

WESTCOOMBE AVENUE CONSERVATION AREA DESIGN GUIDE

merton

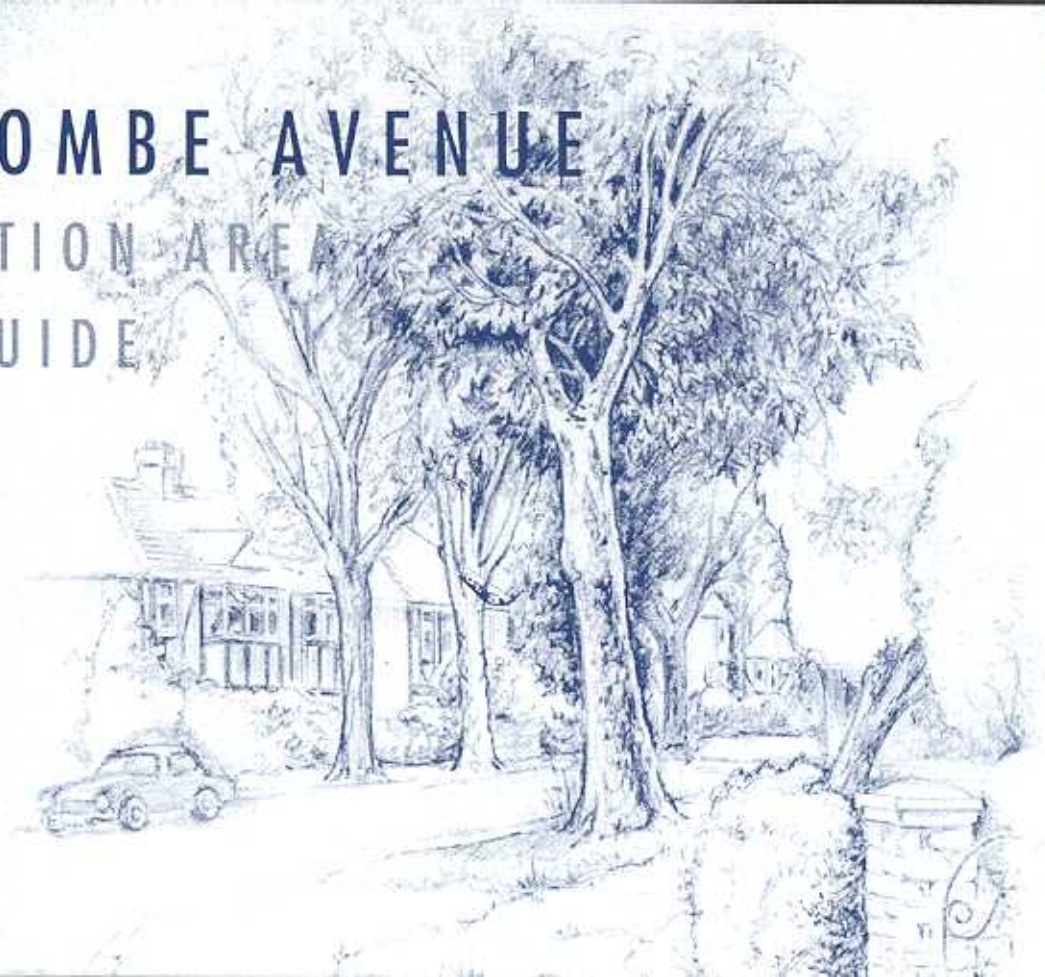
London Borough of

Merton

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This Publication

This is a statement defining the features of interest which warranted the designation of the Westcoombe Avenue as a Conservation Area (CA) in 1990. It also sets out proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the special character of the area, both in terms of design guidance to individual property owners and of enhancement works to publicly controlled areas.

