Kenilworth Road
Character Assessment
1. General Introduction

Conservation Areas are designated by the Council as areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which should be preserved or enhanced.

The Kenilworth Avenue Conservation Area falls into 2 distinct areas (see plan DLU/2158). The special character of each of these areas derives from:

Kenilworth Avenue

- The run of large semi-detached houses which dominate the street, and which has strong group value.
- The geometrical regularity of building lines and street layout.
- The regularity, the rhythm and the scale of the run of gabled roofs which face towards the road.
- The small scale detailing used on the stone lintels and capitals used in conjunction with the window and door openings.
- The high quality street design details and materials, including substantial street trees.
- The landscape quality of the small front gardens.
- The views down the length of both Waldemar Rd and Landgrove Rd towards the street trees in Strathearn Rd and beyond that to the Crystal Palace ridge.
Waldemar Rd and Langrove Rd

- The group value of the terraces of houses which derives from their common architectural design.
- The geometrical regularity of building lines and street layout.
- The small scale detailing used on the stone lintels and capitals used in conjunction with the window and door openings, and which echoes the detailing used in Kenilworth Rd.
- The high quality street design details and materials, including (in the case of Landgrove Rd) street trees.

2. Description of extent of CA

The Conservation Area which is subject of this Character Appraisal is 2.58 hectares in extent. It is situated approximately 900 metres to the north-east of Wimbledon Town Centre, and 800 metres to the south of Wimbledon Park (Underground Station). It lies to the north-west of the Wimbledon to Waterloo railway line. To the south-west, lies Leopold Rd and the Leopold Rd Conservation Area. To the north-west lie the residential areas of Dora Rd and Vineyard Hill Rd (the latter being included within another Conservation Area), and to north-east lies residential properties in Strathearn Rd and Kenilworth Avenue (see plan DLU/2159).

The area lies close to the foot of Wimbledon Hill. The land slopes down from the west to the east, in such a way that Waldemar Rd and Landgrove Rd both have a fairly steep gradient (NW to SE), and Kenilworth Rd has a slight gradient (SW to NE). The highest point within the Conservation Area (close to the junction of Kenilworth Ave and Leopold Rd) is approximately 33 m above sea level, and the lowest point (the junction of Landgrove Rd and Strathearn Rd) is 24 metres above sea level.

The Conservation Area includes the following properties:

- 1 – 33 (odds) Kenilworth Avenue
- 2a and 2 – 36 (evens) Kenilworth Avenue
- 1 – 25 (odds) Waldemar Rd
- 2 – 26 (evens) Waldemar Rd
- 1 – 25 (odds) Landgrove Rd
- 2 – 28 (evens) Landgrove Rd

3. Designation History

The Kenilworth Avenue Conservation Area was designated by the Council in November 1990. There have been no boundary alterations to the Conservation Area since this first designation.

4. History of Development

Rocques map of 1741-45 shows a track or road following the line of the present day Gap Rd and Leopold Rd, linking “Cowdrey’s Lane” (the present day Haydons Rd) to the Duchess of Marlborough’s estate (Wimbledon Park). The present day Conservation Area appears at that time to be open fields either on the edge of, or within that estate.

The OS map of 1865 shows the railway line to the south east of the Conservation Area. It also shows a belt of trees with a track which runs along the line of what is today Woodside, to “Gap Lodge”, (located just outside the Conservation Area, on the
site of 113 Woodside, where Kenilworth Avenue now meets Leopold Rd. From there
the trees and the track continue approximately on the line of Kenilworth Avenue (to
approximately the present day junction of Landgrove Rd and Kenilworth Avenue),
where it sweeps gradually around to the north towards what was then called
Vineyard Hill.

Gap Lodge appears to mark the south-eastern entrance to the Wimbledon Park
estate, as approached from "Cowdrey's Lane"/Haydons Rd/Plough Lane.

This “track”, where it approximately coincides with Kenilworth Avenue, is referred to
as “Avenue Road” on an 1879 map. At that time the area to the north-west of Avenue
Road appears to lie within the Wimbledon Park Estate.

