



Forest Hill Conservation Area Appraisal

July 2010

2nd Part

Lewisham Council

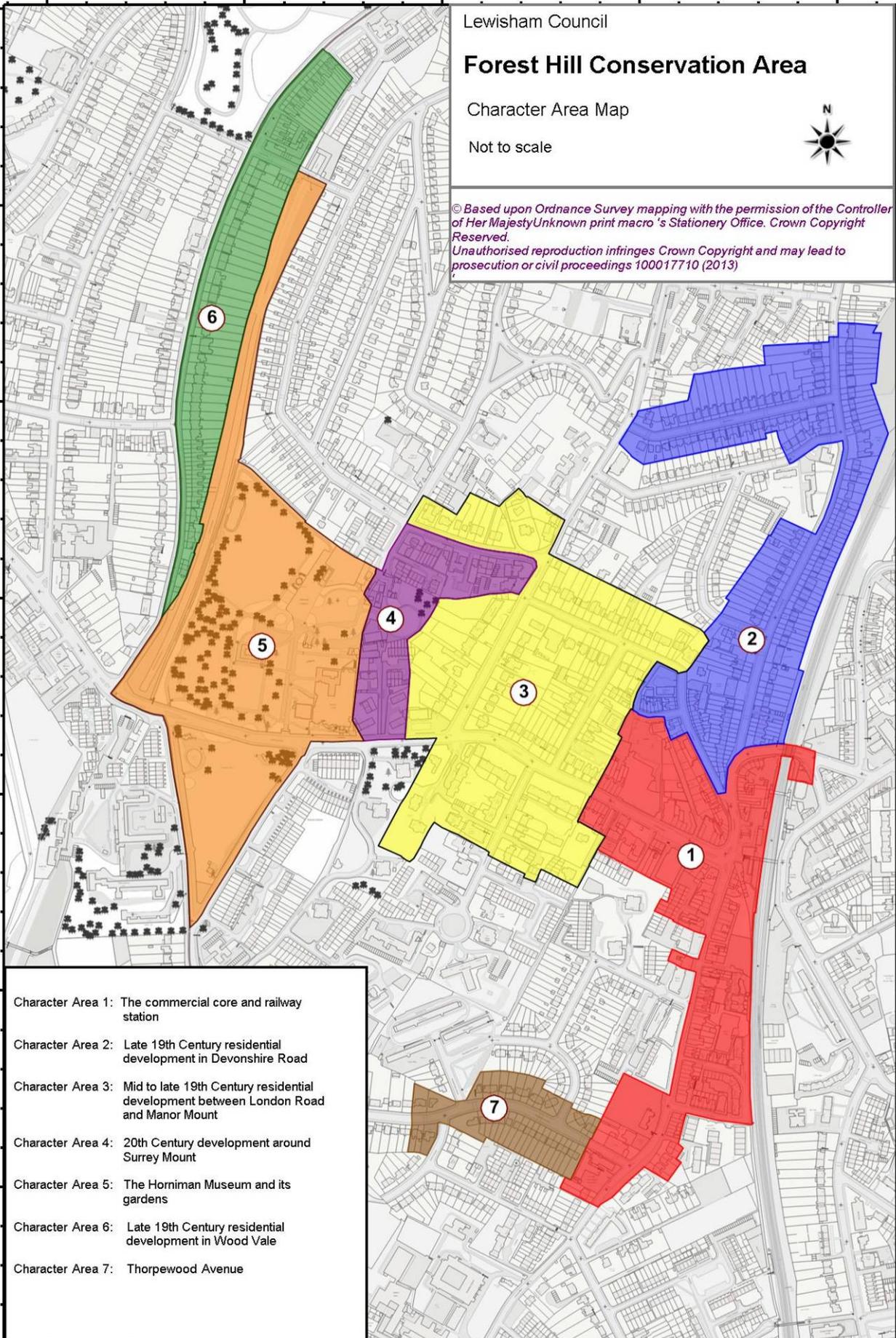
Forest Hill Conservation Area

Character Area Map

Not to scale



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- Character Area 1: The commercial core and railway station
- Character Area 2: Late 19th Century residential development in Devonshire Road
- Character Area 3: Mid to late 19th Century residential development between London Road and Manor Mount
- Character Area 4: 20th Century development around Surrey Mount
- Character Area 5: The Horniman Museum and its gardens
- Character Area 6: Late 19th Century residential development in Wood Vale
- Character Area 7: Thorpewood Avenue