Designed & produced by
The Design Team
Design & Plans
Environmental Services

What is a Conservation Area

A CA is an area, large or small, which possesses a special character which is of sufficient merit to warrant preservation or enhancement. The particular character of CAs does vary greatly, and a wide variety of factors can be taken into consideration in deciding whether or not an area does possess special character. The designation of CAs requires a Local Authority to prepare proposals for their preservation and enhancement. The Council can control many of the changes that would occur in a CA by the way it deals with planning applications or applications for Conservation Area consent. However permitted development rights which householders enjoy do allow certain changes to be made without the need to obtain planning permission. These changes tend to be small scale changes, however cumulatively they can alter the character of an area. This guidance therefore covers not only issues which would require planning permission or CA consent, but also gives design advice on

issues which are allowed as a result of permitted development rights. The designation of a CA also gives some protection to trees, requiring that in most cases prior notification must be given before a tree can be either felled or pruned. If you need advice on whether any change that you wish to make requires permission of any sort from the Council, then you are advised to contact the Merton Civic Centre, a list of contact numbers is given at the end of this leaflet. Construction of the houses in this Conservation Area was started in 1935, and was completed a few years later. Street trees in the area were probably planted at the same time. The wider area was also largely developed during this period. Since that time two newer houses have been built in the Conservation Area, and one newer house immediately outside the boundary of the CA. These dwellings have been fitted into plots formed by the subdivision of the larger gardens.



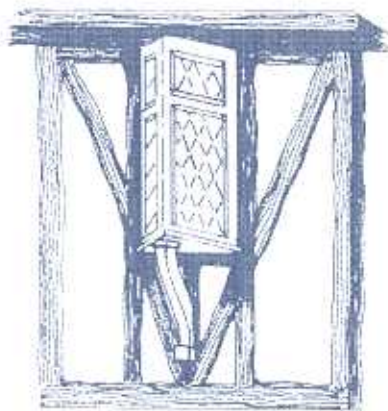
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Historical & Architectural Elements

The principal architectural elements which give a special character to the area are the uniformity of design of the dwellings. This architectural uniformity gives the area a strong sense of coherence, and distinguishes it from surrounding residential areas. The houses are typical of the better speculative suburban housing developments of the inter war period, and because they have for the most part retained intact the main features which contribute to this character they are considered to be justify their status as a CA.

All but two of the houses in the CA were built within a very short period of time in the inter war period. House designs follow two basic patterns, here referred to as Dwelling Types A and B. There is a minor variation of one of these dwelling types in terms of the materials used. Details of the architectural features and materials are dealt with more fully elsewhere. There are no Statutory or Locally Listed Buildings in the CA.



The regular rhythm of semi detached dwelling frontages and spaces between dwellings is a feature particularly in the southern part of the CA. In the northwestern part of the area the relationship of one dwelling to its neighbour is different, with a staggered arrangement where each dwelling is angled relative to the road line. This issue is also dealt with more fully below.

The CA is not included within a defined Archaeological Priority Zone, and it is unlikely that features of archaeological interest would be found here.

Justification of the Boundary

The boundary line for the CA is easy to justify. It includes all of the dwellings which were built to these particular two designs, and but for the two recent infill dwellings, it excludes all other dwelling styles. The western boundary is formed by the Beverley Brook, which here forms the boundary of the London Borough of Merton.

Streets & Spaces

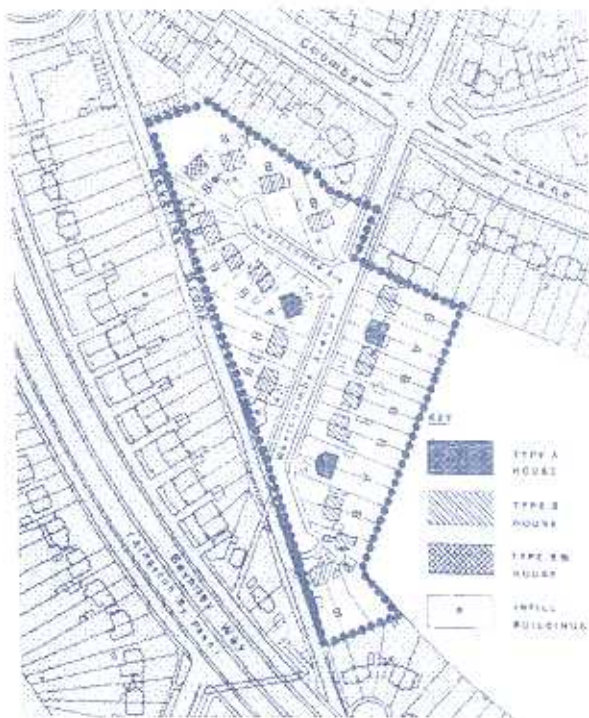
The CA is formed by two short cul de sac streets, both given the name of Westcoombe Avenue. Houses front both sides of these streets, in one case at an angle to the line of the road, and in the other mainly facing squarely towards the road. Houses are built in a staggered pattern surrounding the ends of both of the streets.