Apart from the coincidence in the alignment of this short section of Kenilworth
Avenue with this tree belt and track, there are no evident traces of the landscape of
1865 or 1979 seen in the Conservation Area today.

The development which can be seen in the Conservation Area today began at the
very end of the 19th century. Given the uniformity of architecture seen throughout
most of the Conservation Area it is no surprise to see that the area was developed
within a very short time span. Houses in Kenilworth Avenue were built between 1895
and 1898, those in Waldemar Rd in 1898 and 1899, and those in Landgrove Rd in
1900 and 1901.

The only later additions are seen at 2/4/6 Landgrove Rd, (built in 1906), at 21/23/25
Waldemar Rd, (built in 1909), at 2a Kenilworth Rd, (built in 1927), and at 26/28
Landgrove Rd, (built in 1954).

Ordnance survey maps of the 1930s show a pair of houses on the site of 26/28
Landgrove Rd (an extension of the terrace at 8 – 24 Landgrove Rd), and a single
house on the now vacant site adjacent to 25 Landgrove Rd (an extension of the
terrace at 1 – 25 Landgrove Rd). It seems likely that these three houses may have
been lost as a result of bomb damage.

5. Land Uses

The sole land use within the Conservation Area is residential.

6. Archaeology

The Conservation Area does not lie within an Archaeological Priority Zone (APZ).

7. Listed Buildings – Buildings Contribution

None of the buildings which lie within the Conservation Area are Listed (either
statutorily or locally listed). None is considered to be of such architectural or historic
importance as to warrant consideration for such listing. Buildings must also be
assessed in terms of whether they make a positive, neutral or negative contribution
to the character of the area.

The following buildings are considered to make a positive contribution:
• 2 – 36 (evens) Kenilworth Ave
• 1 – 33 (odds) Kenilworth Avenue
• 1 – 19 (odds) Waldemar Rd
The positive characteristics of these buildings is dealt with in the section on architecture and detailing, below.

The following buildings are considered to make a neutral contribution:
- 21 – 25 (odds) Waldemar Rd
- 2 – 6 (evens) Landgrove Rd
- 2a Kenilworth Ave

The following buildings are considered to make a negative contribution:
- 26/28 Landgrove Rd

The contribution made by each building to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is indicated in plan DLU/2160.

8. Street Layout

As indicated above there is almost no clear relationship between the overall street layout seen in the Conservation Area today and any natural features on the site which are seen in historic maps of the area. Streets are laid out in a way typical of much late Victorian suburban development, with a regular grid of streets, set at right angles, and with rectangular street blocks of a size sufficient to accommodate small front gardens, frontage buildings and rear gardens.

9. Building plots

The individual building plots appear to date from the time when the area was first built up in the late Victorian period. No traces of land subdivisions prior to that date are discernable today. Plots are regular in their layout, in order to maximise the efficiency in the use of the site. Individual house plots in Kenilworth Avenue are 7.25 metres wide, and between 30 and 40 metres from front to back.

The house plots in Waldemar Rd and Landgrove Rd are slightly smaller, being between 5.25 and 5.65 metres wide, and generally between 26 and 35 metres from front to back.

10. Building Height

Buildings in Kenilworth Ave are all 2½ storeys, with the exception of 2a Kenilworth Rd, which is a small scale 2 storey building.

All buildings in Waldemar Rd and Landgrove Rd are two storeys, though numbers 26/28 Landgrove Rd, being of a later date and different architectural style, are much smaller in scale and lower in height.

11. Building form

The buildings in Kenilworth Avenue comprise 17 pairs of semi detached houses, with a further single detached house which is designed as half of a pair of semis. In addition there is another detached house which is of a quite different design.
Houses in Waldemar Rd and Landgrove Rd are in the form of terraces, though in the case of the later houses at 21 – 25 Waldemar Rd this is a short terrace of only 3 houses.

12. Building Line and Building Relationship to the Street

Building lines are an important feature and are for the most part strictly observed, defining the relationship of the house to the street. In Kenilworth Avenue the building line sets building frontages (excluding projecting bays) at approximately 4.5 metres back from the line of the back edge of the footway.

In Landgrove Rd and Waldemar Rd building frontages (excluding projecting bays) are set at approximately 3 metres back from the line of the back edge of the footway.

