

Review of Conservation Areas & their boundaries

Review No. 9 - Proposed Mitre Road & Ufford Street Conservation Area (CA No. 51)

(Bishops Ward)

Report by the Director of Environmental Services

Consulted Formally: CEO, B.Sol,

Authorised for submission by: Tony Hall, Acting Director of Environmental Services

Contact for enquiries: Edmund Bird - Conservation Officer (tel: 0171 926 7182)

PURPOSE

To designate the Mitre Road & Ufford Street Conservation Area (No.51)

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) That the Committee approves the designation of the Mitre Road & Ufford Street Conservation Area, under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as shown on Plan No. DES/PP/418.

(2) That the Committee approves the detailed boundary of the area as shown on Plan No. DES/PP/418.

For decision

1. Context

1.1 The function of the planning system is to regulate development and use of land in the public interest. The best of the Borough's built and landscaped environment can be valued and protected as part of this regulation through the designation of new conservation areas or the extension of existing ones. The enduring quality of these areas adds to the quality of life of the residents by protecting and enhancing the local scene and sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness and civic pride.

1.2 Conservation areas are currently being reviewed by the Council, in accordance with guidance contained within Planning Policy Guidance (PPG15) (sec. 4.3) issued by the Department of National Heritage and the Department of the Environment in September 1994, and Conservation Area Practice issued by English Heritage in October 1995. The importance of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of areas of historic or architectural interest and setting high standards of design for new development in and around these areas is also a key policy contained within the Deposit Draft Unitary Development Plan. Policy C1 states

that the Council will consider whether Conservation Areas should be extended or new ones designated in areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which is desirable to preserve or enhance.

1.3 A strategy for the review of existing conservation areas and the designation of new conservation areas was approved by the Environmental Services Committee on the 21st July 1997 (Ref. ES 55/97-98). This report identified three approaches for implementing this review: development pressures, pressure from local residents and a geographical basis starting with conservation areas in the north of the borough. Three conservation areas in the north team have already been reviewed and extended (Lambeth Palace, Kennington and Albert Square), but this and the proposed Lambeth Walk & China Walk Conservation Area would be the first new conservation areas in the north of the borough for over 13 years (the most recent being Renfrew Road in 1985) as the eight new conservation areas designated since 1985 have mainly been located in Streatham, Norwood and Brixton.

1.4 The designation of the Mitre Road and Ufford Street Conservation Area has been an aspiration of the Council for many years - the proposal is contained within the Deposit Lambeth UDP issued in 1992 (Policy C2: Potential Conservation Areas).

1.5 A detailed assessment of the Mitre Road and Ufford Street area has now been completed in accordance with the guidance referred to above. This guidance is concerned with the quality of existing buildings within/adjacent to the conservation area, the mix of uses, characteristic materials, vistas along streets and between buildings and the importance of landscaped areas. This Conservation Area consists of only two streets (Mitre Road and Ufford Street) and four properties on a third road (Webber Street) and would therefore be one of the smallest conservation areas in Lambeth.

2. Description of the proposed Mitre Road & Ufford Street Conservation Area

2.1 These streets form a compact estate laid out and still owned by the Church Commissioners, in the mid 1900's. During the Eighteenth Century this site was occupied by a garden and was part of the Lambeth Manor called Chalcroft meadow. The site was built over by Samuel Short, a carpenter whose name is still commemorated by Short Street at the end of Mitre Road which forms the borough boundary with Southwark. By 1900 these properties were in need of rebuilding and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who by this time owned the land decided to redevelop the area between Mitre Road, Ufford Street, Webber Street and Short Street. During the next few years this small estate was laid out and has changed little to this day, even down to details such as the universal survival of the original painted timber sash windows and doors and street railings - a credit to the careful management of the Church Commissioners. This has meant

that this group of attractive Edwardian housing has not been spoiled by the often damaging fashions and architectural whims of the later Twentieth Century.

It is also important as it is a good example of the major change in estate planning theory and architectural trends which gathered momentum in the early 1900's with the move away from the more densely developed artisan flats - exemplified by the continuous three storey terraces of Mitre Road, to the lower density garden suburb style cottages on Ufford Street, built soon after Mitre Road. These two parallel streets are therefore an interesting example of the revolution in town planning and social housing advocated by Edwardian reformers such as Raymond Unwin who was developing Letchworth Garden City at the same time.

2.2 This fine example of Edwardian estate planning was developed at the same time as the Hyde Farm Estate north of Tooting Bec Common (designated a Conservation Area in 1996), and serves as an interesting contrast between early Twentieth Century inner city slum clearance and re-housing here in Waterloo, and what was then outer-suburban estate development near Tooting.