At one point the street lies adjacent to the Beverley Brook, which allows a view of the stream. Two footpaths provide pedestrian links from Westcoombe Avenue to the south and southwest, towards the Beverley Way dual carriageway, one of these crossing the Beverley Brook. Access beyond the dual carriageway is possible by means of an underpass.

In the central part of the CA there are grassed verges, approximately 1.5 metres wide, interrupted by vehicle crossovers. Elsewhere pavement areas are narrower, and there is insufficient space to provide a wide verge. Here a narrower band of

bitmac is used between the paving slabs and the kerb.

The pavements are surfaced with concrete paving slabs measuring approx 900mm x 600mm and 600mm x 600mm. Broad granite kerbstones are used in most of the area.



Building Design

As already mentioned there are, apart from the subsequent infill developments, just two building types in the CA, these are referred to as dwelling types A and B. The group value of these buildings is a factor which contributes to the character of the CA. Both types are two storey semi detached dwellings.

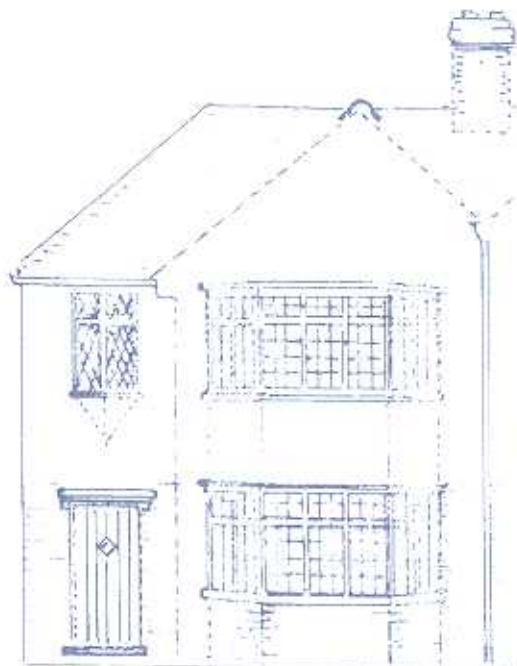
Dwelling type A, of which there are six in the area, has the following principle features of interest.

- ☞ a deep two storey bay window with a flat roof
- ☞ an oriel window at first floor level, above the front door
- ☞ an offset gable feature above the bay window
- ☞ a hipped roof
- ☞ a simple unenclosed porch, supported on brackets
- ☞ a staircase window on the side elevation
- ☞ a chimney positioned at the party wall

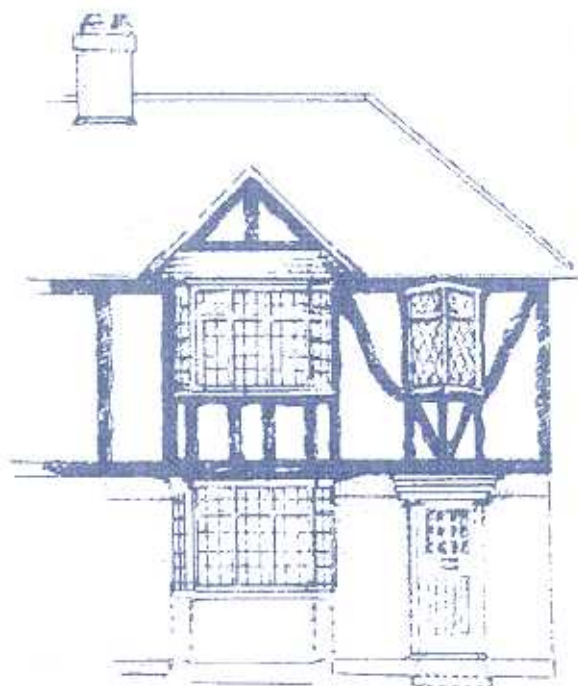
Materials used in dwelling type A:

- ☞ the ground floor elevation uses a red/blue multi brick
- ☞ flemish bond is used for the brickwork
- ☞ the first floor level uses a white painted render
- ☞ the roof is of red/

Dwelling type A



- ☞ brown plain tile
- ☞ windows frames are of timber
- ☞ leaded glazing to windows, diamond pattern at oriel windows, and vertical/horizontal pattern at bay windows
- ☞ and coloured glazing in the staircase window.



