

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LAMBETH
CONSERVATION & URBAN DESIGN OFFICER REPORT**

Review of Existing Conservation Areas and their boundaries and the designation of new and extended Conservation Areas: Proposed Vauxhall Gardens Conservation Area (CA No. 56)

Vauxhall Gardens Conservation Area: Designation report and character assessment.

Introduction

This proposal aims to afford protection to a distinctive neighbourhood in recognition of its characterful working class origins which represents one of the few remaining such districts in the borough to survive the Blitz, post war clearances and redevelopment and more recent gentrification, complementing the only other conservation area in Lambeth which is of a similar working-class character - the adjoining Lambeth Walk and China Walk conservation area. Although a little run down, the area benefits from proximity to the River, the survival of associated local traditional character and a reasonable number of attractive industrial buildings. A revival in the commercial fortunes of the area may therefore be expected over the next 20 years. Conservation Area designation can assist the careful management of change to ensure the traditional character which is the driving force behind the urban renaissance is preserved and enhanced.

Policy Committee 26/11/01

Princes and Bishops Wards

Report by the Director of Policy.

Consulted: Borough Solicitor, Director of Housing, Director of Education, English Heritage, All Ward members, Ali planning committee members, Vauxhall Society, local residents and commercial occupiers.

Authorised for submission by: Peter Holland - Planning Services Manager

Contact for enquiries: Steve Gould - Senior Conservation Officer (tel: 020 7926 1231)

PURPOSE: To designate the Vauxhall Gardens Conservation Area (CA No. 56).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Policy Committee designates the Vauxhall Gardens Conservation Area (CA 56) as shown on Plans No. DES/PP/522.
- (2) That the Policy Committee approves the detailed boundary of the newly designated area as shown on Plans No. DES/PP/522

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. Existing Conservation Areas and their boundaries are currently being reviewed by the Council, in accordance with 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 Unitary Development Plan. Policy CD1 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.
- 1.2** The following appraisal of the character and appearance of the proposed Conservation Area has had regard to the latest advice contained in English Heritage (EH) Guidance Notes "Conservation Area Appraisals" issued March 1997. This standard is supported by PPG 15 Planning and the Historic Environment and is appropriate in view of Lambeth Council's Conservation Agreement with English Heritage. The EH guidance identifies the importance of considering a broad range of factors in assessing distinctiveness ~ not just the quality and interest of the area's historic buildings. In particular the guidance identifies a checklist of items against which to assess potential significance. This includes the following 13 items; location and population, origins and development, prevailing or former uses, archaeological significance, architectural and historic qualities of buildings, contribution made by key unlisted buildings, character and relationship of spaces, building materials textures and colours, local details, green spaces, setting, negative factors, and neutral areas.
- 1.3** **Location and origins:** The Vauxhall Gardens proposed Conservation Area lies close to the River Thames as it flows north prior to making its historic turn to the east at Charing Cross. It is located between North Lambeth and Vauxhall. A 1751 perspective shows that at that time the area comprised formal gardens forming the northern edge of the gardens of Vauxhall House. In the late 18th and 19th century the wharfage, industrial and dockside area of Lambeth extended south. The area was then cut off from the river on the west by the construction of the distinctive arches of the South West Railway line running north from Vauxhall to Waterloo. In this respect first the river and then from the 19th century, the railway has been fundamental influences on the development of the area. In this respect the conservation area is similar to nearby similar Conservation Areas to the north (Lambeth Walk and China Walk CA, and Lower Marsh CA) and the Vauxhall Conservation Area to the south.
- 1.4** **Urban development:** The first edition OS map of 1875 (see copy extract attached), shows small rows of terraces in a 19th century grid. Similarity in the avenue layouts between the 19th c map and the 1751 vista suggests this grid followed or respected the lines and grain of the Avenues in the previous houses were built to poor standards on very small plots and appear to have rapidly degenerated. Perhaps the proximity to the industrial riverside depressed the environmental quality of the area. This led to the 20th century interwar clearance and redevelopment of the terraces as good quality London County Council (LCC) housing blocks. However this comprehensive redevelopment preserved important elements of the working class history of this neighbourhood - the Ragged School, the five Victorian and Edwardian pubs, and the larger plots in the Victorian Vauxhall Walk as characterful local landmarks, useful social institutions, and interesting townscape.