Generally building frontages are set square to the street, however there is a very slight bend in the line of Kenilworth Avenue, where it runs between Waldemar Rd and Landgrove Rd, and rather than realign the orientation of the buildings they have been laid out squarely relative to one another. This means that in this section of the road the buildings are set at a slight angle relative to the alignment of the road, and there is a slight staggering of building footprints.

The general slope of land from west to east means that some of the houses on the west side of Kenilworth Avenue, which runs generally across the slope, are set high above the road, with entrance thresholds being up to approximately 0.75 metres above street level. The houses on the eastern side of the street are set roughly on a level with the street.

13. Roof Form

In Waldemar Rd and Landgrove Rd the ridge of the main roofs of the terraces run in parallel with the road. These principal roofs are gabled at each end. Flank and party walls defining each house run up through the line of the roof plane.

In general the front bay of each of these houses has a small subsidiary hipped roof, which is angled to reflect the shape of the canted bay. There are exceptions to this pattern at 21 – 25 Waldemar Rd and at 4/6 Landgrove Rd where the bays are topped by subsidiary gabled roofs. The roof form used at 2 and 26/28 Landgrove Rd is a simple gabled roof where the ridge runs in parallel to the road. Here there are no subsidiary roof elements.

The roof form of the houses in Kenilworth Avenue is markedly different, and is one of the most striking features of these houses. Here the full width of the frontage of each house has a high gable facing the street, so that each pair of semi-detached houses has a pair of gables. These forward facing gables are linked by a roof which runs parallel to the road where the ridge is of equal height to that of the forward facing gables.

14. Rhythm and Symmetry of Buildings

Throughout the Conservation Area there is a very clear and regular rhythm to the buildings in the way that they present themselves to the street. Pairs of properties generally present a symmetrical elevational design, both in the cases of the terraced houses in Landgrove Rd and Waldemar Rd, and the semi detached houses in Kenilworth Ave. With the exception of the houses at 2 – 22 Kenilworth Avenue, the
forward projecting bays are off set to one side of each house, and each house presents a mirror image of its neighbour. Numbers 2–22 Kenilworth Avenue the bays are set centrally within the elevation of each house.

The rhythm of the properties is created by the forward projecting bays with their gabled and hipped roofs, the flank and party walls projecting through the roofs, and the elevational symmetry of the pairs of houses.

15. Architecture and Detailing

The great majority of the buildings in the area display a strongly cohesive architectural character. Three distinct architectural groups of buildings are identified in the Conservation Area (shown as building types A to C on plan DLU/2161). They dominate the area. Building types B and C are in most respects similar. Curiously the semi detached pair of houses at 22/24 Kenilworth Ave is asymmetrical, and includes one house of type B and the other of type C. At number 24 the front gable is skewed to one side, with a steeper roof slope on one side.

This homogeneity in the architectural designs of the buildings, and the similarities of the detailing and specifically the stone working carving, which are common to the three main building types is a major factor which contributes to its special character.

The remaining buildings are either architectural “one offs”, or very small groups of 2 or 3 buildings of similar design. These do not make the same positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. A briefer description of these is also given below.

The date quoted is the estimated date of construction, usually based on the date building plans were submitted. The contribution that each building makes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is recorded as, either “positive contribution”, “neutral contribution” or “negative contribution”. These contributions are identified on plan 6.

Building Type A (1 – 19, and 2 – 26 Waldemar Rd, and 1 – 25, and 8 – 24 Landgrove Rd).

Date – between 1898 and 1901
Positive Contribution
Building Form – These are terraces of two storey houses, with gabled roofs. They have two storey bay windows.
Materials In the case of the houses in Waldemar Rd the front walls are red brick, with yellow stocks to the flank walls. In Landgrove Rd yellow stock brick is used, with red brick string courses. Stone detailing is used. The roofs are of slate, with red ridge and hip tiles, and with red coping tiles on the upper edges of the projecting flank and party walls. Windows are sashes, and the frames are of timber.
Detailing The bay window surrounds are of stone, as are the lintels and sills of the non bay windows. Recessed porches use either stone lintels or stone keystones and corbels. These stone details have carved foliage decoration on pilaster capitals and on the lintels. Stone tablets are used between the ground and 1st floor bay windows. Stone bracket supports are used at the eaves and at the bay window sills. A string course of moulded bricks is used above the ground floor bay window and above the adjacent porches. An ornate metal finial is used above the hipped roof of the bay.