Dwelling type B

Dwelling type B, of which there are 31 in the area, has the following features of interest. (NB one of these dwellings is a detached house, but it follows the same style as the others)

- ☞ a shallow two storey bay window with a half gable roof over ☞ an oriel window at first floor level, above the front door
- ☞ a hipped roof ☞ a simple unenclosed porch, supported on brackets
- ☞ a staircase window on the side elevation
- ☞ a chimney positioned at the party wall

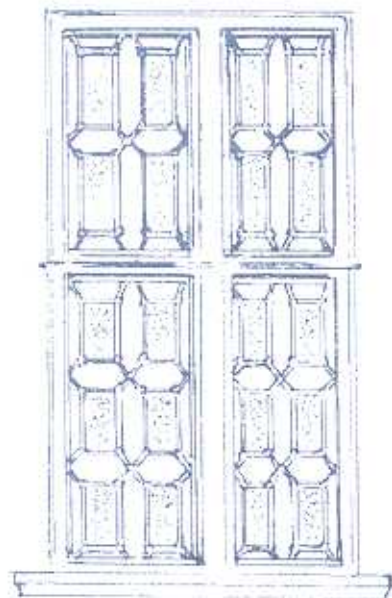
Materials used in dwelling type B

the ground floor elevation uses a red/blue multi brick

- ☞ flemish bond is used for the brickwork
- ☞ the first floor level and the half gable uses white render with strong "mock Tudor" generally black timberframe decorative features
- ☞ the roof is of red/brown plain tile
- ☞ window frames are of timber
- ☞ leaded glazing to windows, diamond pattern at oriel windows, and vertical/horizontal pattern at bay windows
- ☞ coloured glazing in the staircase window.

A pair of semi detached dwellings display a slight variation on the general design used for dwelling type B. These are at 16/18 Westcoombe Avenue. Here the "mock Tudor" timber decoration is missing, and there is tilehanging between the ground and first floor bay windows. The two subsequent infill buildings do not closely copy the design of either dwelling type A or B, but nevertheless fit into the street scene satisfactorily. One of them clearly attempts to echo some of the features and materials of dwelling type B but uses a more modern overall design.

The Character of Spaces



The general density of development in this area is relatively low by today's standards, but is typical of developments of the better quality suburban housing development in the inter war period. The massing of the buildings and the spaces between them set up a rhythm which is important to the character of the street scene.

In the central part of the Conservation Area the houses are built in line, and parallel to the road. Here a pattern is established of 11 metre dwelling frontages with 5 metre spaces between. In many cases garages have been built between the pairs of semis, however the rhythm is largely intact because of the spaces being kept at first floor level. Fairly generous front gardens and a wide street create a 34 metre wide space between dwellings facing one another across the street.

At the two corners which are formed at the junction of the two arms of Westcoombe Ave, the pairs of semis are

built at an angle to face towards the junction. This slightly formal and symmetrical arrangement provides for even longer front gardens with more planting potential and makes the side elevations of these dwellings more prominently visible from the street. At the ends of the two culs de sac, the dwellings are arranged at an angle to the road line, and they are also laid out in a staggered arrangement.

The orientation of one pair of semis to its neighbour tends to vary. This pattern creates a much more irregular street scene, it also allows for longer front gardens with more planting potential. At the southern end of the Conservation Area, Westcoombe Avenue lies adjacent to the Beverley Brook. Here there are no dwelling frontages to contain the public space on the western side of the street, and there is as a result a view through trees towards the backs of dwellings in Beverley Way.

TRANSLATION SERVICE

अगर इस प्रकाशन की जाय अपनी ही भाषा में समझने की जरूरत महसूस करते हैं तो कृपया मर्टन ट्रांसलेशन सर्विसेज़, 9वीं मंजिल, मर्टन सिविक सेंटर के साथ संपर्क कीजिए।
फोन: 0181 545 3397.

