town centre core, with the greatest concentration of quality buildings and townscape assets. A marked sense of arrival is provided by the topography of the Wandle valley, with the Book House/Mount Nod triangle on East Hill and St. Thomas's Church (listed Grade II) on West Hill acting as gateway markers.

**6.3** The main road has a subtle curve with progressively changing vistas along its length;

**6.4** All Saints Church (Grade II\*) is strategically placed at the focus of this curve. Where other roads meet the main route, corner buildings are prominent and generally well handled, good examples being the Town Hall and South Thames College (both listed Grade II), which combine to create a potentially imposing civic space, marking a change in character from East Hill to the High Street. The junction of Garratt Lane and Ram Street with the High Street also marks the change to the commercial core of the town. The Southside Centre has a largely negative effect on the townscape here, but The Ram Brewery (listed Grade II\*) presents an impressive facade that provides an important and unique identity and character to the town. The River Wandle should form an important element at this point, but is largely hidden from view. There is great potential to increase public awareness of the river.

**6.5** Other listed buildings in the core area include Church Row (Grade II\*) in Wandsworth Plain opposite All Saints Church, and 18<sup>th</sup> Century houses on East Hill (nos.123 and 174-8 - see above), the Spread Eagle PH, 140-2 Wandsworth High Street (recently restored) and 23-37 West Hill (all Grade II). Many of these make a more effective contribution to the character of the conservation area because of the way they are grouped together.

**6.6** As well as the many listed buildings, there are a number of other important townscape buildings (for example Book House, The Brewers Inn, West Hill Library) and important groups of buildings: Huguenot Mansions at the top of East Hill and opposite Book House and Mount Nod; and 106-124 Wandsworth High Street, with an interesting roofscape and good shopfronts. The numerous small alleys and yards off the High Street also have good groups of buildings associated with them.

### **The Armoury Way/Fairfield Street Area**

**6.7** The second sub-area comprises two groups of buildings connected by Armoury Way. Those clustered at the junction of Dormay Street and Armoury Way form a good nucleus with great potential beside the River Wandle. Wentworth House, Dormay Street (listed grade II) and the Crane PH, with the adjoining cottages and terrace, are reminders of the traditional townscape of this locality. The collection of buildings in the elbow of Armoury Way and Fairfield Street, including the Barchard Street cottages and listed Grapes PH (grade II) also reflect the historical development of the area.

### **The Dempster Road Area**

**6.8** The third group of streets, north of East Hill at its apex, is a good example of late Victorian suburban development, a grid of streets centred on Dempster Road, and terraces of houses built in gault brick with Gothic Revival detailing.

### **The Putney Bridge Road Area**

**6.9** Putney Bridge Road links the buildings of the fourth sub-area from its junction with Armoury Way to the railway bridge. On the corner a good group of buildings, including the former All Saints School and a pair of Georgian houses (listed Grade II), and opposite the long boundary wall and gates of St Joseph's School, define the road which leads on to a particularly good group of buildings, including the Adelaide PH and the Arts & Crafts properties in Oakhill Road/Oakhill Place. The terraces of railway workers' cottages grouped around the railway bridge, including Prospect Cottages, are amongst the earliest in the area.

## **7 Audit of Heritage Assets**

### **Listed Buildings**

- 7.1** Terrace of flats at 155-171 Oakhill Road and former laundry block to the rear
- 7.2** West Hill - Church of St. Thomas of Canterbury, (Grade II).
- 7.3** West Hill - Nos. 33, 35 & 37 (Grade II).
- 7.4** West Hill - Milestone in frontage to Library (Grade II).
- 7.5** Wandsworth High Street - Nos. 140-142 (Grade II).
- 7.6** Putney Bridge Road - Nos. 20-22 (Grade II).
- 7.7** Wandsworth High Street - All Saints Church (Grade II\*).
- 7.8** Wandsworth Plain - Nos. 1 – 6 (consec.) Church Row,(Grade II\*).

- 7.9 Wandsworth High Street - Ram Brewery (Young's Brewery, adj. no. 70) (Grade II\*).
- 7.10 Wandsworth High Street - No. 70 (Grade II).
- 7.11 Wandsworth High Street - Stables at Ram Brewery, (Grade II).
- 7.12 Wandsworth High Street - Lamp Standards at Wandsworth Town Hall, (Grade II).
- 7.13 Wandsworth High Street - Wandsworth Town Hall, (Grade II).
- 7.14 East Hill - No.170 (formerly 174-176) Wandsworth House, (Grade II\*).
- 7.15 Huguenot Burial Ground, East Hill/Huguenot Place - Paggen Table Tomb, Cotterell & Allen Table Tomb, Samuel John Table Tomb, John Gilham Table Tomb, Errington Ward Table Tomb (all Grade II).
- 7.16 East Hill - United Reform Church and Church Hall (Grade II).
- 7.17 East Hill – No.123 The Elms (Grade II).
- 7.18 Wandsworth High Street - South Thames College, (Grade II).
- 7.19 Wandsworth High Street - No.59 The Friends Meeting House
- 7.20 Wandsworth High Street – Spread Eagle Public House, (Grade II).
- 7.21 Garratt Lane – Wandsworth Museum (Old County Court House), (Grade II).
- 7.22 Dormay Street – Wentworth House, (Grade II)

