

STREATHAM COMMON CONSERVATION AREA  
(Streatham Wells, streatham South and St. Leonards)

Report by DBS. consulted formally: DLCSS, DFIS.

Authorised for submission by.....  
Paul Duffield. Director of Environmental Services.

PURPOSE

The designation of a new conservation Area, Streatham Common.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) That the committee approve the designation of the area shown on Plan No. DES/PP/127 as the Streatham Common conservation area under section 69(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

(2) That the committee approve the detailed boundary of the Streatham Common conservation area as that shown on Plan No. DES/PP/140. (This 1:2500 Scale Plan will be on display at the Committee meeting.)

For decision

1. Context

Previous decisions

1.1 In March 1981 the Town Planning committee approved the "Strategy for the designation of new Conservation Areas". The Streatham Common area was recommended for conservation and included in the strategy and on the map that accompanies that report (UD/CON/101R).

Policy Context

1.2 Policies UL1-6 of the Lambeth Local Plan adopted in July 1987 detail the Council's position in relation to conservation areas within the borough. UL1 identifies Streatham common as an area suitable for Conservation Area designation. Policy RL23 and Proposal 46 identify Streatham Common as Metropolitan Open Land. The Common is further identified as Existing Public Open Space with District Park Status in Table 10.2 and Fig. 10.4 p.88-89 of the Local Plan.

1.3 Policy C1 of the Draft Deposit version of Lambeth's unitary Development plan (UDP) November 1992 states that the council will consider the designation of new conservation areas, including those recommended by local residents organisations, in areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

1.4 The Draft Deposit version of Lambeth's UDP (November 1992) contains a number of policies and proposals that relate specifically to Streatham Common:

- (i) Policy C2, proposes the designation of Streatham Common as a new conservation area. The proposal appears in the Proposals Schedule as C51.

(ii) Policy ENVI, proposes the designation of Streatham Common including the Rookery, as a site of Borough Nature Conservation Importance (as recommended by the London Ecology Unit). This means the Council will normally refuse planning permission for any development that would have a detrimental effect on the nature conservation value of sites such as Streatham Common. The proposal appears in the Proposals Schedule as Ell.

(iii) Policy RL22, confirms Streatham Common's existing designation as Metropolitan open Land. The proposal appears in the Proposals Schedule as MOL4.

(iv) Policy CI5, proposes that parts of Streatham Common are safeguarded because of archaeological remains. Proposal A16 designates a site in the north west of the proposed Conservation Area as an Archaeological Priority Area. Also part of Proposal A4 includes that part of the proposed Conservation Area which covers Streatham High Road as an Archaeological Priority Area.

(v) Table R2 p157 of the Deposit Draft UDP, lists the existing open space in Lambeth; Streatham common is shown and is given District Park status. Fig. 10.1 p158 also lists Streatham Common as Public Open Space.

(vi) Policy ENV5 on the Design and Management of Open spaces for Nature Conservation will also apply to the common.

#### Deposit Draft UDP: Results of consultation

1.5 Following consultations at the Deposit Draft stage of Lambeth's UDP a number of comments were received in relation to some of the policies and proposals mentioned. These are:

(a) Policy C2. Eight comments received, five of which are supports. No comments relating to Streatham common.

(b) Policy ENV1. Nineteen comments received, ten of which are supports. Two comments specifically supported Streatham Common and the Rookery, one of these was from the Streatham society who considered the Common to contain some of the most valuable wildlife habitats in the borough. No objections to the Streatham Common and Rookery designations.

(c) Policy RL22. Ten comments received, seven of which are supports. No comments relating to Streatham Common and the Rookery.

(d) Policy C15. Six comments received, two of which are supports. No objections relating to the Streatham Common area.

(e) Proposal PRC51. Three comments received, all supporting. One comment suggested the inclusion of properties; 496-510 Streatham High Road (including the "Red Bull" and "Beehive Coffee House" and the 'Garage Island Site' on Voss Court. These were adopted by the Environmental services Committee on-13 October 1993- and the boundary has been changed to ^ include them.

(f) Proposal PRE11. NO comments received.

(g) Proposal A4. One supporting comment received.

(h) Proposal A16. One objection received, change -Tooting Bee" in Proposals schedule description to "Streatham Common- to more accurately describe the location. This was agreed by Environmental services Committee 13,9.93. —..

(i) Table R2. One objection received, not related to Streatham Common.

(j) Policy ENV5. Six supports received.