यदि এই বুকলেটটা আপনার নিজের ভাষায় বোঝার দরকার হয় তাহলে দয়া করে যোগাযোগ করুন : মার্টন ট্রান্সলেশান্ সার্ভিস, মার্টন সিভিক সেন্টার, ৯ তলা
টেলি : 0181 545 3397

如果您需要中文譯本，請聯絡設在市政中心九樓的美敦翻譯服務處。

電話 : 0181 545 3397

आ प्रकाशनने, तमारी भाषामां समझवामां सहायता जोईजे ती, कृपया करी संपर्क करीओ: मर्टन ट्रांसलेशन सर्विसेस, मर्टन सिविक सेंटरना लयमे भाओ, फोन : 0181 545 3397

If you need to understand this publication in your own language, please contact Merton Translation Service, 9th Floor, Merton Civic Centre.

Tel: 0181 545 3397.

உங்களுக்கு இந்தப் பிரசுரத்தை உங்கள் சொந்த மொழியில் விளங்கிக் கொள்ளத் தேவை யெனில், தயவு செய்து மேட்டன் மொழி பெயர்ப்புச் சேவைகள், 9வது மாடி, மேட்டன் சிவிக் சென்டர், தொலைபேசி 0181 545 3397 உடன் தொடர்புக் கொள்ளவும்.

اگر آپ اس اشاعت (پبلیکیشن) کو اپنی زبان میں سمجھنا چاہتے ہیں تو براہ مہربانی مرن ٹرانسلیشن سروسز، نوین منزل، مرن سوسائٹی سینٹر سے فون نمبر 0181 545 3397 پر رابطہ قائم کیجیے۔

ਜੇ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਨੂੰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਹੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਸਮਝਣ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਮਰਟਨ ਟ੍ਰਾਂਸਲੇਸ਼ਨ ਸਰਵਿਸਜ਼, 9ਵੀਂ ਮੰਜਿਲ, ਮਰਟਨ ਸਿਵਿਕ ਸੈਂਟਰ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰੋ। ਫੋਨ: 0181 545 3397.





Trees



The area is notable for the very fine street trees planted in the highway verges in the central part of the CA. There are a variety of tree species, including chestnut, plane, lime, maple, sycamore and ash. These trees, having probably been planted when the area was first laid out in 1935, have now reached maturity, and have

attained a considerable height and spread. They can easily be seen from outside the Conservation Area. The above average sized front gardens have allowed for the growth of important vegetation in these areas, even allowing for space given over to driveways and car parking spaces.

Front Boundary Treatment

Though there have been many changes to the front boundary fencing over the years, enough remains to get an idea of the original treatment used when the area was first developed. The typical arrangement appears to have been a low stained wood fence which combined a solid boarded lower section, with a variety of latticed designs to make up the upper half. Stained wooden posts are used for supports.



NEGATIVE FEATURES

In recent years there have been several changes made in the area which have adversely affected the character of the area. Most notable of these have been the roof and side extensions which have been carried out to some of the houses. Roof extensions have included the replacement of a hipped roof with a gable, which diminishes the architectural coherence of the street scene, and affects the rhythm of building skylines.

Both single storey and two storey side extensions have generally not observed any setback from the front elevation line, which has disrupted the rhythm and proportions of the buildings and spaces, with harmful effect to the street scene.

There have been a considerable number of minor changes to doors and windows, where replacements have used designs and materials which are inappropriate to the character of the area as a whole.

These include new double glazing with aluminium or UPVC frames, or loss of

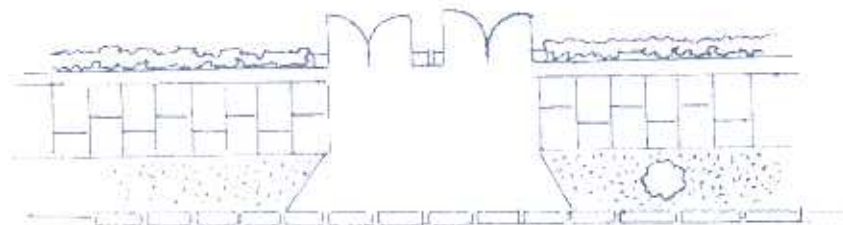
leaded lights, and new doors which do not follow the original designs used.

The original open sided porches have also been replaced or enclosed in some cases. This diminishes the original character of the houses, and adversely affects the character of the area.

Where the street and footpath adjoins the Beverley Brook, there is a plastic coated chain link fence. This boundary treatment is inappropriate to the character of the area. The banks of the Brook itself are formed by concrete walls, and they have a very artificial appearance.

In places the grass verges are subject to encroachment from motor vehicles. This

results in the grass being killed, and tyre marks across the verge.