- 1.5 Buildings:** The area includes five Victorian Pubs, two housing estates (including shops and amenity space), four road tunnels through the railway arches, Vauxhall School, the Victorian Townscape of Vauxhall Walk, Glasshouse Walk and Tinworth Street (with some recent contextual buildings), the former Ragged School at 22 Newport Street near Black Prince Road. The character of these buildings is reviewed below.
- 1.6 Spaces, views and setting:** The spaces in the local area which contribute character are the small parks, streets and a few interesting former back alleyways and courtyards yards surviving from 19th century development. These act as a reminder of the former character of the area and should be preserved, and their form echoed in new development. Open spaces need and often lack sufficient and consistent boundary enclosure. Semi private open spaces include the school playgrounds, and the housing estate amenity spaces. Views in the area include:
- Victorian streetscapes, and views into courtyards and alleyways
 - Views of buildings, especially the pubs and the "industrial" views of the Victorian warehouse type or similar buildings
 - Views over parks - in particular the view of the ragged school from Pedlars park,
 - Views of and through the railway arches, these retain a powerful Victorian industrial-sublime quality.
- 1.7 Materials:** the predominant building material in this area is brick most commonly yellow stocks with red dressings. The variety of hues expresses the fashions of succeeding building periods. The bricks include:
- yellow stocks in the older and industrial buildings,
 - red brick in the late Victorian and Edwardian housing and pubs, often with red terracotta ornament and/ or white stone dressings,
 - Yellow with red dressings in the Arts and Crafts early 20th century school.
 - Yellow with red dressings, or yellow and brown, sometimes with rendered bays in the interwar housing.
 - Some other materials exist for example the stuccoed John Bull
 - Roofs are mainly clay tile or natural slate.
 - Windows are often wooden sashes with some use of metal steel casements.
- 1.8 Details:** One of the reasons the pubs make such a contribution to this area is that, apart from some unfortunate painting (e.g. the Lavender) their facades survive in much their original condition. This is in contrast to retail shopfronts, many of which have been replaced. Many of the industrial buildings are expressed into bays with intervening brick pilasters. The wide horizontal bands of brickwork which up the large housing blocks of the Vauxhall gardens estate have been successfully echoed in some of the Vauxhall walk new contextual development (for example at 92-98 Vauxhall Walk).
- 1.9 Neutral:** There are no really neutral buildings in the area. The Glasshouse Street 19th century industrial buildings overlooking Spring Gardens fail to create a good frontage and so could do more to enclose the park. But they are in yellow stocks and traditional in style to the area and are on balance considered -to contribute to the area. The yellow stock industrial buildings in Vauxhall Walk also contribute to the character and appearance of the area's townscape. There is some red brick modern contextual development in Vauxhall Walk, and on balance this appropriate in scale and materials and complements to the area's character. Streets of more neutral character such Worgan Street lie with in the setting of the Conservation Area but are not included within it. The small Methodist church in Worgan Street is unusual but has not been assessed.
- 1.10 Negative:** Some of the shopfronts in the LCC estate on Vauxhall Street have been spoilt by thoughtless alteration, however Conservation Area designation may provide the needed spur to encourage their restoration. The shopfronts in Black Prince road have also been altered but more of their original frames survive. The "Heel Bar" shoe repair shop at 63

Black Prince Road is an example of a shopfront which retains much of its original character.