Buildings of interest and character areas

The Forest Hill conservation area can be divided into six discernible 'Character Areas', each one unified by a similarity of historic development, land use or architectural character. The character areas are defined broadly and may overlap. The six character areas are:

- Character Area 1: The commercial core and railway station
- Character Area 2: Late 19th century residential development in Devonshire Road
- Character Area 3: Mid to late 19th century residential development to the north and south of London Road and Manor Mount
- Character Area 4: 20th century development around Surrey Mount
- Character Area 5: The Horniman Museum and its gardens
- Character Area 6: Late 19th century residential development in Wood Vale
- Character Area 7: Inter-war housing at Thorpewood Avenue

Almost all the historic buildings in the conservation area make a positive contribution to its distinctive character and appearance. Positive buildings are identified on the accompanying map.

As recommended in Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment, the general presumption is in favour of retaining all buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Individual listed buildings, locally listed buildings and other buildings of architectural significance are featured within the relevant Character Areas below.

4.1 Character Area 1: The commercial core and railway station

Comprising London Road (east end), Havelock Walk, David's Road (west side), Devonshire Road (south end) and Dartmouth Road (northern part)

This Character Area, which developed around the former canal route and the railway station from the 1840s onwards, provides a mixture of mainly commercial properties, as well as the buildings of Havelock Walk, once in industrial uses but now largely converted into live-work units or artists' studios. Most of the properties to either side of London Road and along Dartmouth Road were built after the railway line was opened in 1839 and before 1870. It is a busy local shopping centre, with a mixture of small and larger shops, various catering establishments, offices and the railway

station. Along Dartmouth Road, some of the (originally residential) buildings have been built out at ground floor level to provide shops, with living accommodation or storage above. The buildings include a number of public houses, most notably the Dartmouth Arms, which has recently been skilfully restored. The new Sainsbury's Supermarket and the adjoining block of flats in London Road have replaced older buildings which had fallen into disrepair and provide good examples of well-detailed, modern buildings which may eventually become part of the established scene although at present they seem to provide a stark contrast with the surrounding late 19th century development. Notable historic buildings include the former Capitol Cinema of 1929 (now a Wetherspoons pub), which is listed grade II. The architect was Stanley Beard, who designed it in an art-deco style. Outside the cinema stand two listed cast iron telephone boxes. These were designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in the late 1920s (one is a K2 pattern, and one a K6).



Mixed commercial and residential buildings on London Road and Dartmouth Road retain a range of

interesting architectural detail.

Many of the buildings in the Character Area have Italianate details and are therefore similar to Character Areas 2 and 3, but because of the commercial uses the ground floors have been radically changed with the insertion of modern shopfronts. No. 5 is of mid 19th century date and is the remainder of a group of semi-detached houses, known as Prospect Villas, that originally lined this side of the street. Nos. 29/31 (Princes and Kings Garth) and Nos. 67-75 and 77-81 (Dorrell Estate) further down the road in Character Area 3 are all part of this original development. Nos. 1-3 London Road (Barclays Bank) provides a good example of a three-storey institutional Edwardian corner building.

Turning from London Road into Dartmouth Road, the buildings are stylistically slightly later (1880s onwards) with more Gothic Revival details, although the use of yellow London stock brick and the three storeys height is the norm. Further along the road, the buildings are just two storeys high, but with built out ground floors. The use of red bricks for decoration is very common. Many properties retain good architectural features above ground floor level including sash windows and some particularly good examples of eight-over-one paned sashes. A number of examples of historic sign writing on the front and side walls also survive, though much faded.

To the north, the beginning of Devonshire Road has an urban scale, with three storey terraced properties. The Hob Public House has recently been restored and its attractive ground floor frontage makes it a prominent landmark at the main approach from the east into the conservation area via the South Circular Road. The brick wall supporting the raised pavement at David's Road was once the eastern Canal bank to the former Croydon Canal which was exposed when Waldram Crescent was created as an undercrossing to the railway line. The overlooking two and three-storey 19th century houses and shops along David's Road, including the former Forest Hill Working Men's Club (now Kingdom Hall) were constructed right in the bed of the former canal. They offer a variety of styles and have good group value. On the opposite site, an early 20th century public conveniences provides in the way it responds to the complex changes in road level and road layout an architectural curiosity at the junction of David's Road and Devonshire Road. The late 19th century three-storey houses and shops on Waldram Crescent and Devonshire Road provide good rhythm and a strong sense of enclosure on this approach to the town centre.