Crossovers

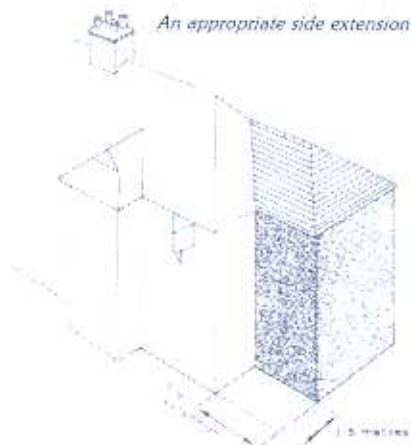
New Buildings

There are two examples of infill development where a new house has been built on a subdivided garden plot. A further example exists immediately outside the CA. There is no further scope for any further developments of this kind. Spaces between buildings are an integral part of the character of the CA, and erosion of those spaces with further infill development would inevitably be damaging to the special character of the area.

Side Extensions

Many of the houses in the area have had side extensions added. This may take the form of added garages or the addition of single or two storey extensions. Some of these extensions have resulted in a reduction of the character of the area.

Future extensions, whether single storey or two storey, should be set at least 1.5 metres behind the front facade of the



original building (excluding the line of the projecting bay windows). This setback is needed in order to maintain the visual separation of the dwellings one from another, and thus protect the rhythm of buildings and spaces along the street frontage. Such extensions should also keep the existing pattern of hipped roof,

which is typical of the area. Materials used for such extensions should be similar to those used in the original building.

In some cases the angle of the building, relative to the line of the road, means that the side elevation of the building is prominently seen from the street. In these cases particular care is needed in the design of the side elevation of such extensions. Here the re-use of the original staircase window, with its original coloured glazing is recommended. The same setback of 1.5 metres from the front facade of the building should be provided.

Roof Extensions

The typical hipped roof pattern used in these houses limits the extent of usable area within the roofspace. The hipped roof style should however not be

Roofing works



>>> *roof extensions*

changed as this is an integral part of the character of the area, and it contributes to the regular and uniform rhythm of the building mass along the street. Any extension into the roofspace should not therefore convert the hipped roof into a gabled roof, nor should it involve dormer

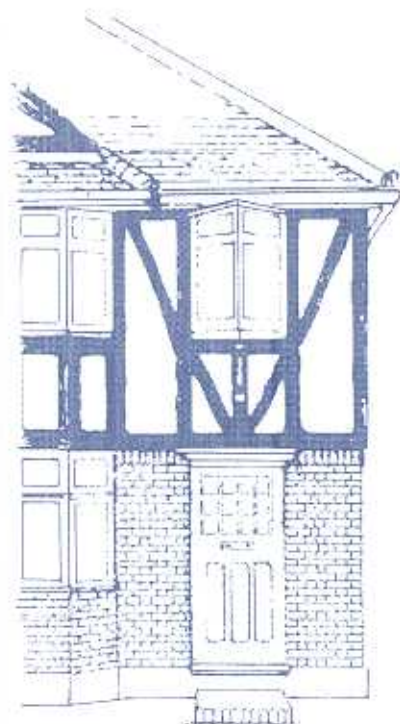
windows on the front or side roof slopes. Velux windows, where the glazing is in the same plane as the plane of the roof, may be acceptable on the front roof slope. Any roofing work should ensure that tiles of similar size, colour and profile are used to those typical of the area as a whole.

Painting of Exterior Brickwork

Where the original exterior surface of the walls is rendered, then it is typical of the area that this should be painted in white. Where the original exterior surface of the walls are of brick, then it is much better to leave them unpainted.

Painting or cladding of any kind of the exposed brickwork is damaging to the character of both the dwelling and the

area as a whole. Removing paint applied to the exterior surface of a brick wall can often be done, however it is an expensive job, and if it is not done correctly then there may be damage to the bricks. It is advisable to carry out a small sample of paint removal before finally deciding to do this work.



A typical house with original external finishes

Replacement of Doors & Windows

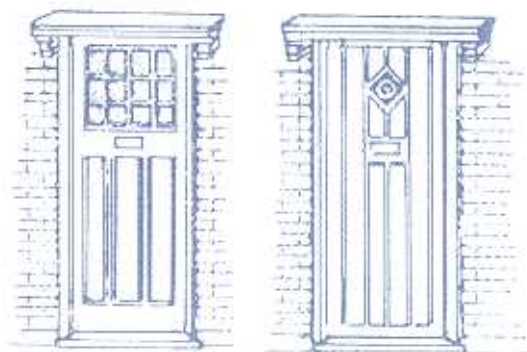
Several of the original front doors and windows in the area have been replaced using new materials, and using different designs.