- 1.11 HOUSING: The former LCC VAUXHALL GARDENS ESTATE: Tyers Street/Newburn Street - 1936-39.** This LCC estate is one of the largest and most architecturally diverse in Lambeth by virtue of its incremental development over some three decades. There are two main groups of inter-war flats of particular interest. The most distinctive group lies between Glasshouse Street and Jonathan Street - built between 1936 and 1938. They are of a design not evident anywhere else in the borough and are of considerable character. The most notable features of the elevational treatment are the Odeon style rounded brick corners to the four blocks, enhanced by a subtle contrast in alternating horizontal bands of brown brickwork and broken up by prominent white rendered oriel canted bay windows extending the full height of the building from first floor upwards. The blocks are set amidst lawns with small decorative trees, enclosed with park style hooped railings. These blocks appear to have been well taken care of over the years with their original painted timber sliding sash windows intact.
- 1.12** The second group of blocks on the Vauxhall Gardens Estate is centred on Newburn Street, the largest one being Malmsey House. Their design, probably planned slightly later towards the end of the 1930's than the first group is a more standard LCC neo-Georgian style. The five storey blocks are of brown brick with horizontal bands of contrasting hues. They have tiled roofs set behind parapets with prominent chimneystacks. Malmesbury House has a particularly well-articulated corner elevation with a central projecting four-storey bay with cantilevered balconies either side, given added interest by subtle rusticated detailing between the windows on the fourth floor. Again the blocks benefit from pleasant frontages set back from the highway behind hooped railings allowing ground floor flats to benefit from individual gardens accessed by French windows. Malmesbury House is fortunate to have retained its original fenestration. However the character of the smaller Wynard House has been spoiled by the wholesale replacement of the windows with plastic units. The contrast between these two blocks clearly illustrates the crucial importance of retaining the original timber Georgian style windows, without which the blocks look faceless and rather banal.
- 1.13 HOUSING 2: The BLACK PRINCE ESTATE - Black Prince Road 1927:**
Lambeth Council built this small estate and replaced a workhouse, shown on the 1875 OS map. Originally this estate comprised of four 5-storey blocks of flats on Black Prince Road. It was built in 1927 to accommodate over 500 people in 108 flats. The two smaller middle blocks were demolished in the post war years to create a grassed open space between the remaining Sullivan House and Deacon House however the handsome pair of iron gates bearing the initials of the Borough and the railings either side survive. The two remaining blocks are of a high quality design. This is similar to the Kennings Estate which was built at the same time and has since 1997 been designated as part of the Kennington Conservation Area. The elevations are of stock brick with generous red brick dressings, given additional height and elegance by the tall chimneys. The blocks are well landscaped with railings enclosing lawns, hedges, shrubs and mature trees. Most of the LCC housing appears from external inspection to have been well maintained and retains the original appearance and materials - although a few windows onto Black Prince Road have been inappropriately re-fenestrated in UPVC.
- 1.14 PUBLIC HOUSES:** A special distinctive feature of the area are the attractive mainly Edwardian or 19th century surviving public houses. The redevelopment of the area in the interwar years took care to preserve the best architecture of the preceding period and therefore retained five Edwardian or Victorian public houses:
- The John Bull, Tyers Street,
 - The Lavender (formerly The Black Dog),
 - The Queens Head, Black Prince Road, late 19th century with interesting detail,
 - The Queen Anne, Edwardian Arts and Crafts,
 - The Jolly Gardeners, Black Prince Road, late 19th c florid,

- George and Dragon; this is a neo-Georgian 20th century style of pub.

- 1.15 The Lavender, Vauxhall Walk.** This red brick pub on the corner of Glasshouse Street was formerly known as "The Black Dog". It is constructed on four floors with Dutch style Edwardian gables and plentiful use of stone in the mullions, banding, stone ball finials, and decorated window arches.
- 1.16 The Queens Head, Black Prince Road,** late 19th century with interesting detail. This pub has a first floor and second floor gables projecting from the roof. Its large chimneys, prominent classical gable to the corner, and oriel window refer to the Tudorbethan style. Other windows are of six over one lights in timber sashes. The original ground floor facade survives.
- 1.17 The John Bull, Tyers Street:** This is an 1870 restrained traditional Victorian classical building with good ornamental brickwork, stucco and a parapet roof and surviving upper floor margin light windows. Historical records show the building dates from 1830 and was rebuilt in 1870. The external and internal appearance of the present building is a little altered building of 1870. The houses to the rear of the pub were demolished in the 1930's- to make way for the Vauxhall Gardens Estate developed by the LCC in the 1930's. At that time the John Bull was preserved from development. The pub makes a clear contribution to the streetscape of Tyers Street and makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.
- 1.18 The Queen Anne, Vauxhall Walk.** This small but handsome Edwardian pub sits on the corner of Spring Gardens and Laud Street. With an unusual diminution of scale and recession from the ground floor to the second -floor gable end, it sits well on the ground with a projecting shopfront facing the park. It was, in keeping with its name, built in the Queen Anne Revival style with well-revealed windows set in stone frames and flanked by stonework parapets. It remains in use despite its appearance (boarded up to discourage passers-by seeing the interior floorshow).
- 1.19 The Jolly Gardeners, Black Prince Road.** This fine late 19th c florid pub is built on three floors. The ground floor has seven fluted Corinthian pilasters framing an original wooden shopfront. Above the window arches are decorated with floral patterns. There is a fine bas relief plaque at first floor level on the corner. Stone banding in six layers under an ornate cornice breaks up the facade, and there is also use of stone mullions to the windows.
- 1.20 George and Dragon, Vauxhall Street.** Stripped neo-Georgian in three bays with three dormers and pitched setback roof. Crittall style steel windows with key stones under a stone band to the first floor. Altered ground floor front.
- 1.21** Other characterful features contributing to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 1.22 Vauxhall (Primary) School, Vauxhall Street.** This stylish building makes a significant contribution to the area. It is constructed in dark red brick on three floors with a flat parapet roofline. Some elements such as the characterful tower and porthole windows respond to Art Deco or Vernacular styles.
- 1.23 Former "Ragged School" 22 Newport Street.** Only one third survives of this excellent classical building constructed as a school in 1851 by Henry Beaufoy. This south wing is currently in appropriate use as the Beaconsfield Art Gallery. It has an attractive, large, high internal hall on the first and upper floors. Below in the lower ground floor are old stone slab and iron supporting pillars. The metal fenestrated windows seem to be 19th century. Originally it had three wings, the central one having a Greek pediment and Colonnade. The ragged school had previously been housed in one of the railway arches. All but the southern wing was pulled down in 1904 due to railway arch expansion. Although the