1.6 The following boundary changes were proposed after a further period of discussion with the Streatham society and not in response to an objection to the UDP Deposit Draft. They were accepted by the Environmental Services Committee on 13 October 1993. The Conservation Area proposal has therefore been extended to include:

- (a) The Sainsbury's Complex.
- (b) 1-2 Voss court and land adjacent to R/o 12-32 Baldry Gardens.
- (c) The whole of the mews access way R/o 440-450 Streatham high Road.
- (d) Car Park and garden to R/o Greyhound Public House.
- (e) Site adjacent to 7-14 Lewin court on Lewin Road.
- (f) Site bounded by Natal Road, Streatham High Road and Lewin Road, adjacent to 1-6 Oakdene Court.

## 2. Justification Location

2.1 The proposed Conservation Area encompasses the 68 acres of Streatham Common (including the Rookery) and the surrounding buildings on Streatham High Road, Streatham Common North and Streatham Common South, that add to the area's character. The attached map DES/PP/127 shows the boundary of the proposed conservation area including the changes accepted by Committee on 13 October 1993.

### History

2.2 The Common is one of Streatham's oldest features, but little is known of its early history. However, it is known that in 1362 Edward the Black Prince endowed his South Streatham Manor, including the Common to the prior and convent of Christchurch, Canterbury, thereby placing it under church ownership for the next five hundred years.

2.3 The demise of the Manor during the mid-19th century meant that the Common passed into secular hands, it was run by a Committee of local inhabitants on behalf of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners who relinquished their ancient rights to the common.

2.4 In 1888 the responsibility for the Common was transferred to the newly created London County council and in 1965 to the Greater London council. The 68 acres of Common Land was registered under the Commons Registration Act 1965 and has been managed by the London Borough of Lambeth since 1971.

### Character Description

2.5 The proposed conservation Area would comprise of three distinct parts:

- (i) Streatham common itself
- (ii) The Rookery and
- (iii) The buildings that surround the Common.

#### (i) Streatham Common

2.6 From its base along, Streatham High Road to its peak, the Common rises 140 feet getting steeper in gradient as it reaches the top. From its peak there are good local views across the lower common to the high ground of Wimbledon Common and across Streatham Vale towards Morden Park and Hotspur Park.

2.7 The lower part of the Common exists as open space and is used as a venue for many public events e.g. fun-fairs, fireworks displays, the Mela Asian festival and various other sports and recreational activities. The only structures in place are a children's playground, a paddling pool, a sports changing room and toilets.

2.8 in contrast with the well-mown lower reaches, the slope to the top of the Common is managed as a natural area with woodland trees, bushes and an acid grassland, a rarity in London. The south side of the Common has a substantial avenue of mature plane trees alongside a bridle path.

2.9 Beyond the peak, towards the borough boundary and Crown Lane, there is an area of the common given over largely to woodland, including Scrub Oak and a natural regeneration Elm area. This woodland area is possibly a relic of the Great North Wood and as such it may be the only one remaining in Lambeth. The area also contains a paddling pool and the continuation of the bridle path and a public car park.

2.10 Part of the Common is also a proposed link in the route of the London inner orbital Walk as proposed by the Ramblers Association and the London Walking Association.

#### (ii) The Rookery

2.11 The Rookery Gardens, added to Streatham common in 1911 and opened in 1913 are laid out and maintained as ornamental public gardens with terraced lawns and a large formal walled garden including the wild garden, the white garden, pools and streams. The gardens are Grade II listed by English Heritage on their Register of Historic Parks and Gardens as they are of special historic interest.

2.12 Located in the area of the common immediately east of Covington way the Rookery was previously the site and grounds of Streatham wells Mansions and the site of Streatham Spa. The first spring was discovered in 1659, but it wasn't until the 18th Century that it was developed as a Spa. The Spa waters were very sought after in the early to mid 18th century, but by the 1760s had fallen out of fashion. One of the original springs still survives in the Rookery Gardens.

2.13 The terraced area provides a summer venue for concerts and open air performances including Opera, Open Air Theatre, the Council's annual Pinknic event - and many others, while outside the Rookery is a small refreshment cafe with open-air facilities facing the common. The Rookery also contains a maintenance complex for the parks' services including a staff workroom, toilet, garages, plant and equipment stores and a nursery.

2.14 Adjoining the proposed area for designation visible, from the Rookery, is an area of open space across a local government boundary in the London Borough of Croydon known as Norwood Grove. This continuation of open space contains the Grade II listed buildings Norwood Hall and 125 Gibson's Hill (Beech cottage) and an early twentieth century public garden and park listed by English Heritage in its Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. It contributes to the overall feel and character of the Common and the Rookery providing interesting and attractive local views to the south.

#### (iii) Buildings that surround the Common

2.15 The buildings that overlook the Common are an integral part of the area's character. Their preservation and enhancement is an important reason behind the need to designate the conservation area.

