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 Wood Road conservation area was designated by Merton Council, following a thorough debate in November 1998. The special character of this area derives from the early 20th Century architecture and diverse styling of the large ‘ornate’ detached houses, the uniform street design including grass verges, and natural landscaping of the surrounding area and views towards Wimbledon Common, particularly from Wood and McKay Roads.

This character assessment covers the whole of the conservation area and provides an analysis of the area’s history and development, and identifies the main architectural features, and important qualities that contribute to the area’s special character. The appraisal is not intended to be comprehensive or the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply any disapproval. Merton Council hopes that residents will find the leaflet informative and take into account the recommendations made in it when considering alterations and improvements to their properties. A separate Design Guide has been prepared which provides advice on improvements that can be carried out by residents to preserve and enhance their area, copies of which can be obtained from the London Borough of Merton.

CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

The Wood Road conservation area is bounded on the north, east and south sides by the adjacent Wimbledon-Wood conservation area, immediately to the north lies Wimbledon Common Park, included on English Heritage’s Register of Historic Parks and Gardens listed as Grade II. To the south is Copse Hill, formerly a narrow country lane and now a busy thoroughfare linking Wimbledon Village to the Kingston bypass, and to the east by Worple Road. To the west the conservation area is the Wimbledon Woods, formerly known as Bounds Down Wood, which is one of the few remaining parts of the Royal Wimbledon Golf Course in 1907 and which is designated as Metropolitan Open Land. From the earliest maps, there do not appear to be any tangible historical elements which have influenced the present topography of the area, surroundings apart from Cannizaro Park, and the historic roads, Woodhayes Road, Copse Hill and Ernle Road which follows the line of an old footpath that once linked them. The part of Cannizaro Park that meets the Wood Road Conservation Area, just behind Dunstall Road, is known as Lady Jane’s Wood was planted by Henry Dundas who moved into Stann House, since renamed Cannizaro House in 1790.

The earliest record of the area is Roscup’s early plan of 1714-15 which shows the area to be undeveloped and divided up into a group of open fields which formed part of the interior ‘Wimbledon’ – it is also referred to as ‘Wood Road’ and before that it was covered in woodland. The 1830 Wimbledon ‘Fire Map’ shows a footpath linking the old Woodhayes Road with the present Copse Hill, along the present alignment of Ernle Road. Comparing 1865 Ordnance Survey Map with the more recent Ordnance Survey map of 1986, shows how apart from the golf course to the west and the woodland, within Cannizaro Park, Lady Jane’s Wood directly to the north of the conservation area, the area has been completely transformed in character from rural and semi-rural to suburban.

Records indicate that from 1700 to 1870, the land changed ownership a number of times. It was during the 1870s, when the six lots of land, forming part of the Drax Estate, were sold off, that the road was built along Copse Hill and still in modern times today stand just west of Christchurch. At Number 11 a Clayfield built in 1862 and designed by Francis Crumpton-Penrose distinguished architect and Surveyor of the fabric of St. Paul’s Cathedral, he lived there until his death in 1955. Its neighbour Caledon, is another of the earliest dwellings to be built along Copse Hill. It was completed some five years earlier in 1857.

ORIGINS AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SURROUNDING AREA

The Wood Road conservation area is surrounded on the west, east and south by semi-rural to suburban. Records indicate that from 1700 until the 1870s, the land changed ownership a number of times. It was during the 1870s, when the six lots of land, forming part of the Drax Estate, were sold off, that the road was built along Copse Hill and still in modern times today stand just west of Christchurch. At Number 11 a Clayfield built in 1862 and designed by Francis Crumpton-Penrose distinguished architect and Surveyor of the fabric of St. Paul’s Cathedral, he lived there until his death in 1955. Its neighbour Caledon, is another of the earliest dwellings to be built along Copse Hill. It was completed some five years earlier in 1857.

ORIGINS AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE WOOL ROAD CONSERVATION AREA

The present Wood Road conservation area which covers an area of approximately 12.7 Hect. [31.5 Acres] occupies part of the area of land located to the north of Copse Hill between Beverley Brook to the west and Wimbledon Common to the east, that was originally known as the Old Deer Park. This land, which was renamed The Warren, remained between Beverley Brook to the west and Wimbledon Common to the east, that was originally known as the Old Deer Park. This land, which was renamed The Warren, remained.

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