surviving wing of the original grand structure is not on the Statutory List of Historic Buildings, the building has significance and it would be worth proposing its addition for both architectural and historic reasons. Survey of London Vol. XXIII pp 142-3 includes plans and photographs.

- 1.24 Parks and Open Space:** No parks are included within the Conservation Area, but one green allotment space on Glasshouse walk and Tyers Street is included. Two parks form part of the setting of this Conservation Area. The Pedlars Park between Salamanca Street and Black Prince Road supports the setting of the railway arches, the Queen's Head pub, the former Ragged School and other buildings in the Conservation Area, it provides valuable amenity space - and is equipped with seating, planting and children's play facilities. A disused pathway between the northern part of Pedlars Park and the arches joins Black Prince Road to Salamanca Street. This path is included in the Conservation Area and could beneficially be re-opened. Also outside the Conservation Area, but making a good and potentially superb contribution to its setting is Spring Gardens. This was created on the site of the famous former Vauxhall Gardens by demolition of small 1860's terraced housing in the post-war period. A welcome re-planning and enhancement of this park could reinstate the north-south east-west Vauxhall Gardens grid (with diagonal desire lines), create a water feature, more trees and shrub planting, play areas and safe and pleasant seating areas.
- 1.25 Vauxhall Walk:** This street was known as Lowner's Lane on the 1745 Rocque's map. The Duchy of Cornwall granted the first building phase of 28 houses in 1768. It now comprises a number of attractive buildings including a small Edwardian block of flats, modern apartments, workshops, shop buildings and small industrial units all in red or yellow bricks of varying ages from Victorian Edwardian and later periods. Making a particular contribution is the long but excellent frontage and traditional fascia of the "Surrey Ironworks Horatio Myer & Co. Ltd. Bedstead Manufacturers" at no.'s 83-97. Its unusual and locally distinctive fascia should be preserved. Walkers Books immediately to its south and the attractively pilastered industrial brick facade of 108 opposite complement this building to create an enclosed Victorian Streetscape in which the scale and characteristic form of enclosure of Vauxhall Walk survives from the 18th century. This local and wider area is, today, reminiscent of the Old Street area 20 years ago - and the location indicates a similar upward transformation is in progress.
- 1.26 Tinworth Street:** The south side of Tinworth Street includes a number of interesting buildings. Adjacent to the railway arches lay a former gas works with three Gasometers and a retort house - all shown on the 1875 map. Half of the large retort house survives, its current east facing (formerly internal) wall shows a large relieving arch - bricked up presumably when the east half of the building was demolished. This old building is worthy of retention. At No 2 is a pilastered industrial building in seven bays. This is also part of the attractive industrial character of the area. It is of similar design and construction to, but significantly older than 100 Vauxhall Walk, and unlike the latter is shown on the 1875 OS first edition map. The arches at the west end of Tinworth Street form an attractive termination closing the vista. If the undeveloped sites in the street and the other old shed buildings were replaced by appropriately scaled and textured new development fronting to the street, this could enhance the character of the area.
- 1.27 Glasshouse Walk:** The south side borders Spring Gardens. The industrial buildings on the north side contribute to the area through their age, variety and make a particular contribution to the area as they frame and overlook the park.
- 1.28** The industrial buildings contribute to local character. A replacement scheme to those between No 5 and the Lavender might relate to the area if it was in scale and enhanced the enclosure of the streetscape and park. An interesting 19th c. industrial building at no 5 contributes. It has a door case added to the front and an oriole window to the side (both probably Edwardian). The building now lies very close to the

railway arches - it probably was constructed before these were widened.