Building Type B (2 – 22 Kenilworth Ave).
Date – between 1895 and 1898
Positive Contribution

Building Form – These are semi detached two and a half storey houses. Each house has a dominant gable facing the road. They have double width two storey bay windows set centrally relative to the gabled roof, with a further window at 2nd floor level set high within the gable. The front entrance to the house is set within the flank wall.

Materials The front walls are of red brick, with flank walls of yellow stocks. Stone detailing is used. The roofs are of slate, with red ridge and hip tiles, and with red coping tiles on the upper edges of the projecting flank and party walls. Windows are sashes, and the frames are of timber.

Detailing The window surrounds are of stone. These stone details have carved fluting on the upper parts of the pilasters used on the bay windows. Foliage decoration has been carved on pilaster capitals and on the lintels. Stone tablets are used between the ground and 1st floor bay windows, and above the 2nd floor windows. Stone bracket supports are used at the bay window sills. The front gables have very ornately cut timber bargeboarding, and timber finials top the gables.

Building Type C (24 – 36, and 1 - 33 Kenilworth Ave).
Date – between 1895 and 1898

Positive Contribution

Building Form – These are semi detached two and a half storey houses. Each house has a dominant gable facing the road. They have double width two storey bay windows set in an off-centre position relative to the gabled roof, with a further window at 2nd floor level set high within the gable. The front entrance to the house is positioned alongside the front bay.

Materials The walls are of red brick, with the flank walls of yellow stocks. Stone detailing is used. The roofs are of slate, with red ridge and hip tiles, and with red coping tiles on the upper edges of the projecting flank and party walls. Windows are sashes, and the frames are of timber.

Detailing The window surrounds are of stone, as is the lintel above the recessed porch. These stone details have carved fluting on the upper parts of the pilasters used on the bay windows. Foliage decoration has been carved on pilaster capitals and on the lintels. Stone tablets are used between the ground and 1st floor bay windows, above the porch lintel, and above the 2nd floor windows. Stone bracket supports are used at the bay window sills. The front gables have very ornately cut timber bargeboarding, and timber finials top the gables.

21 – 25 Waldemar Rd
This is a short terrace of 3 houses dating from 1909. The group make a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The general form of these houses is broadly similar to building type A, but here a square bay is used with a subsidiary gabled roof. A lean-to roof is used above the porch. The richness of detailing used is less than that of building type A.

2 Landgrove Rd
This is a wide (double-fronted) house which though it forms part of a terrace, is of a completely different elevational design. The building makes a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The house dates from 1906. The ground floor has square bays flanking the central entrance. Above this running across the full width of the house there is a balcony with iron railings around.

4/6 Landgrove Rd
This is a pair of matching houses which form part of a wider terrace. The building makes a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The houses date from 1906. Each house has a square two storey bay with a
subsidiary gabled roof above. A lean-to roof covers the porch, and above this there is a three-sided oriel window.

26/28 Landgrove Rd
This is a smaller scale and very plain two storey building which forms part of a wider terrace. The building makes a negative contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It is post war (dated 1954), and is probably a replacement consequent on wartime bomb damage. The eaves and ridge of the roof are both distinctly lower than the related features in the adjacent house. The design of the building, and the materials used draw nothing from the character of the buildings in the Conservation Area, and its bland architectural treatment is in stark contrast to the richly detailed buildings in the rest of the street.

2a Kenilworth Ave
This is a small scale, part two and part one and a half storey, detached house. The building makes a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It is set well back from the road, and it presents two gables, one larger than the other, and one set forward relative to the other. The house dates from 1927.