2.16 The roads that surround Streatham Common have in themselves great antiquity. It is the building along the following roads that make up the proposed conservation area:

- (a) Streatham High Road
- (b) Streatham Common North
- (c) Streatham Common South.

2.17 The buildings that now overlook Streatham Common range, in age, over two centuries from the 18th century Ripley House at 10 Streatham Common South to the post-war Javelin Court on Streatham Common North and the more recent addition of Sainsbury's on Streatham High Road. (See Appendix A for details of the features and buildings that surround the Common.)

2.18 Amongst the many fine buildings and structures that surround the Common some have Grade II listed building status:

- (i) Parts of St Michael's convent, Streatham Common North (The Gardens of the convent are also listed as Grade II in the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens as they are of special historic interest.)
- (ii) No. 9 Streatham common South
- (iii) Horse Trough, Streatham Common
- (iv) Beehive coffee Tavern, Streatham High Road
- (v) Hill Path; Wall on east, and west side of the path (Although the south side is listed it has recently been demolished and is now the subject of enforcement action.)
- (vi) Silk Mill building, part of Sainsbury's, west of 496 Streatham High Road.

2.19 There are also a number of other buildings around the Common which the Streatham Society and Council officers feel merit consideration for listing:

- (i) No 12a, Nos 13/14 and No. 20 Streatham Common North
- (ii) Hambly Mansions Streatham High Road
- (iii) Former Immanuel school, Streatham High Road
- (iv) War Memorial.

#### Ownership

2.20 Most of the properties that surround the Common are privately owned, some in multiple-occupation. The shops and businesses along the High Road are run as private businesses or as branches of national companies. The common, The Rookery and the Albert Carr housing estate (not in the conservation area) are in the ownership of the London Borough of Lambeth.

#### Purpose of designation

2.21 The purpose of designating Streatham common and its surrounding buildings as a conservation area is twofold. Firstly to enable the Council to bring greater development control powers to bear on insensitive and inappropriate development in the area, in an effort to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of an area of special architectural or historical interest, secondly, to enable the Council to take positive steps towards preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the area. For example, issuing guidance to property owners explaining the effects of designation and/or publishing a preservation and enhancement plan for the area.

#### Reasons for designation

2.22 over recent years local groups in Streatham, particularly the Streatham Society (who have provided a lot of the background material for this report) have sought the designation of Streatham Common and its surrounds as a conservation area. They believe that it will have a beneficial effect upon the amenity of the area, and result in residents taking a greater care of their environment and the appearance of their properties.

2.23 The Streatham common area as shown on Plan No. DES/PP/127 is considered to be an area of special historical interest (as described in Sections 2.2-2.19) with an identifiable character which it is felt

is desirable to preserve and enhance. Essentially, the character of this area lies within the relationship between the historical open spaces, their topography and the appearance, style and setting of the surrounding buildings, individually, there are only a handful of either listed or other architecturally special buildings. However, the buildings have quality and merits as a group, especially those properties on Streatham Common North and South. The views of these buildings and those on Streatham High Road from the common are an important part of the area's character and opportunities to improve these views when they arise will be taken. Unfortunately many of these properties are now suffering aesthetically from the cumulative effect of unsympathetic alterations and their merit individually and as a group is now in the balance.

2.24 The character of the area consists of the relationship between the open spaces and the surrounding buildings so in order to maintain it both require protection. At present the open space is protected as Metropolitan Open Land and Common Land, but the surrounding buildings-are not offered any protection. The houses and other buildings which face on to the Common are an important part of the area's character. The existing predominance of residential private dwellings is seen as a vital element in the continuation of this character. The existing plot sizes, scale, design and appearance of these residential properties, although varied, are thought on the whole to complement and enhance the location.

2.25 Where some less obvious buildings and sites have been included the intention is to use the additional controls available under Conservation Area legislation and the emphasis on design quality and apply them to the buildings/sites if they are subsequently redeveloped or extended. (As encouraged in paragraph 4.19 of Draft PPG15: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas.) These buildings and/or sites are known as "Opportunity sites" and include the following: site adjacent to 7-14 Lewin Court on Lewin Road, site bounded by Natal Road, Streatham High Road and Lewin Road, adjacent to 1-6 Oakdene Court and the car Park and garden to R/o Greyhound Public House.

