

Town Planning Committee (19.11.84) TP 13J/84-85

PROPOSED EXTENSION TO THE VAUXHALL CONSERVATION AREA (NO 32)

Report by DTPED in consultation with DALs and DHP.

SUMMARY

This report recommends that a new area, comprising Bonnington Square and Vauxhall Grove and the block between Vauxhall Grove and Langley Lane, be designated as an extension to the Vauxhall Conservation Area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) That the Committee approves the designation of the Bonnington Square/Vauxhall Grove extension to the Vauxhall Conservation Area, as shown on the plan No. OD 61.1 under Section 277(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1971.

(2) That the Director of Administration and Legal Services be authorised to advertise the above designation and to notify the Secretary of State in accordance with the provisions of Section 277(6) and (7) of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1971.

For consideration

1. Policy considerations

1.1 In March, 1981 the Town Planning Committee (TP 298/81-82) approved the 'Strategy for the Designation of new Conservation Areas'. The proposed area was not considered in the strategy paper as of conservation potential because it was zoned for education use in the Lambeth Development Plan 1981 and the site was safeguarded for ILEA's programmed extension to the Lilian Bayliss School. It is probable that but for this proposed extension and the consequent zoning the area would have been considered as of conservation potential. In July 1983 ILEA resolved that the land was no longer required, with the exception of Nos 46 and 82-85 Bonnington Square. In September 1983 the Town Planning Committee (TP 63/83-84) adopted a recommendation that the owners/occupiers of the properties affected should be notified of the change.

1.2 The Bonnington Square and Vauxhall Grove area was in the now defunct Vauxhall Mixed Use Area. The proposals for this area included an investigation into its Conservation Area potential, and preliminary work indicated that this status would be beneficial.

1.3 Conservation Areas represent an important part of Lambeth's policy for achieving a good urban environment. The GLDP contains no specific policies relating to the selection or designation of such areas, but Lambeth's attitude towards conservation over the last 10 years has been to take a broad approach to the care of the historic townscape, in line with the growth in public interest in conserving existing communities and the social fabric. Conservation Area status is given to areas of special architectural or historic interest where the Council feels it desirable to preserve or enhance the character or appearance. This is achieved mainly by controls on demolition and development.

1.4 Review of policy in 1983 on Conservation Areas reaffirms the need to enhance the existing areas and to consider the designation of new areas. Designation of Conservation Areas is set out in Policy Statement ULI in the 1981 Development Plan, which identifies 19th Century residential estates, many of which illustrate the historic movement of the middle and lower income groups from London outwards. The designation of the Bonnington Square/Vauxhall Grove area would be consistent with the aims and policies of the Council, as set out in the 1981 Development Plan and 1983 Development Plan Review.

1.5 Part of the southern area of the existing Vauxhall and Waterloo Conservation Area and part of the western edge of the proposed Conservation Area extension were designated as an extension to the Vauxhall Industrial 6 Commercial Improvement Area by Town Planning Committee on 26.3.B4 (TP 24 83/84).

2. Financial considerations, Race Relations and Equal Opportunities considerations- None.

3. Staffing and Accommodation considerations

3.1 The extension of the Conservation Area will involve additional work within DTPED and DALs. It is considered that there are sufficient staff in post to undertake the additional work which may arise.

4. Legal considerations

Section 277(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1971 (as amended by the Town and Country Amenities Act 1974) states that:

“Every local planning authority shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance and shall designate such areas as conservation areas”

Sub sections (6), (7) and (9) refer to the provisions for notifying the Secretary of State, advertising and registering the designation of such areas respectively.

5. Detailed considerations

5.1 Bonnington Square and Vauxhall Grove are built on land which was part of the Hawbey Estate, which included much of the Manor of Kennington. From the mid 19th Century building leases were granted for various parcels of the estate, although the 1871 map of the area shows Vauxhall Grove was then a lane called 'The Grove', lined with cottages, and leading to gardens, the boundary of which matches the present boundary of this smaller square. Bonnington Square was a nursery garden at the end of Langley Lane, with a house called 'The Vinery'. This detached house, now called 'Vine Lodge', remains today at the entrance to Bonnington square.

5.2 Both Bonnington square and Vauxhall Grove were developed in 1881 within the boundaries of the gardens and nursery. Access was created between the plots and also provided on to Harleyford Road to supplement the existing narrow lanes.

5.3 The houses are built on three storeys with similar rear additions mainly constructed of London stock brick under slate roofs. The lower window lintels and the door arches are embellished with Coade stone, some cast with vine leaves and grapes which may recall former growing of grapes for wine vinegar in the nursery garden.

5.4 Private space around the houses is very restricted, both at the front and rear. There are, at present, two small open sites in Bonnington Square where buildings have been demolished which are being used by the residents; the larger as a playground and the smaller as a community garden. The original layout of the area has resulted in high population density and inadequate provision of natural light and ventilation.

5.5 The area has suffered in recent years from physical decay while being safeguarded for the programmed ILEX extension. ILEA have been acquiring properties for this extension, but in both ILEA and other properties maintenance and repair works have been minimal. As a result many of the buildings are in poor physical condition and some lack the basic amenities.

5.6 The long term future of the area has been the subject of a number of discussions within the Council and with GLC, and local residents. The Conservation Area designation would allow studies to be carried

out to assess the impact of demolition of the most seriously deficient properties, creation of new public open space, and the conservation and restoration of the remaining houses. Additional potential benefits of Conservation Area status will be the availability of DoE finance for restoration work and additional powers to control demolition and new development.

5.7 Nos 27-29 South Lambeth Road is the headquarters of the British Interplanetary Society. No 29 is a Grade II Listed Building. No 32 Vauxhall Grove is also a Grade II Listed Building.

5.8 This study and report has been made following an exercise carried out by the Conservation Option group at the 1983 BSc (Estate Management) Hons 4th Year from the Polytechnic of the South Bank. This Group identified the area as worthy of conservation area status, and recommended it for consideration to the Council.

6. Tenure

The proposed extension to the Conservation Area comprises about 130 properties, many of which are believed to be in multiple occupation. At least 90 properties are owned by ILEA or the GLC. About 4 units are occupied either by sitting tenants or occupational licensees. Some of the remaining properties are occupied by unlicensed squatters.