West Hill Road
Conservation Area Appraisal
and Management Strategy
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West Hill Road Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Strategy

Introduction

This document identifies and appraises the special architectural and historic characteristics of the West Hill Road Conservation Area and it also gives practical guidance on the implications of conservation area status. It is in two parts: a conservation area appraisal and a management strategy.

This document has been produced in accordance with government guidelines set out in Planning Policy Guidance Notes 15 (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 the appraisal is to provide clearly defined analysis of the character and appearance of the West Hill Road Conservation Area, which is defensible on appeal, and can be utilized in development control decisions. The management strategy addresses issues which have been identified in the character appraisal and advises on preservation and enhancement of the character of the conservation area. The document was made available for public consultation in October 2006, amended accordingly and approved by the Planning and Transportation and Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 January 2007 and the Council’s Executive on 22 October 2007.

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.
Conservation Area Appraisal
1 Summary of special interest

1.1 West Hill Road Conservation Area was designated in on 30th October 1985.

1.2 The special character of this conservation area is derived from the many differing architectural styles, and housing types. The core of the conservation area is a speculative middle class estate laid out on what were, until the mid nineteenth century, fields.

1.3 It is almost exclusively residential with a high survival of single occupation houses, some conversions to flats and twentieth century blocks of flats. This consistent use helps to define the area despite the variety in building types.

1.4 Commercial and other uses are restricted to Wimbledon Park Road / West Hill Road and Merton Road.

1.1 Location and Setting

1.5 West Hill Conservation area lies approximately 1/4 mile east of Wandsworth town centre.
1.2 Townscape and Topography

1.6 The conservation area is set on rising ground above the Wandle Valley with a ridge line more or less marked by the triangular greens at the main road junctions, these formed from Viewfield/West Hill/Melrose and Wimbledon Park Roads.

1.7 The roads sweep up in picturesque and sometimes steep curves to these focal points, from which there are extensive views. The villas have stepped frontages or impressively linked facades and compositions; e.g. the terrace in Merton Road.

1.8 Side and rear elevations of buildings have a greater impact than is often the case; the rears of houses on West Hill Road backing onto Jeptha Road are more like principal elevations and should be treated as such.
2 Historic Development

2.1 Principally, the conservation area was built speculatively from the mid nineteenth century and there is a relatively high survival rate of these Victorian villas. The Park Tavern was licensed in 1854, an adjoining building is dated 1857, and the author George Eliot took possession of Holly Lodge in 1859.

2.2 The field pattern still partly defines the boundaries of the conservation area, but little regard was paid to these for the internal layout of the estate, although the line of Southfields Passage/Lower Wimbledon Park Road does follow an ancient field path.

2.3 The estate had a picturesque plan laid out with large detached and semi-detached villas, aimed at an expanding middle class population. Amongst those who lived here were author, George Eliot, who lived at 31 Wimbledon Park Road. The pair of houses at 31-33 Wimbledon Park Road are now listed buildings. Development was slow with plots sometimes remaining empty until well beyond the end of the 19th century and the very mixed building types and ages reflect this slow development.
3 Buildings and Materials

Merton Road and adjoining villas in Wimbledon Park Road

3.1 The original development (1850s/60s) was of slate roofed stock or gault brick, late Regency style, detached or semi-detached villas, including the terrace in Merton Road, detailed much as it would have been about 1790, with the adjoining villas in Wimbledon Park Road in much the same style.

3.2 Other styles include Italianate, "Jacobethan" and Grecian; in all cases the houses are large, three or four storey blocks with a high quality of moulded and applied detail, careful proportions, and consistent use of timber glazing bar sashes. Interspersed amongst these are groups of later C19 houses, often in red brick, in a variety of John Ruskin-inspired Gothic, or else Queen Anne style, often with terracotta or stone detailing.

Corner of West Hill Road and Wimbledon Park Road

3.3 Occasional individual houses stand out, such as the well-designed Gothic house on the corner of West Hill Road and Wimbledon Park Road. The early/mid C20 semi-detached houses which are infilled into the area include a variety of traditional and modern styles, all two storeys high, representing a move away from the earlier and dominant character of the area; in this respect, some of the later infill flat blocks are better in scale, though (with the exception of those in Lime Gardens) they are rarely so in detail or in setting.