2.3 Mitre Road was laid out in c1905. It is a dignified tree lined avenue of three storey apartment buildings of stock brick with white painted lintels over the double hung four-over-four paned timber sash windows. The steeply pitched slate roofs have a traditional eaves construction and are surmounted by prominent chimney stacks of stock brick with red-brick cappings. Substantial rendered porches supported on tapering brackets are set between the two storey square bay windows. The frontages are set back from the street behind simple painted metal railings. The vista at the northern end is closed by the landmark copper roofed clock tower of St Andrew's & St Thomas's Church which was rebuilt in the 1950's in an interesting Scandinavian Modern style (this church lies in the Borough of Southwark). The vista to the south is closed by the arched red-brick bays of the side elevation of the Old Vic Theatre.

2.4 Exactly the same design of flats continues around the corner fronting a short section of Webber Street - immediately to the east of these buildings stands the former London City Mission (now the Waterloo Christian Centre), an attractive mission hall of stock brick with red-brick and stone dressings which also dates back to around the Turn of the Century. It is set back from the street frontage behind spiked railings with stone steps leading up to the former main entrance on the Ufford Street elevation. The properties on the opposite side of Webber Street are not to be included as these consist of the Old Vic (already Grade II* Listed, rendering Conservation Area status as superfluous) and Wellington House (a rather uninspiring 1980's redevelopment behind a Grade II Listed 1920's facade of the former David Greig Head Office).

2.5 The western side of Ufford Street is a continuation of the Mitre Road architectural style of three storey apartment buildings, however it has a very different overall character due to the more

vernacular cottage-style design and scale of the short terraces on the east side and also the green open space laid out as the Ufford Street Recreation Ground in 1907. This public open space was transferred by the Commissioners in 1907 to Lambeth Borough Council who have maintained the playground, lawned areas and fine London plane trees ever since. This open space forms an important central focus for the estate and the proposed conservation area, creating an attractive green interlude in what is a densely built up inner area of the borough.

2.6 The short terraces which line the south side of Ufford Street are in an altogether different architectural idiom - they were built only a few years after the remainder of the estate in c1910 but are of a vernacular cottage-style design. These two storey houses are of stock brick with red brick dressings with the two end dwellings of each terrace of six having a pebble-dashed gable surmounted by a decorative clay finial. The six-over-six paned sash windows are unusually painted black within white painted reveals and cills. The mono pitch tiled porches over the front doors add to the village style charm of the properties. The tiled roofs are divided by substantial parapet upstands which add to the vertical emphasis of the dwellings. These terraces are also set back from the road frontage behind simple painted railings and are further enhanced by particularly well tended window boxes and planters in the small front garden areas, which suggest a great pride held by residents for their neighbourhood.

Summary

This area has been carefully assessed in accordance with the criteria recommended by English Heritage and this small Church Commissioners Estate is considered worthy of Conservation Area status by virtue of its historic and architectural character and its interesting reflection of the changing ideals of philanthropic housing for the working classes in the early Twentieth Century.

3. Public Consultation

Letters of consultation asking for the views of the Church Commissioners and other owners/occupiers of the properties within the proposed Mitre Road and Ufford Street Conservation Area were delivered on 21st & 22nd April 1998. These letters also outlined the type of controls that would apply within a conservation area.

The Church Commissioners have responded to say that "should the properties become a conservation area, the Church Commissioners will continue to care for them to preserve their original character".

A number of residents have responded - one writes that they are 'fully in agreement with the proposal to designate the conservation area and hopes the proposal will be successful', a second writes that they 'are in agreement with the proposal by virtue of the properties being sound, well

built and deserving of the designation', and a third writes to say that the support the proposal with one hesitation concerning the windows which are in poor repair and that the cost of sympathetic replacement may be higher in a conservation area. A fourth resident writes to say she strongly opposes the designation on the grounds that the property would be greatly enhanced by some alterations that a conservation order would block [the nature of the alterations are not specified].

A fifth occupier lends her support to the designation in principle although she does raise the concern that the designation may encourage the Church Commissioners to further raise the two-yearly rent increases. She also draws attention to the volumes of through traffic in peak hours and urges the implementation of a new traffic scheme if the conservation area is approved as well as a ban on the parking of large commercial vehicles. A sixth resident (in Ufford St) writes to say they "are in complete agreement with making the area a conservation area". They also refer to the need to slow down the traffic and reduce pollution, going on to say "as long as the idea does not restrict the Commissioners from doing necessary repairs [Conservation Area Consent is not required for repairs], I am all for it".