Havelock Walk, also built along the line of the former canal in the early 1860s, provides an interesting example of former industrial warehouses which have been converted into residential and workshop uses. Modern details and materials have been used in association with the original buildings to produce idiosyncratic elevations, enlivened by balconies and planting. The retention of the 19th century granite paving is a notable feature. Despite some very modern infill, the street retains its historic character.

This Character Area has been subject to the greatest pressure for change due to the variety of mainly commercial uses. Only a few historic shopfronts remain in their entirety. Most have been changed in recent years although individual historic features, such as original pilasters or moulded fascias, remain. The loss of the Victorian Station building still presents one of the most significant changes to the area. The 1960s replacement station building is of poor quality and fails to provide

a visual and functional focal point to Forest Hill. The single-storey ranges of shops that enclose the forecourt are also of poor quality and out of character with the area. Their replacement as part of a wider scheme for the re-development of the station and environmental improvements should be positively encouraged.



The buildings at the south-western end of David's Road stand in what once used to be the bed of Croydon Canal. In the foreground to the right is the former Forest Hill Working Men's Club (now Kingdom Hall).



Left: The Hobb overlooks the entrance to London Road from Waldram Crescent Right: Havelock Walk is a narrow backstreet just behind the busy corridor of London Road

Further south along Dartmouth Road commercial activity comes to an end with a group of further shops and other commercial premises, all of the late 19th century and very similar to the buildings which are already in the conservation area. Nos. 111-119 Dartmouth Road are two pairs of well-detailed three storey terraced houses of c1880 with attractive gables and mullioned and transomed windows. Nos. 107-109 Dartmouth Road date from c1840 and are included in the Council's adopted list of Buildings of Local Interest. It is unfortunate that the top floor windows have all been replaced, but the multi-paned windows at the lower level all remain.

Beyond this, the streetscape is dominated by four municipal buildings comprising the Forest Hill Pools, Louise House (the former Girl's Industrial School), the Public Library and Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School. These have relatively open spaces between them and the street, although the school's playground is partly screened from view from the road by tall fences to provide security. A new extension to the school has been added in recent years. These buildings represent an important part of the area's social history and are of architectural quality. Three of them, the Library, the School and Louise House are Grade II listed. The Victorian frontage building of the Forest Hill Pools contributes significantly to the townscape and historic character of the street and has been adopted as a Building of Local Interest. The proposed extension also includes the small area of green open space between the Pools and Salcombe House.



Forest Hill Library (left) and Louise House (right) form part of a group of important municipal buildings further south on Dartmouth Road

The latest extension also include Clyde Vale, a short street off Dartmouth Road leading down to the railtracks. The modest terraces found here are remainders of late Victorian working class housing that was located in this area before much of it was cleared during the 20th century to make way for industrial uses. At the end of the row stands the former Forresters' Hall, built in 1868, now converted into flats. These buildings have retained their original features and have historic interest in their own right in terms of the history of development and former uses of the area.



Properties at Clyde Vale

Between No. 18 Dartmouth Road and the Forest Hill Baths there are few buildings of any architectural or historic interest on the west side of the road and this area has not been included within the conservation area. One building that stands out is No. 30 Dartmouth Road. This is a mid-19th century villa, which formerly stood back from the road but was extended in the later 19th or early 20th century with a single storey shop structure, which until recently served as a bank. The change from private residence to mixed commercial and residential use echoes the development seen on the east side of Dartmouth Road. It is proposed to include this building within the conservation area in recognition of its group value with the buildings on the west side of the street, including its similar historical development and contribution to the architectural interest of the street scene.



No. 30 Dartmouth Road

No. 1 Waldram Place is a small two storey mid-19th century cottage. It is built into the railway embankment next to the road-under-bridge that forms the eastern entrance to the conservation area. Its angular frontage to Waldram Crescent and Waldram Place makes it particularly prominent, whilst the simple white painted brickwork and natural slate roof stand out against the brickwork of the adjoining railway embankment. It is probable that the building was constructed as part of the development of the railway station in the mid-19th century. The bridge itself is a relatively simple structure with abutments of brown engineering brick supporting a girder bridge with yellow painted inset panels running between red and brown brick piers with stone caps supported on narrow moulded stone brackets. A corrugated metal sheet safety wall forms a parapet to the bridge. The boundary was extended in 2010 to include these two structures as they contribute to the quality of approaches to the conservation area from the east.