Seymour Road

3.4 The occasional small terraces of late C19 houses, especially in Seymour Road, reflect the slow development of the original plan. In Merton Road, apart from the surviving large villas and the terrace, there are short curving terraces such as Mount Pleasant or Thanet Place which, while only of two stories and of very different social class, use the same materials and are detailed in a similar way to the large houses.
The terraces to the north of Wimbledon Park Road are late C19, gothic detailed with bay windows, and not related to the rest of the conservation area in terms of style, materials or history. All road surfaces are in tarmac. Scorria blocks are exposed in the less busy streets. Paving is mixed, with large areas of tarmac or concrete slabs. Crossovers are generally poured concrete with a few red brick, some textured concrete block and some stable blocks in Melrose Road.

3.5 One of the most distinctive features of the estate was that most of the roads originally had grass verges - these only survive adjoining the green in West Hill Road. Boundaries are very variable, but clearly most were originally timber, very often on dwarf walls; some still survive. The variety of current boundary treatments reflects the variety of building dates and designs in the conservation area; most are now a variety of more or less good C20 brick or rendered walls. There are some original examples of railed boundaries in a few turn-of-the-century groups, such as those at the west end of West Hill Road, and some of the earlier regency style villas, especially in Wimbledon Park Road (east).

**Melrose Road and Viewfield Road**

3.6 Some boundaries, again relatively few, are of panelled brickwork, moulded with large piers, such as the corner of Viewfield/Melrose Road. The timber fences that survive may in themselves be of considerable quality, such as those to the cottage pair on the south west side of the West Hill Road green, and some of the timber fences to the early C20 developments. Several unsightly gaps in boundaries are associated with mid/late C20 inserts, or with front garden parking. Many front boundaries retain hedges, some overgrown into a line of big trees.
4 Green Elements and Open Areas

4.1 The layout of the estate hinges around the triangular greens at the junctions of Viewfield Road/West Hill Road (outside the conservation area), Viewfield Road/Melrose Road and West Hill Road/Wimbledon Park Road, the latter especially acting as a focal point for the whole conservation area. These greens are well planted with mature trees, with scarcely any street furniture and no shrub or flower planting; their setting was formerly much enhanced by the grass verges of adjoining footpaths, which survive in one case.

4.2 Street trees are present in some roads, but tend to be small; only those in Wimbledon Park Road are large and make a big impact. Front gardens are relatively small, with shrubs, small to medium trees being the most common form; large front garden trees make an especial impact in Melrose Road. The Merton Road properties generally have the smallest front gardens or areas, but still have some fairly large hedges. The group of houses in Granville Road is well screened by walls and planting.

4.3 As important to the conservation area is the impact of rear garden trees, especially given the open structure of the area which allows numerous views into rear gardens which are ringed by mature trees.
5 APPENDICES

5.1 Listed Buildings

31-33 Wimbledon Park Road (Grade II)

5.1 This pair of mid-19th Century yellow stock brick houses is of three stories and basement, and the whole is four windows wide beneath a hipped slated roof. There is a coupled stuccoed Doric porch, and no. 31 has a two storey single bay wing. The windows have gauged flat arches. No. 31 has an early LCC Blue Plaque to George Eliot (1819-1880), who wrote "The Mill on the Floss" here (plaque erected 1905).

5.2 Locally Listed Buildings

5.2 The Council holds a list of buildings that are of architectural or historical interest at a local level. These are different from buildings that are listed by English Heritage and the Government for which consent is required for alteration. There are no additional planning controls over locally listed buildings other than those that already apply to the building. However, the list is a record of some of the historic buildings in the borough that are of particular interest.

5.3 The following buildings in this conservation area are locally listed:

- Melrose Road SW18 Nos. 37 & 39
- Seymour Road SW18 Nos. 16, 20 & 24
- West Hill Road SW18 Nos. 57, 61, 65-79 (odd), 85, 89-91 (odd)
- Wimbledon Park Road SW18 Nos. 3-13 (odd), 17-21 (odd), 22-28 (even)
Management Strategy
1 Preservation and enhancement

1.1 The Council has a duty under section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. This section therefore outlines both what the Council does to preserve or enhance the character of West Hill Road Conservation Area and what residents and businesses can do.

1.2 The issues raised during the public consultation included the loss of original windows from the villas and the disrepair of the shops on Merton Road. This document aims to help address these issues by aiding the understanding of the important features of the conservation area through the information given in the character appraisal.

1.3 This section describes how the Council manages the conservation area and what residents and business owners can do to look after the character of the area.

The Planning Process

1.4 Where planning permission is required, it is Council policy to grant permission only for developments or alterations which preserve or enhance the special architectural or historic character and appearance of the conservation area as set out in the conservation area appraisal. This is in accordance with government guidance: Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment and the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

1.5 Planning is an inclusive process where any interested party is entitled to give an opinion. All planning applications are advertised so that any interested person can comment or object and applicants have the right of appeal if they have been refused permission. See the following section on what works require planning permission. You can also see how the Council consults people in its Statement of Community Involvement, available on the website or from the Forward Planning team (contact details at end of document).