### **Locally Listed Buildings**

- 7.23 East Hill SW18: No. 45 (Book House)
- 7.24 Fairfield Street SW18: Nos. 43-49 (odd), nos. 26-30 (even)
- 7.25 Oakhill Place SW15: Nos. 1-10 (consec.)
- 7.26 Oakhill Road SW15: Nos. 173-175 (odd incl.)
- 7.27 Putney Bridge Road SW15: Queen Adelaide Public House (No. 35), No. 37.

### **Buildings that could be added to the Local List**

- 7.28 Armoury Way SW18: The Crane Public House (no. 14)

**7.29** Barchard Street SW18: Nos. 6-34 (odd)

**7.30** Merton Road SW18: West Hill Primary School

**7.31** Point Pleasant SW18: 8-14 Prospect Cottages

## 1 Management Strategy

**1.1** Wandsworth Town Conservation Area has undergone considerable change for the better in the last ten years. Between 1996 and 1999 the Council together with English Heritage Established a Conservation Area Partnership Scheme (CAP) that funded a major programme of repairs and refurbishments to important buildings, including many listed buildings in the area. In excess of £250,000 in grant funding was spent during the 3-year programme. This initiative enabled many buildings to be given new life and saved for future generations to enjoy. Another phase of grant assisted improvements took place as a result of joint funding by the Wandsworth Challenge Partnership and the Council. These improvements built on the work achieved under the earlier CAP programme and focussed on enhancements to settings of buildings and the townscape. Over the lifetime of the Challenge Partnership nearly £1½ million was spent on conservation enhancement related improvements in the town centre. Most recently, in 2003 TfL funded the repaving of Wandsworth High Street entirely in York stone, again at a cost in excess of £1½ million.

**1.2** These publicly funded projects were estimated to have levered in private funding at a ratio of 2:1 and were all part of a wider initiative to bring about the regeneration of the town centre. The regenerative efforts and grant expenditure have borne fruit and the evidence of new investment and the significant physical improvements are very noticeable today. However, regeneration sometimes brings with it unwelcome pressure for change. The next section of this report focuses on the pressure for change and other important issues facing the Conservation Area over the next ten years.

## 2 Issues Affecting the Conservation Area

**2.1** There are issues affecting all 4 of the component sub-areas within the Wandsworth Town Conservation Area. Inevitably, the area facing the greatest pressure for change is the town centre core whilst the outlying, essentially residential areas have seen different types of pressure. Taking the outer areas first.

### **Armoury Way/Fairfield Street Area**

**2.2** Armoury Way is seen essentially as an area with potential for enhancement. There are two interesting clusters of buildings, one at Dormay Street, and the other at Barchard Street/Fairfield Street. Both suffer from compromised settings dominated by traffic, signage and advertising hoardings. Issues are:

- Potential for enhancement of Armoury Way
- Proposals by TfL – implications for Armoury Way and Fairfield Street
- Ram Brewery Site – potential for enhancement of area to the north and east
- Dormay Street – a possible gateway to the River Thames

### **Dempster Road Area**

**2.3** This late Victorian grid of streets has seen considerable investment by householders. However, there is little evidence of unsympathetic alterations to houses as a consequence. Most householders seem aware of the importance of maintaining the traditional appearance of houses and the little new development that has taken place appears to be well integrated. Issues are:

**2.4** Consideration to extending the Conservation Area to include the 'Tonsley' streets, or Including Dempster Road area within a larger, new Tonsley Conservation Area.

### **Putney Bridge Road Area**

**2.5** The area surrounding Putney Bridge Road north of Armoury Way is only tenuously connected to Wandsworth town centre and could be a separate conservation area in its own right. Consideration could be given to protecting Prospect Cottages and the Arts and Crafts group in Oakhill Road with article 4 directions to control unsympathetic alterations that would otherwise be permitted development.

### **The Town Centre Area**

**2.6** There are five distinct zones that make up the development that frames the routes into and within the town centre. These are: – starting from the east – 1) East Hill/Huguenot Place; 2) East Hill; 3) Wandsworth High Street – Civic Focus; 4) Wandsworth High Street – Town Centre Core and 5) West Hill.