16. Building Materials
The range of building materials used in the most important buildings in the Conservation Area is quite restricted. This limited palette reinforces the cohesive character of the area. Brickwork is limited to red bricks or yellow stock bricks. There is an abundance of stone detailing, much of it carved with foliage motifs. The roofs are of slate with red ridge tiles, and the window frames are timber. Render or pebbledash is limited to only a few buildings which are not typical of the area generally.

17. Building Alterations
Certain small scale alterations have been made to individual houses, which have to a degree harmed their intrinsic interest. These changes tend to be all the more apparent because of the way in which most buildings in the area follow the design of others nearby. When one building is changed, the change is highlighted when seen in conjunction with other similar but unaltered buildings nearby. The changes are all the more significant because the character of this particular Conservation Area is so dependent on similarities in design and detail between the different houses throughout the area.

These changes include replacement window frames, replacement front doors, infilling of open fronted porches, painting over brickwork or cladding (with render or pebbledash) over brickwork, re roofing with tiles instead of slates, and loss of decorative bargeboard details in Kenilworth Ave.

Plan DLU/2162 illustrates where such adverse alterations have occurred.

The majority of these minor changes do not require specific planning permission, however the Council can seek an extension of planning control to cover some of them, by means of an Article 4 Direction. Possible action of this type is proposed in the section on Opportunities and Recommendations, below.
18. Gardens and Spaces between and around Buildings

Front gardens are small in this Conservation Area, particularly in Landgrove Rd and Waldemar Rd. Generally they are considered to be too small to accommodate trees. However many of them are attractively planted, and when this occurs it greatly enhances the street scene by softening the outlines of buildings, and introducing colour and variety.

The front gardens in Kenilworth Avenue, being slightly larger than those in the other 2 roads are generally more generously planted than gardens elsewhere in the Conservation Area.

In Kenilworth Avenue in particular new and ornate iron railings have been introduced in recent years on the street frontages of some front gardens. Many of these railings are of unusual and attractive design, and again they enhance the street scene.

Unfortunately a few front gardens on Kenilworth Avenue have been changed to provide off street car parking, these are indicated on plan DLU/2163. The shallow depth of the garden spaces means that cars must be parked parallel to the street. This type of change not only removes all planting opportunities, but it also requires the removal of all of the front garden boundary walls or fences. It has a severely negative impact on the street scene.

There is a vacant and overgrown site adjacent to 25 Landgrove Rd. Historic maps indicate that this plot was once occupied by a house similar to the houses in the adjacent terrace, which seems likely to have been lost as a result of bomb damage. The vacant site is in derelict and unkempt condition and has a negative impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The original layout of the area set the flank walls of houses adjacent to Strathearn Rd hard on the line of the back edge of the footway, and the opportunity exists for a new building to be erected on this site, to reflect this original building layout. This development opportunity, if sympathetically designed would be an important enhancement to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

19. Streets

The quality of street design and street materials is generally very good. These are usually original street materials dating from the initial layout of the streets.

Street trees are dealt with in the section on trees and landscape below.

The typical street design for the three streets within the Conservation Area involves large format ASP paving slabs, a narrow bitmac verge and wide (300 mm) granite kerbstones. In the carriageway, gullies have 3 or 4 rows of granite setts, though some of these have been covered with tarmac.

There has recently been a proliferation of parking control signs, many of which are located on their own individual metal posts. This provides an opportunity to reduce signage clutter, in particular by the re-location of these signs onto front garden boundary walls.

Yellow parking control lines are the narrow yellow line type (50 mm wide).
The Unitary Development Plan indicates an existing cycle route which runs through the Conservation Area, along the length of Kenilworth Avenue.

20. Trees/landscape

Trees make some contribution to the special character and appearance of this Conservation Area, though less than that made by the buildings.

There are currently 2 Tree Preservation Orders covering trees within or close to the Conservation Area. The details are set out below:

- 24 Landgrove Rd (rear garden) – Maidenhair tree (within the Conservation Area).
- 42 Leopold Rd (rear garden) – London Plane tree (located just outside the Conservation Area but the tree is an important element in the street scene of Kenilworth Avenue viewed from within the Conservation Area).

There are three fine mature lime trees located within the garden area adjacent to 25 Landgrove Rd, which make an important contribution to the street scene in Strathearn Rd.