1.6 Planning authorities may control small scale alterations to family houses by making an Article 4 direction. This serves to control alterations which are harmful to the historic character of conservation areas such as installing upvc windows and front doors, concrete roof tiles, laying hard surfaces across front gardens, and other unsympathetic alterations.

Enforcement

1.7 In carrying out its planning function, the Council may take enforcement action against unauthorised developments or alterations that harm the character of the conservation area where planning permission would be required.
1.8 Anyone can report breaches of planning control or officers may see these whilst carrying out their daily work. If you wish to report a breach, contact the Planning Enforcement Group using the address and telephone numbers given at the end of this document.

Guidance on Alterations to Buildings

1.9 Maintenance of your property and its historic features makes good sense not only for the overall conservation area but it also retains the value of your property.

1.10 Officers in the Conservation and Design Group can give informal advice on carrying out sensitive works to historic buildings. If you are considering works you are advised to contact them to discuss your proposals, particularly before making a planning application.

1.11 To give you advice, officers will need to see a photograph of your building and a sketch of the works proposed, unless the works are very simple and easy to explain, when a telephone conversation may suffice.

1.12 Basic guidance on works that are appropriate in the conservation area is given below.

Repair or reinstate original style windows and doors

1.13 Whenever possible repair original features such as windows and doors rather than replace them. It is possible to replace rotten components, draught proof or install secondary glazing at the fraction of the price of replacing original windows. Replacing windows or doors often requires planning permission, but repair work does not.

Maintain external brickwork

1.14 Where individual dwellings have been visually emphasised in recent years by painting brickwork, pebbledashing or stone cladding, the result is seriously damaging to the appearance of the street as a whole. Removing these elements and reinstating the original improves the conservation area enormously.

Improve front boundaries

1.15 Front gardens and their boundaries are as much part of the public realm as the street. Generally, boundaries should not be so high as to obscure the building behind and should aim to have a coherent appearance alongside other boundary treatments. Advice on your original boundary treatment can be given by the Conservation & Design Group.

Resist front garden parking
1.16 Front gardens are extremely important to the character of the conservation area and they should not be sacrificed to extensive hard surfacing.

**Shopfronts**

1.17 When carrying out works to a shopfront it is important to retain the historic features that still survive. These can include pilasters, decorative console brackets, slim sloping fascias and decorative tiled thresholds. Grant aid may be available to help with the cost of reinstating a new shopfront to replicate an original design.

**Conservation & Enhancement Grants**

1.18 The Council operates and Conservation & Enhancement Grant Scheme to offer financial incentives to owners of historic buildings to reinstate lost features or remove unsightly features. Anyone is eligible for these grants, but the key criterion is that the work will make a significant impact in conserving and enhancing the special character of an important area or building. Examples of possible grant aided works include:

- removal of paint, render or pebbledash from a brick elevation;
- replacement of boundary walls, railings, gates and fences to the original design;
- reinstatement of original style windows or original roof material.
- reinstatement of shopfront elements

1.19 Grants offered are normally between 25% to 50% of the 'eligible costs'. Eligible costs are for the actual conservation or enhancement work - not routine maintenance, conversion, alteration or modernisation which may be going on at the same time. More information can be found on our website:

http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/info/514/building_conservation_and_design/230/conservation_and_enhancement_grants

1.20 Grants are also available for commercial premises and are dealt with by Council's Economic Development team. See contact details at the end. Other grants for renovation or improvement of houses are dealt with by the council's Environmental Services team. Ring the Grants Helpline on 020 8871 6127.

1.21 Outside the Council, grants may be available from English Heritage, the Heritage of London Trust and other similar bodies, mainly for listed building projects. See their websites for details or look at the Funds for Historic Buildings website for other grant aiding bodies: www.ffhb.org.uk
2 What works require consent

2.1 Additional planning controls exist within conservation areas and this section explains what works will require consent. Most ‘material alterations’ to buildings that are not houses require planning permission. Some works to houses will require permission from the Council. For further information on these or any other planning matter please contact us using the contact details given at the end of this document.