English Heritage were given a guided tour of the area on 27th April 1998 and have commented that 'the draft report provides an excellent appraisal of the significance and character of the respective areas, reflecting the advice set out in EH guidance'. They go on to say that the Mitre Road/Ufford Street estate is "an interesting enclave of model housing by a philanthropic landlord (Church Commissioners) which is astonishing in its unaltered state." They also note that they "understand that there are proposals under consideration for replacement of the original timber sash and casement windows by modern double glazed units, which may lead to a diminution of the quality of this area" and that they "have no hesitation, therefore, in supporting this proposed designation, and suggest that an Article 4 Direction be considered as a means of safeguarding the appearance of the area" Response - the need for an Article 4 Direction will be considered by officers and if appropriate should be proceeded with as resources permit.

5 Effects of Designation

Under the Town and Country General Development Order 1995 (the GDO) and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), conservation area designation has a number of practical implications for the area. These are outlined below:

- (i) Designation would take effect on the date of the Committee's resolution to agree to the recommendations in this report.
- (ii) Conservation Area Consent is required to demolish or partially demolish buildings within a conservation area (Section 74 of the Act).
- (iii) Some permitted development rights are restricted within a conservation area, e.g. neither stone cladding, nor roof extensions are allowed without planning permission.
- (iv) Consent for all advertisement hoardings, temporary or permanent, is required.

- (v) The Council must be informed of all works to trees within a conservation area 6 weeks in advance to give time to issue a Tree Preservation Order, if required.
- (vi) The design quality of all new development in a conservation area is important. Planning Policy Guidance: Planning & the Historic Environment (PPG15) and Section 72 of the Act state that all development is required to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. PPG15 goes on to state that new buildings should respect their context, as part of a larger whole which has a well established character and appearance of its own.
- (vii) The council has the power to make a direction withdrawing certain other permitted development rights.

6. Procedure After Designation

Following Committee approval of the report a number of actions would be undertaken:

- (i) All owners of properties within the area designated as a conservation area would be informed in writing of the designation, which would also be advertised in the local press and the London Gazette.
- (ii) English Heritage and the Borough Land Charges section would be notified of the decision.
- (iii) The production of a character statement and design guidance for the whole of the extended conservation area would be reported to Committee for approval as resources permit.

7. Legal Powers and Advice

7.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 gives the Council power to declare a new conservation area or extend an existing one. Section 69 (2) states that:

“It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas; and if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly”.

7.2 Section 69 (4) states that:

“The designation of any area as a conservation area shall be a local land charge”.

7.3 Section 70 (5) of the Act states that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) should publish notice of any designation, variation or cancellation with particulars of its effect, in the London Gazette, and in at least one newspaper circulating in the area of the LPA.

7.4 Section 71(1-3) of the Act identify future duties on the Council associated with a designation, stating:

- “(1) It shall be the duty of a LPA from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation area.*
- (2) Proposals under this section shall be submitted for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate.*
- (3) The LPA shall have regard to any views concerning the proposals expressed by persons attending the meeting.”*

8. Environmental Implications

The designation of the Mitre Road and Ufford Street Conservation Area provides the Council with additional development control powers to protect and enhance this small area, it also places a duty on the Council to include this area within a plan outlining the aims of preserving and enhancing the conservation area as a whole.

9. Financial Implications

Approval of the recommendations will result in the expenditure of approx. £150 for advertising the designation in the South London Press and the London Gazette - the requisite budget is held by the Planning Division Business Unit.

10. Staffing & Accommodation Implications

There are no staffing implications as a direct result of this report. The designation of this new conservation area may generate some additional workload for Development Control and Conservation officers, however in this case the virtual mono-ownership of the properties in this area means that this should be minimal. The duty to prepare public design guidance and enhancement schemes is already a part of the conservation team's future work programme.

11. Equal Opportunities

There are no implications for equal opportunities as a direct result of this report, however any improvements to the urban environment gained as a result of the extending the conservation area should benefit all groups in society. Any improvements will of course take into account the needs of people with mobility problems (e.g. traffic calming initiatives).

12. Background Documents

Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1991

Department of the Environment & Department of National Heritage: Planning Policy Guidance (PPG15): Planning & the Historic Environment (September 1994)

English Heritage: Conservation Area Practice (October 1995)

Lambeth's Open Spaces - An historical account Marie P.G. Draper (London Borough of Lambeth 1979)

12. Audit Trail

Committee deadline:22/6/98					
Author: Edmund Bird - Conservation Officer					
Date drafted: 10th April 1997					
<u>Consultation with other Officers/Directorates</u>					
Date	Name	Directorate	Date Received	Date Cleared	Date Returned
16/4/98	P. Davies	EDFCS			
16/4/98	M. Dickens	B SOL	16/4/98	16/4/98	16/4/98
16/4/98	P. Hart	CEO	17/4/98	17/4/98	17/4/98
16/4/98	H. Mills	EDHS			
Date sent to Committee Secretariat:					
Date received by Committee Secretariat					
Date sent to Councillors:					