No. 1 Waldram Place



The railway bridge on Waldram Crescent

4.2 Character Area 2: Late 19th century residential development in Devonshire Road

Comprising: David's Road (east-side), Pearcefield Avenue, part of Devonshire Road and Benson Road

These streets provide the best example of unaltered cohesive residential development in the conservation area apart from Wood Vale, with nearly all of the buildings being considered 'positive'. The buildings principally date from between 1870 (when the roads are shown undeveloped, Devonshire Road being labelled on the historic map 'New Road') and 1896, when they are complete. David's Road east side contains groups of yellow and red brick houses dating to c1880 with a more modest scale than Devonshire Road, being mainly two storeys high. Devonshire Road is altogether grander with rows of detached or paired villas of c1875 lying set back from the road as it rises up the hill to the north. Mature trees in the front gardens provide valuable greenery, although many of the gardens have been converted into parking areas. Paired Italianate villas from c1860-1880, very similar to those in Character Area 3, are the most common building type. These buildings are built from yellow London stock brick and are symmetrically

designed with shallow hipped slated roofs and central chimney stacks. They are three storeys high, with white painted stucco to the ground floor and white-painted architraves to the first and second floor paired windows. Sometimes the front entrances are defined by simple porticoes supported by Tuscan columns. Of interest are the ornate cast iron window guards which can still be seen on a number of the properties.



Paired Italianate villas and longer rows provide a dense area of well detailed late 19th century houses on Devonshire Road



Above: Properties on David's Road are of smaller scale but also preserve many original decorative details

Right: traditional telephone and post boxes provide incidental points of historic interest in the street scene



There is some 20th century infill or replacement development, mainly apartment blocks, that do not positively contribute to the character of the area. Leyland Court occupies the site of St. John's Church, demolished in 1983. The former Lecture Hall of the church survives intact behind accessed via a lane from David's Road. It has intrinsic architectural quality, including the original Victorian windows, and has been locally listed. Another building of interest is the former post sorting office (No. 61 Devonshire Road), which is an excellent example of its type. The K2 telephone box to the front is listed.

Negative features within the area include the painting of brickwork; a profusion of satellite dishes where the buildings have been subdivided into flats; some unfortunate new dormer windows which have adversely affected the rooflines, particularly on the west side of Devonshire Road; and the conversion of front gardens for hard-standing with the resultant loss of the front boundaries.

The middle section of Devonshire Road retains on its eastern side some early Victorian Italianate-style buildings very similar to those within the existing conservation area which belong to the earliest phase of development of this road. On the western side there are some very substantial, yellow and red brick houses, again three storeys high and symmetrically arranged. They have projecting ground and first floor bays with tripartite sash windows. The front gardens of these buildings are relatively small, creating a more intimate relationship with the street. Again the historic buildings are almost continuous and nearly all of the buildings are judged to be 'positive'. An unusual addition is Belle Vue Court, a block of purpose built flats of c1900 at the eastern side of Devonshire Road, with ornate cast iron railings to the front balconies.

The buildings in Benson Road are consistent in terms of coherence and architectural quality with those already present in the area, though they are on a more modest scale, being mainly two storeys with gables at first floor level. They are built from red brick with sash windows and appear to date from c1880-90. They are well-detailed and largely original with Gothic Revival details such as foliage decoration to the rendered pilasters which support the window lintels, and similar details to the arch over the recessed front porches. Nos. 2-6 Ewelme Road should also be included as they were built at a similar time.



Late Victorian houses on Benson Road

4.3 Character Area 3: Mid to late 19th century residential development to the north and south of London Road and Manor Mount

Comprising London Road (part of); Honor Oak Road; Westwood Park (east); Manor Mount; Waldenshaw Road; Taymount Rise (part of) and Park Hill.

This part of the conservation area lies on two slopes, one facing south east and one facing north. It was developed from the 1840s onwards with large, mainly detached or semi-detached villas which were provided for the wealthy middle class workers who wanted to use the newly-built railway line to commute into London. Apart from the busy London Road (part of the South Circular) this Character Area is formed by a number of short secluded streets. These contain a large number of trees, in contrast with the urban centre of Forest Hill which is literally only a minute or so away.



Left: A grand mid-19th century houses on Honor Oak Road Right: These semi-detached houses at Manor Mount are typical of the character area.