Street trees are of somewhat variable quality. Medium sized street trees are present in Kenilworth Avenue, and a few small street trees are to be found in Landgrove Rd. There are however no street trees in Waldemar Rd.

Immediately outside the Conservation Area, on the eastern side of Strathearn Rd there is a line of fine mature plane trees set at regular intervals along the length of the footway. These trees contribute to views into and out of the Conservation Area.

Important trees including all street trees are indicated on plan DLU/2163.

21. Ecology

There are no sites within the boundaries of the Conservation Area which have specific nature conservation status. However the railway land on the south east side of Strathearn Rd (just outside the Conservation Area) is designated as both a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and as a green corridor. The SINC is valued as a Borough Grade 2 site.

These designations may have implications for any possible development proposals within the Conservation Area which adjoin the railway land. Such development proposals should avoid harm to the nature conservation value of the SINC site, or if harm can not be avoided should make compensatory restitution.

In addition the backland areas, though small, which mainly comprise blocks of land containing back gardens, are likely to contain some ecological value from the point of view of the habitat that they contain, and this too will be taken into account when assessing development proposals.

22. Views

The Conservation Area slopes towards the east, and as a result there are long distance views from the top end (western end) of both Landgrove Rd and Waldemar Rd. These views extend towards the high land on the Crystal Palace ridge.
Other than these, the views are limited to short distance views along streets, towards individual buildings, groups of buildings, and landscape features. The view along the length of Kenilworth Avenue is notable for the sequence of prominent gables which face towards the street, and the views along the length of Strathearn Rd (though outside the Conservation Area) is notable for the impressive row of mature plane trees which are positioned regularly along the length of the footway on the south east side of the road.

23. **Landmarks/legibility**

There are no major landmark buildings in the Conservation Area.

24. **Positive/negative features**

The positive, negative and neutral features have been referred to in the earlier part of this assessment. This section therefore summarises those references in relation to each of the two distinct sub areas in the Conservation Area.

**Kenilworth Ave**

- **Positive Features**
  - The strong rhythm of buildings in the street, and especially the rhythm of gabled roofs facing to the street.
  - The high quality of architectural design used on most of the buildings within this area.
  - The high quality of design detailing and high quality materials used on most of the buildings.
  - The group value of the majority of buildings within the area.
  - The quality of street materials, especially granite kerbs and granite setts.

- **Neutral Features**
  - None

- **Negative Features**
  - The loss of original detailing on the houses as a result of insensitive alterations to doors, porches, windows, and to brickwork surfaces.
  - The use of some frontage garden areas for car parking.
  - Proliferating signage clutter, including large numbers of car parking control signs many of which have their own individual posts.

**Waldemar Rd and Landgrove Rd**

- **Positive Features**
  - The strong rhythm of buildings in the street.
  - The high quality of architectural design used on most of the buildings within this area.
  - The high quality of design detailing and high quality materials used on most of the buildings.
  - The group value of the majority of buildings within the area.
  - The quality of street materials, especially granite kerbs and granite setts.

- **Neutral Features**
  - Certain of the buildings make a neutral contribution.

- **Negative Features**
  - The loss of original detailing on the houses as a result of insensitive alterations to doors, porches, windows, and to brickwork surfaces.
• The negative contribution made by the vacant site adjacent to 25 Landgrove Rd.
• The negative contribution made by the building at 26/28 Landgrove Rd.
• Proliferating signage clutter, including large numbers of car parking control signs many of which have their own individual posts.

25. Opportunities and Recommended Action

• In Kenilworth Ave, the restoration of decorative timber bargeboards at the front gables should be encouraged.
• A Tree Preservation Order should be considered for the 3 lime trees adjacent to the rear garden of no 25 Landgrove Rd.
• An Article 4 Direction should be sought to protect the small scale alterations on the houses within the Conservation Area, including replacement of front doors, infilling of porches, painting of masonry and replacement of windows on the front elevation of buildings.
• An Article 4 Direction should be sought to protect against the conversion of front gardens to off-street car parking.
• Proposals for the reduction of signage clutter should be prepared and implemented, especially in respect of those car parking control plates which are located on a separate post.

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