#### Effects of designation

2.26 Under the Town and Country Planning General Development order 1988 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Conservation Area designation has a number of practical implications for the area. These are, in outline:

- (i) conservation area consent is required to demolish most buildings within a conservation area (Section 74 of the Planning (LB & CA) Act 1990; with only a few exceptions as listed in section 75 and para's 21 and 22 of Annex 8 of the Draft PPG15).
- (ii) Some permitted development rights are restricted within a conservation area, e.g. neither stone cladding, or roof extensions are allowed without planning permission.
- (iii) consent for all advertising 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 & Tree Preservation Order if desired. This only applies to trees planted on privately owned property,
- (v) The design quality of all new development in a conservation area is also important. DOE circular 8/87 paragraph 62 indicates that in addition to adopted local plan policies for conservation areas, special regard should be had to such matters as bulk, height, materials, colour, vertical and horizontal emphasis and design. When considering development proposals within a conservation area the Council will consider those items mentioned above as well as giving special regard to layout style, landscaping including boundary treatment, proportion and rhythm in design and existing trees in an effort to ensure development proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. (The above is reiterated in paragraph 4.20 of Draft PPG15: Historic Buildings and conservation Areas.)
- (vi) The Council could also make a direction (under Article 4 of the General Development order

1988) further restricting permitted development rights within the conservation area. This would need to be approved by the Secretary of State. It could be used to, e.g. remove the rights to alter the original style of windows in a terrace, or to place estate agents' "For sale" boards, without first obtaining planning permission.

(vii) Once a conservation area is declared there is a duty on the Council to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the area. They could identify such things as environmental improvements, (e.g. reinstatement of period street lighting and paving etc\*) prepare briefs and design guidance for the future development of sites and detail the type of alterations, repairs and maintenance of property that would be desirable in the area.

(viii) Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 there are a number of possible funding sources for preserving or enhancing conservation areas.

### Procedure after designation

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

(i) All properties in the conservation area would be written to informing them of the designation. Notice of the designation would also be published in the local press and the London Gazette.

(ii) English Heritage would be notified of the designation.

(iii) The production of character appraisals and management statements on such things as townscape analysis, design guidance and maintenance of properties. Management policies and Plans would be reported to Committee for approval as resources permit.

### 3. Legal powers and advice

3.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 gives the council power to declare a conservation area. Section 69(1) states that:

"Every local planning authority-

- (a) 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
- (b) shall designate those areas as conservation areas,"

3.2 section 69(4) states that:

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

3.3 Section 70(5) of the 1990 Act states that the local authority should notify the secretary of state and the Historic Buildings and Monuments commission (English Heritage) of the designation.

Section 70(8) of the Act states that the local authority 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 local planning authority.

3.4 Section 71(1),(2) and (3) of the 1990 Act identify future duties on the Council associated with a designation, stating that:

"(1) It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts 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 local planning authority shall have regard to any views concerning the proposals expressed by persons attending the meeting."

#### 4. Financial implications

4.1 There are no financial implications as a direct result of this report.

4.2 Any specific preservation and enhancement improvements works, would be set against the appropriate budgets, and committee authority requested as necessary.

#### 5. Environmental Consideration

5.1 Public open space is recognised by the Council as providing an important environmental contribution to the borough, Streatham Common, as one of the largest of these, plays an important role and many of its environmental contributions are unique locally, wildlife habitats and the welfare of animals are also protected as the common offers both a home for a large variety of birds and mammals and a place for local people to engage in healthy recreation and exercise.

5.2 The designation of a conservation Area provides the Council with additional development control powers to protect and enhance the area, it also places a duty on the council to prepare and publish a preservation and enhancement plan. This could mean that environmental improvements are carried out including landscaping projects, new paving, lighting etc.

#### 6. Staffing and accommodation implications

6.1 The declaration of a conservation Area involves Development Control staff in more complex procedures when handling planning applications within the designated area.

6.2 The duty to prepare and publish a Preservation and Enhancement Plan will require staff to undertake some complex and detailed conservation Work

6,3 The Council is actively seeking to appoint a Conservation officer and subject to funding confirmation from English Heritage hopes to have an officer in post by August 1994.

6.4 It is considered that with the additional support of a conservation Officer, existing staff resources will be adequate to carry out the additional work as part of the normal programming of workloads.

#### 7. Equal opportunities

(a) Race relations

(b) Women's rights

(c) people with disabilities

7.1 The designation of a Conservation Area places a duty on the council to prepare and publish a Preservation and Enhancement Plan. Any physical improvements to the area, e.g. new paving or street lighting, as a result of this would be improvements for the benefit of all. New paving would in particular improve accessibility for people with disabilities and new street lighting would improve safety for all pedestrians.

7.2 Access to public open space is especially important for economically die advantaged groups and for people whose ability to travel to more rural locations is limited. Most of the park's facilities are accessible for people with disabilities and it is also important to recognise that for women Streatham Common is an important place as it offers safe local play and recreation facilities for children.