Buildings tend to stand well back from the road in long plots and although a number of the larger properties have been converted into flats, a significant number of single family dwellings remain on Manor Mount, Taymount Rise and Honor Oak Road. The area is particularly notable for the contribution made to the street scene by the many large, deciduous trees, which also frame views into back gardens, most notably at street junctions. At Manor Mount these include rows of pollarded limes. The area around Taymount Rise, Queens Court and Park Hill has a particularly wooded character due to the presence of mature trees and planting along the streets and in rear plots alike. Despite the gaps between each building, which are important in creating an architectural rhythm through the Character Area, there is a strong sense of enclosure, and many parts of this Character Area feel protected from the busy traffic experienced elsewhere in Forest Hill.

The majority of the historic houses in this part of the conservation area are typical of a London estate of the 1850s to 1870s, with symmetrical facades and Italianate details arranged behind a

common building line. The buildings can be detached or, more commonly, arranged in semi-detached pairs and are usually two windows wide and three and a half storeys high, as they include a semi-basement. The chosen building material is yellow London stock brick, often with a white painted stuccoed ground floor. Tall sash windows, symmetrically arranged, can have white painted moulded plastered architraves. The ground floor tripartite windows or the occasional canted bay add interest, along with shallow porches set on simple Tuscan columns. Above, the buildings have shallow pitched slate roofs with tall brick chimney stacks. Some of the buildings have more ornamental details including bracketed eaves corncicing, decorative balconettes above the porches, and ornately detailed (original) dormer windows. Some well-detailed four or six panelled timber front doors can also be seen, for example in Waldenshaw Road.

Good examples of paired Italianate villas can be seen in Westwood Park and Manor Mount, though the latter also includes a later 19th century red brick house in the Arts and Crafts idiom, as well as some pretty Gothic Revival houses of c1880 with fretted gable boards facing the street. These have been diluted on the north side of the road by the insertion of a mixture of modern infill houses, most of them detrimental.



Well detailed and attractive Gothic style and Arts and Crafts buildings at Manor Mount

Nos. 67-75 and 77-81 London Road, today known as the Dorrell Estate, were built in the mid 19th century as five semi-detached houses. They have fine Italianate detailing in stucco and substantial porches at first floor level. The stairs to the porches were removed at the beginning of the 20th century when the villas were converted into blocks of flats and the gaps between them filled with the new stairwells. Nos. 83 and 85 are an early 20th century addition, altogether replacing an earlier house in this location.



Above and right: Nos. 67 – 85 (odd) London Road. The former grand Italianate Villas were converted at the turn of the century into blocks of flats. They are locally listed for their architectural and townscape quality to the area. Below: The Dorrell Estate includes properties in London Road, Park Hill and Taymount Rise.



The stucco-faced villa with Regency detailing (No. 101 London Road) immediately south of the Honor Oak Road junction is of c.1840 and a landmark feature in the area. The narrow lane to its side, Park Hill, leads to the two-storey blocks of flats of the Park Hill Estate, i.e. Nos. 97-99 London Road. They were built in the 1930s and are of traditional construction with prominent chimney stacks. Next to it, Queens Court and Queens Court Lodge constitute an inconspicuous but attractive early Victorian villa and its associated outbuilding which belong to the earliest development phase of the area.

The area is known as the Dorrell Estate which since the mid 1970s has been in use for Council Housing. Ownership and use have created a distinctive area, connecting properties of various dates and types by some large areas of gardens and communal green space to both front and rear. The lack of boundaries and mature and in places overgrown green give the estate a surprisingly sylvan, even semi-rural character that positively contributes to the special character of the Forest Hill Conservation Area.



Clockwise from top left : Queen's Court, Taymount Rise; Queen's Leaze, Taymount Rise; former Congregational Church at Taymount Rise (now: St. Paul's Conversion); and 1930s flats at Park Hill



Other buildings in this Character Area provide examples of the Gothic Revival style which was popular around the 1880s and 1890s. These buildings, of varying heights according to location (taller in London Road) are built using red brick with steeply pitched gabled roofs which face the street. Some of them use both red and yellow brick, the former used to pick out string courses, window and door reveals, and chimney details.

Also of note are Hill House (No. 64 Honor Oak Road), which was built in c1796, and Ashberry Cottage (No. 62 Honor Oak Road), which was built in c1820. These are the oldest buildings in the conservation area, and both are listed. A plaque records that William, Duke of Clarence (later King William IV) lived in one of them with a mistress, though this may be conjecture.