### **Traffic**

**2.7** The overriding issue for this trunk road corridor remains the sheer volume of traffic passing through it and this is a factor common to all the component zones of the town centre. This traffic and the visual clutter from direction signs, traffic signals and guard railing make it difficult to appreciate the quality of the buildings and townscape. Traffic management within the town centre is the responsibility of the Mayor and Transport for London. The Mayor has a stated commitment to review the current one-way gyratory traffic system and his consultant engineers have been looking at various ways of reconfiguring the trunk road system to bring relief to the High Street from the impact of high volumes of through traffic.

**2.8** Any opportunity to reduce the flow of through traffic within the town centre would be beneficial to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It would be possible to reduce the scale and impact of signage and other associated traffic related paraphernalia and the improved environmental conditions would not only make the town centre a more attractive place for pedestrians to enjoy but also make investment in its heritage buildings more likely.

## **Town Centre Core – Pressure for Change**

**2.9** As the regeneration of Wandsworth town centre continues there comes with it the inevitable pressure for change to both the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The principal issues are as follows:

### **Future of the Ram Brewery**

**2.10** The cessation of brewing by Young & Co and the sale of the Ram Brewery to a commercial developer represents a significant opportunity for the town centre but there are the following concerns:

**2.11** - New development will need to ensure that it safeguards the listed buildings on the site and generally preserves the appearance of the Conservation Area.

## **3 General Guidance**

**3.1** There is a lot of guidance available if you need it. See the Council's web site [www.wandsworth.gov.uk](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk).

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

- Making More of Your Loft – design guidance on altering your roof
- Basement Conversions
- Parking in Front Gardens
- Shopfront Design Guide
- Shopfront Security
- What is a Conservation Area? – Information on Conservation Areas in general.
- Tree Strategy for the Borough – the action plan for trees in the Borough.

### **Government Guidance**

**3.2** This has been published by central government and is available on planning portal

**3.3** [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://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.
- A Householder's Planning Guide – for the installation of Antennas, including Satellite Dishes.

### **Further reading**

- Period House – How to repair and restore your home (English Heritage Collins 2005)
- Retail Development in Historic Areas – English Heritage, Planning advisory Service and English Historic Towns Forum [www.helm.org.uk](http://www.helm.org.uk)

## **4 Planning Permission**

### **What requires Planning Permission as a result of Conservation Area Status?**

#### **Works to Trees in a Conservation Area**

**4.1** 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 work - 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 the reasons why. The notice period is six weeks. To serve a notice you can fill out a form entitled

**4.2** 'Application to carry out work to a tree in a conservation area.' Please see 13.1, 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.

#### **Placement of a Satellite Dish**

**4.3** 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'.

#### **Demolition**

**4.4** You will need to apply for Conservation Area Consent to totally or substantially demolish any structures bigger than 115 cubic metres or higher than 1m fronting the road.

**4.5** The council has a presumption in favour of retaining buildings that contribute to the character of the Wandsworth Town Conservation Area. Anyone who wishes to demolish a building must produce convincing reasons why they want to.

**4.6** The proposed redevelopment of the site will be a material factor in deciding whether to give consent for demolition; this will normally only be granted subject to planning permission for redevelopment being granted, and a contract for carrying out the works having been signed, where these are required.

## 5 Planning Applications

### 5.1 Application Forms

**5.2** All application forms are available on the website <http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/Home/EnvironmentalTransport/PlanningService/Planningapplications/pappforms.htm> or on request, just contact the planning department (see contact details below). To make an application for planning permission it is necessary to complete the relevant application form and submit scaled drawings showing the existing arrangement and the proposed development.

### Planning Applications – Council Policy

**5.3** 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 the Wandsworth Town Conservation Area special in the first place.

**5.4** 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.

**5.5** Planning applications are determined using national and local planning policy. Wandsworth Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted in 2003 sets out the local planning policies that will be 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.

**5.6** It usually takes eight weeks to process a householder planning application or an application for conservation area consent or listed building consent.

**5.7** 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 engaged an agent to submit the application for you and act on your behalf, correspondence will be automatically conducted with that agent unless otherwise requested.

**5.8** If the correct information is not provided the application will not be validated, you or your agent or will be notified of this within 10 days of the case officer receiving the application.

**5.9** The 8-week period starts on the date of validation. Within this time the application will be advertised and anyone will then be able to comment on your application.

## **6 Building Control**

**6.1** If you want to do new building work that involves structural alterations you will almost certainly need Building Regulations approval. If you want advice on this, call (020) 8871 7620.

## **7 Contact Us**

Contact telephone numbers for the Borough Planner's Service

Development Control 020 8871 7657

Conservation & Design 020 8871 6646

Planning Enforcement 020 8871 6643

Building Regulations 020 8871 7620

Website [www.wandsworth.gov.uk/planning](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/planning)

E-mail [boroughplanner@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:boroughplanner@wandsworth.gov.uk)