1.29 Tunnels and arches under the railway: The road tunnels under the railway between Waterloo and Vauxhall have strong enclosure and express a characterful Victorian industrial sublimity. They have been identified for enhancement and may attract regeneration funding. At this stage the four arched road tunnels on Black Prince Road, Salamanca Street, Tinworth Street and Glasshouse Walk are included in this Conservation Area as gateways from the Albert Embankment to the west. The Back Prince Road tunnel has, branching off on its south side, an unusual underground road penetrating a series of arches and forming a quite special enfilade. The arches fronting this to the east are also included in the designated area. In the longer term- the possibility of designating other arches or even the entire raised arched railway structure would be worthy of consideration.

1.30 CONCLUSION: It is therefore proposed to designate the Vauxhall Gardens Conservation Area.

2. Consultation:

- 2.1** Legal advice taken on the draft report advises on the consultation and adoption procedure. The requirements of this advice have been taken on board.
- 2.2** English Heritage has been consulted and have written. Whilst they do not see the need to duplicate the Lambeth Conservation Team's assessment work, they do support the proposal. Their letter refers to the LCC estate and says "This appears to be a particularly fine local example of a 1930s LCC flatted estate. Much of the exemplary housing work of the LCC across London is now protected by conservation area designation."
- 2.3** Local Ward Members and Members of the Planning Applications Committee have been consulted and have raised no objection. The Council's Education and Housing Services who have property in the area have been consulted. Subsequently the matter was discussed at a meeting of the Housing Review Group. They have raised no objection to the scheme. A petition was raised in the John Bull Public House in favour of its retention - although this was prior to the consultation over Conservation Area designation. The Vauxhall Society has written supporting this scheme and providing useful historical detail on the buildings. A representative of the local Town Centre Management Board has written in her personal capacity supporting the scheme.
- 2.4** A letter explaining the proposals was sent to all postal addresses in the proposed area. Ten letters of response have been received, all of them supportive. Almost half of those responding asked for Spring Gardens to be included in the Conservation Area. In fact officers considered this when drawing up the scheme - but it was considered that this was not feasible since the complexity of the planning issues in this area needed further consideration. If necessary Spring Gardens could be added as an extension at a future stage. Support has come from local business and from the Vauxhall Gardens Community Centre as well as from owner occupiers, public sector and private residential tenants.
- 3. 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 Resolution to agree the recommendations in this report.
 - (ii) Conservation Area Consent is required to demolish buildings within a conservation area (section 74 of the Act).
 - (iii) Consent for all advertisement hoardings, temporary or permanent, is

required.

- (iv) 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.
- (v) The design quality of all new development in a conservation area is important. Planning Policy Guidance: Planning & the Historic Environment (PPG 15) and Section 72 of the Act state that all development is required to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. PPG 15 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.

4. Procedure after Designation: Following the approval of the report a number of actions would be undertaken:

- (i) The owners of the property within the area affected by the designation of the 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.

5. Legal Powers and Advice

- 5.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 gives the Council power to review existing conservation areas and their boundaries -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".
 - 5.2 Section 69 (4) states that: "The designation of any area as a conservation area shall be a local land charge."
 - 5.3 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.
 - 5.4 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 part of their area which are conservation areas. (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."
- 6. Environmental Implications:** The designation of this 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.
- 7. Financial Implications:** Approval of the recommendations will result in the expenditure of about £50 for advertising the designation in the South London Press and the London Gazette - the Planning Division Business Unit holds the requisite budget.

8. Staffing and Accommodation Implications: There are no direct staffing implications as a direct result of this report. The duty to prepare public design guidance and enhancement schemes is already a part of the conservation team's future work programme.

9. Equal Opportunities: The preservation of the buildings (flats, shops, public houses and school) in this area will potentially benefit users from a diversity of social groups as well as the amenity of local residents.

10. Background Documents:

Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1991.

DoE & DNH (now DCMS)- PPG 15: Planning & the Historic Environment (September 1994).

English Heritage: Conservation Area Practice (October 1995):

English Heritage: Conservation Area Appraisals ((1997). Survey of London - Volume XXIII

11. Audit Trail

Author: Steve Gould - Senior Conservation Officer

Date drafted: 30th Aug 2001

Revised following consultation with Conservation Team **Leader:** 31 Aug 2001

Revisions following community, legal, housing, education and policy consultation 28th Sept 2001

Consultation with Members/Officers/Directorates:

Planning Committee members19/10/01

Head of Planning (PH)....18/10/01

Policy Team leader (AV)....18/10/01

Development Control (LB/SB): 18/10/01

Director of Housing (Housing Review Panel David Longbottom, Stewart Holton): 27th Sept 2001

Legal service on authority to designate. 10 October 2001

Democratic Services (Tim Stephens) 10 October 2001, 22nd October 01

Director of Education (Housing Review Phyllis Dunipace) 27th Sept 2001