The best solution for the replacement of doors and windows is to replicate the original designs using wood. In particular the original front doors, which in this area, follow one of two basic designs typical of the interwar period, are very attractively detailed. Their detailed design considerably enhances the character of the CA. Insensitive changes to either doors or windows can damage the special character of the property and can cumulatively detract from the character of the CA as a whole.

Insensitive changes to the windows may involve the use of inappropriate materials, such as aluminium or UPVC, or may involve the use of differently proportioned glazing bars, or a different pattern of glazing bars.

In order to achieve a scheme for replacing windows which is harmonious

with the character of the building, it is necessary to carefully design the replacement window so that the glazing bar pattern, thickness, profile and colour closely matches that of the original windows. Provision of leaded lights in new front windows would also help to ensure that the character of the new windows matched that of the old ones. Insensitive changes to doors may also involve the use of inappropriate materials, again such as UPVC or hardwood, or they may involve the use of a different, often standard, door design. Where the woodwork of original doors and windows has become defective, it should wherever possible be patched and repaired rather than replaced.



Original door & window designs.

Porches

The original design of porches in this area is a simple small unenclosed porch with a flat roof supported on two brackets. In a few cases enclosed porches have been built in place of the originals. Such changes do adversely affect the character of the building, and cumulatively, do impair the character of the area. The porches should therefore be left in their unenclosed form, and changes should be confined to such simple repair work as may prove necessary.

Other Details

Guttering and downpipes are traditionally made of cast iron in properties of the inter war period. Traditionally they are painted in black, and conforming to this colour strengthens the sense of coherence of the area. Any additional downpipes would be best located at the rear of the property.

Satellite dishes should wherever possible be sited at the rear of properties, out of sight of the public street. If this is not possible, then they should be sited in such a position as to be as inconspicuous as possible. They should not, for example break the skyline, nor should they be located above the eaves level. In certain circumstances planning permission will be required for the installation of a satellite dish. Anyone considering installing a dish is therefore advised to contact the Environmental Services Dept for guidance.

Burglar alarms are another minor detail, where positioning is important to the appearance of the house.

Trees

If consideration is given to either the felling or pruning of a tree within the CA, then it is likely that formal notice will

need to be given to the Council before any work is carried out. Anyone contemplating such work is therefore advised to contact the Environmental Services Dept for guidance.



GENERAL MAINTENANCE OF PROPERTIES

The Westcoombe Avenue area has been designated as a Conservation Area on the basis of the special character which it is thought to possess.

The area is generally made up of houses built to a standard size and design, and using standard materials and detailing features. This homogeneity is an important element in the general character of the area. The features which give it that special character have been set out in sections 2 to 5 above. Minor changes to individual houses may not seem much in themselves, but they can cumulatively seriously affect the character of the area as a whole.

When considering repair or maintenance work, or small extensions to a house it is therefore important to carefully consider the possible effect that such changes, whether large or small, may have on the individual building, and on the area in general.

You are therefore recommended to repair and restore original features

wherever possible, in preference to replacing or removing them. If repairs are necessary, then traditional materials are to be preferred to their more modern equivalents.

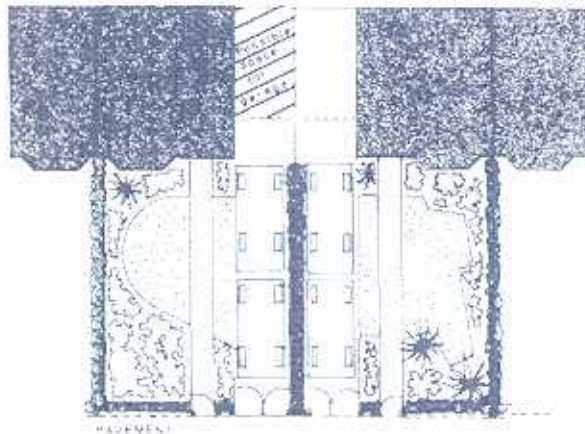
Any extensions to houses should respect the character of the street in general, following the massing, proportions and materials used in the original buildings. Any changes to the front boundary treatment should as far as possible follow the original style used in this area. Front gardens should retain as far as possible the areas of planting and landscaping, avoiding larger hardstanding areas for cars.