Works to maisonettes, flat blocks and houses converted to flats:

2.2 These buildings do not benefit from permitted development rights and therefore most external alterations will require planning permission, including:

- Changing windows and front doors
- Reroofing and altering chimneys
- Cladding or rendering external walls
- Laying out a hard surface in the front garden
- Altering boundary treatments

Works to houses that require planning permission in the conservation area:

2.3 This list is intended as a guide and is not exhaustive. Householder consents changed on 1 October 2008, so do not rely on outdated information. Works not mentioned here may nonetheless require planning permission and you are therefore advised to check with the planning service at an early stage to avoid delays to your project or even enforcement action.

2.4 You may also apply to the Council for a Certificate of Lawful Development which will confirm that planning permission is not required.

2.5 The following works require planning permission:

- Any roof extension
- Any side extension
- Any extension to the front of a house
- All rear extensions over one storey and beyond the rear wall of the original house
- Cladding a house in stone, artificial stone, pebbledash, render, timber, plastic or tiles
- Installation, alteration or replacement of a chimney, flue, soil or vent pipe to an elevation fronting a highway or to a side elevation
- Installation, alteration or replacement of an antennae or satellite dish on a part of the house that is visible from a highway
- Garden buildings, enclosures or pools built in the front garden or within 2 metres of a boundary or over 2.5 metres high or takes up over 50% of the curtilage
• Hard surfaces in front gardens, unless they are less than 5 cubic metres or are porous or water runs off into a porous area
• Boundary treatments (fence, wall, railings, etc) over 1 metre adjacent to a highway or 2 metre elsewhere.
• Air source heat pumps
• Wind turbines

**Works to commercial buildings**

2.6 Buildings that are not houses do not benefit from householder permitted development rights. This means that most external alterations will require planning permission. As an example, some common alterations requiring planning permission are given below:

• Any alteration or extension to a building including roof extensions and windows, where a material alteration is involved.
• All changes to shopfronts require planning permission. This includes any external security shutters.
• Advertisements to shopfronts may require planning permission depending on size. All illuminated advertisements will require consent.

**Conservation area consent is required to:**

• Demolish a building or substantial part of a building in a conservation area as well as to demolish boundary treatment (eg fence, wall, railings, etc) that is over 1m adjacent to a highway or over 2m elsewhere.

**Works to trees**

• All trees in conservation areas are protected and the Council must be notified of any works, including pruning and felling.
• The notification procedure applies to trees which are subject to tree preservation orders.

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**Further information can be found at**

[www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)

or contact Wandsworth’s Planning Service on 020 8871 6636

or the Conservation & Design Group on 020 8871 6646 or 6645
3 How to make a planning application

3.1 This is a brief guide to applying for planning permission. Planning officers are available to answer simple queries between 9.00 - 5.00 at the One-Stop counter on the 5th floor of the Town Hall Annexe on Wandsworth High Street.

Application forms

3.2 All application forms are available on the webpage given below or on request from the planning service (see Contacts at the end).

http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/info/485/apply_for_planning_permission/521/

Making your application

3.3 For all but the simplest alterations, you are advised to appoint a qualified architect with experience and understanding of conservation issues.

3.4 To apply for planning permission you must the correct application form (often the householder application form alone) and submit scale drawings showing the existing and the proposed. Each application form gives guidance on what basic plans are required. 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 1:50. It must show how the window will open and close this is best shown in a cross section.

3.5 All applications for works in conservation areas should be accompanied by a Design & Access Statement which should set out the process by which your development or alterations have been designed and how they conserve the special interest of your property and the area. Guidance is available on our website.

Planning policy

3.6 All applications are determined in accordance with Council policy as set out in our Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and emerging Local Development Framework (LDF). The character appraisal and guidance given in this document will also be taken into consideration when determining applications. The overarching policy set by the Government is that development or alterations should preserve or enhance the special architectural or historic interest of the conservation area. The UDP and LDF are available on our website:

http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/info/200074/planning/233/guide_to_planning_policy
Pre-application advice

3.7 We welcome and encourage discussions before you submit your application. Simple enquiries can be dealt with by telephone or at the One Stop counter, but it is likely that to discuss extensions and significant changes to a property, officers will need to see photographs and sketches. A pre-application meeting may be granted following the receipt of photographs and sketches if the matter cannot be adequately dealt with over the telephone.

How long does it take?

3.8 It takes eight weeks to process most planning applications. If the correct information is not provided the application cannot be validated and your agent or you, the applicant, will be notified of this within 10 days. The 8 week period only starts when the application has been validated.

3.9 When the application is received it is allocated to a planning officer who will be your case officer and main contact. 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. The case officer will be responsible for consultation on the application which includes consulting neighbours and liaising with the Conservation and Design Group.