Properties which lie within a Conservation Area are subject to more planning restrictions than those outside such areas. These restrictions are applied in order to try to preserve and enhance the character of the area. They are not used to prevent changes and improvements to buildings, but they do

try to ensure that any changes which are carried out do not harm the area's special character. Careful conservation of an area can increase the value of a property, as well as improving the local environment.

The Council's Environmental Services Dept can offer more detailed advice and guidance to assist anyone who is considering making changes to a property in the area.

Front gardens.

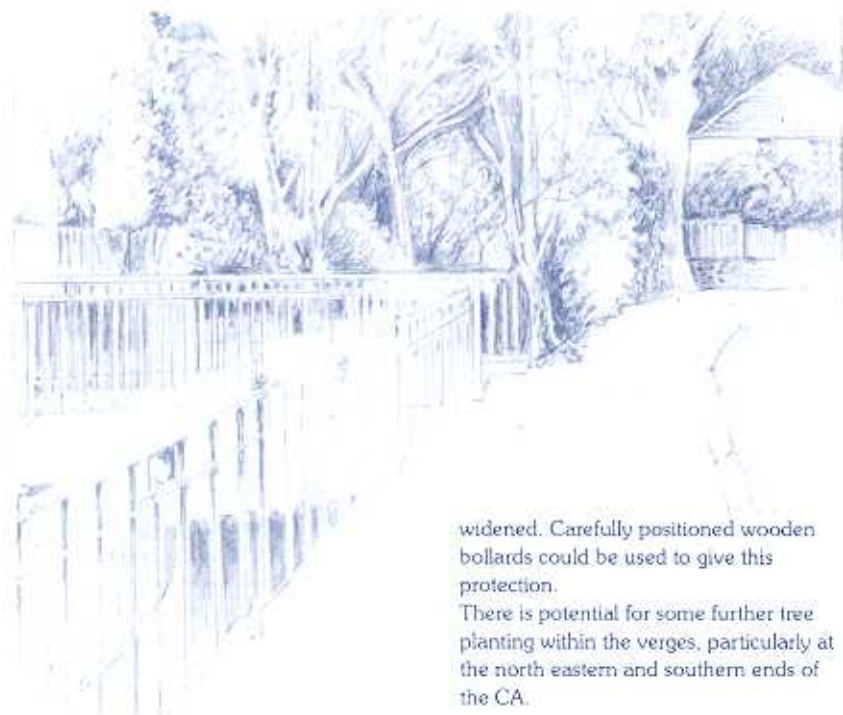


AREA ENHANCEMENT

The Council's plan for the enhancement and conservation of the area will to a large extent be fulfilled by the production and operation of the Guidance Note for this area. There are however a number of schemes on publicly controlled land which can further enhance the area's special character. These are dealt with below.

The most important enhancement project for the area is to replace the chainlink fencing, which separates the street and the footpath, from the Beveley Brook, with metal railings of a design which is appropriate to the inter war period of the area.

Suitably designed protection for the grassed verges is required to prevent vehicles from cutting them up is required. The damage seems to occur mainly where the pavement crossover is narrower than the width of the drive within the front garden area. This is particularly evident in a number of cases where driveways appear to have been



The footpath adjacent to Beveley Brook

widened. Carefully positioned wooden bollards could be used to give this protection.

There is potential for some further tree planting within the verges, particularly at the north eastern and southern ends of the CA.

FURTHER ADVICE

If you require further advice on any issues dealt with in this leaflet, then please contact the Environmental Services Department at Merton Civic Centre, London Rd, Morden SM4 5DX.

Useful Telephone Numbers

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Forms to apply for planning permission or Conservation Area consent | 0181 545 3833 |
| Forms to apply for permission for a footway crossover | 0181 545 3141 |
| To discuss matters relating to trees in the street or on private land, and to discuss Tree Preservation Orders | 0181 545 3815 |
| To find out if you need to apply for planning permission or for Conservation Area Consent | 0181 545 3117 |
| To discuss other detailed design issues | 0181 545 3074 |





*DESIGN & PLANS
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
APRIL 1995*