Building control

3.10 Approval under the Building Regulations is a separate requirement and you should check with Building Control if this is required before carrying out your works. See Contacts at the end.
Further information & contacts
Further information

Council publications

The Council publishes a number of useful guidance documents which can be found on the following web page:

www.wandsworth.gov.uk/downloads/200074/planning

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Government publications

Many of the following documents are available from the Planning Portal (see "Useful Websites").

Planning: A Guide for Householders
Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment
Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals, English Heritage
Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas, English Heritage

Books

A Stitch in Time: Maintaining your Property, available from The SPAB
Building Conservation Directory. Available from Cathedral Communications 01747 871717 or www.buildingconservation.com
The Elements of Style, An Encyclopaedia of English Architectural Detail, edited by Stephen Calloway (Mitchell Beazley)
Informed Conservation by Kate Clark. Available from English Heritage
Life and Labour of the People in London by Charles Booth, (Macmillan and Co.)
London Suburbs, published by Merell Holberton in association with English Heritage
Old House Care and Repair by Janet Collings (Donhead) www.oldhouse.info

Wandsworth Conservation & Design Group
**Period House:** Complete Care, Repair and Restoration by Albert Jackson and David Day (English Heritage & Collins)

**Structural Repair of Traditional Buildings** by P. Robson (Donhead)

**Suburban Style:** The British Home from 1840-1960 by Helena Barrett & John Phillips (MacDonald & Co)

**The Buildings of England: London South** by Cherry and Pevsner (Penguin)

**The Edwardian House Explained** by Trevor Yorke (Countryside Books)

**The Old House Handbook, A Guide to Care and Repair** by Roger Hunt and Marianne Suhr (published in association with SPAB)

**The Victorian Society Book of the Victorian House** by Kit Wedd. Available from the Victorian Society

**Victorian Architecture** by R. Dixon and S. Muthesius (Thames & Hudson)

**Public Archives**

**Wandsworth Heritage Service**
Battersea Library
265 Lavender Hill
SW11 1JB
Tel: 020 8871 7753

Email: localhistory@wandsworth.gov.uk
See the Council's website for opening times.

**London Metropolitan Archive**
40 Northampton Road
Clerkenwell
London
EC1R 0HB

Website: [http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/Corporation/LGNL_Services/Leisure_and_culture/Records_and_archives/](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/Corporation/LGNL_Services/Leisure_and_culture/Records_and_archives/)

**Useful Websites**

**Organisation** | **Web address**
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Planning Portal | [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)
Planning Aid for London | [www.planningaidforlondon.org.uk](http://www.planningaidforlondon.org.uk)
Funds for Historic Buildings | [www.ffhb.org.uk](http://www.ffhb.org.uk)
HELM: Guidance on the historic environment from across the country compiled by English Heritage | [www.helm.org.uk](http://www.helm.org.uk)
English Heritage | [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)
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Contacts

Wandsworth Council
Borough Planner
Town Hall,
Wandsworth High Street,
London, SW18 2PU

Tel: 020 8871 6000

Email: boroughplanner@wandsworth.gov.uk

Council Contacts
Planning Service: General enquiries 020 8871 6636
Conservation & Design 020 8871 6646 or 6645
Planning Enforcement Group 020 8871 6643
Building Control 020 8871 7620
Tree Officer (trees on private land) 020 8871 6631
Arboricultural Service (trees on Council land) 020 8871 6370
Economic Development Office (shopfront grants) 020 8871 6203
Environmental Services (grants) 020 8871 6127
Wandsworth’s Local Studies Centre 020 8871 7753

On Street Services Office (to report street defects, graffiti, refuse & recycling problems) www.wandsworth.gov.uk/Home/EnvironmentandTransport/StreetDefects/default.htm

or

020 8871 6708

Arboricultural Service (trees on Council land) 020 8871 6370

External Contacts
English Heritage (London Region) 020 7973 3000
External Contacts

English Heritage (Customer Services, publication requests, etc) 0870 333 1181
The Georgian Group 087 1750 2936
The Victorian Society 020 8994 1019
The Twentieth Century Society 020 7250 3857
SAVE Britain’s Heritage 020 7253 3500
Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) 020 7377 1644
Local Residents Association

Planning Aid for London
Unit 2, 11-29 Fashion Street
London, E1 6PX
Tel: 020 7247 4900

Contact Conservation & Design
This document was approved by the council’s executive on 22 January 2007. Further copies are available from:
www.wandsworth.gov.uk/planning/conservation

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<td>Wandsworth Interpreting Service: (020) 8871 5751</td>
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