No. 64 Honor Oak Road

Negative features include poor quality 20th century infill development between the original houses and poor quality modern extensions to the original buildings (e.g. Manor Mount). The replacement of the original sash windows with uPVC windows of differing designs, often with different opening methods, is also a negative feature. There are examples throughout the conservation area.

4.4 Character Area 4: 20th century development around Surrey Mount.

Comprising Hill Rise and Surrey Mount

This area was largely re-developed in the 20th century, replacing mid-19th century houses shown on the 1870 map, including Horniman's own house, Surrey Mount, which was demolished in the 1960s. The area is mainly in use for housing but includes commercial premises in form of a petrol filling station at the corner London Road/Honor Oak Road – the latter and associated advertisement constitutes the principal 'negative' feature of the whole conservation area, unfortunately located close to the Horniman Museum. The land is hilly, and well treed, which helps

to conceal the modern development.



Left: Modern flats at Honor Oak road form part of this character area Right: The Petrol Station on London Road detracts from view east and west along this important transport corridor

4.5 Character Area 5: The Horniman Museum and public spaces

Comprising Horniman Museum and Gardens, the disused South Eastern and Chatham Railway (Nature Trail) and the Horniman Triangle

The Horniman Museum is an important focal point and the most important building in the conservation area. Opened in 1901, it was designed by Harrison Townsend and paid for by F J Horniman (1835-1906), a Quaker who made his money in the tea trade. He was an inveterate collector and originally opened his house (Surrey Mount) to show off his collections until more space was needed and the present building was provided. More utilitarian buildings, associated with the museum, are located to the side and rear. A conservatory to the back of the museum is well used for social events and, in the summer, as part of the museum café. The bandstand located in the northern part of the gardens provides good views over central London. An interesting eco-friendly extension, the 'CUE' Building, has recently been built next to the museum facing London Road and houses the library and research facilities.

The adjoining gardens are managed as a public park with a selection of traditional and more exotic plants. The belt of woodland to the west on the line of the disused South Eastern and Chatham railway has been included in the Museum Gardens and turned into a small Local Nature Trail. On the south side of London Road a separate field with a children's play area, known as the Horniman Triangle, provides a rural quality to the conservation area. Overall the gardens are an extremely well used and much loved local facility.

Issues for this Character Area include the possible Local Listing of the bandstand and the removal of the profiled metal sheeting on its western side. This should be replaced with a screen of appropriate design and material that would also allow open views to be enjoyed towards the London City skyline in the west.



Clockwise from top left:

The listed entrance to the Horniman Museum, with the imposing mosaic which adorns the building's London Road frontage;

The Horniman Gardens include areas of formal planting, as well as more open parkland; and

The impressive conservatory at the rear of the Horniman Museum



4.6 Character Area 6: Wood Vale

This part of the conservation area was developed between 1870 and 1894 although the road, winding through open land, is shown on the 1870 map. The buildings provide a very cohesive streetscape due to the common use of brick and the similar form of the various building types. The houses appear to be built in a continuous terrace, but actually are mostly arranged as semi-detached houses with small gaps between them. They are mainly two storeys high, occasionally three, and built from yellow London stock brick following a common build line. Towards the south, the buildings are smaller and built on narrower plots. The curve of the street and the contribution made by street trees are the most notable features. Small front gardens have in places been converted into parking areas, with the resultant loss of the front boundaries.



Houses at Wood Vale include groups of smaller terraced dwellings as well as numerous larger detached and semi-detached houses, including Italianate villas and late Victorian Gothic houses

At the corner of Langton Rise, No. 110 (once a hotel) provides a prominent focal point in the area in terms of scale and architectural detailing. The Victorian terrace next to it, Nos. 112 – 122, contains a parade of shops which serve the area, some of which have now been turned into residential uses at ground floor level. As a group with No. 110, they make a strong impression on the streetscene. Their former commercial / part-commercial uses might be the reason for the notable difference in scale to the surrounding development of the area. Some fading traditionally painted signage at first floor level reminds us that here was once the 'Forest Hill Wood Vale Post Office' and there is VR letter box and a K2 telephone box to the front, the latter being listed Grade II.

The unity of the street is a strong characteristic although the incremental changes, such as the painting and rendering of front elevations, the replacement of windows, the loss of boundaries and the infilling of gaps between the buildings, have become an increasing matter of concern. The opposite side of the road lies within the adjoining London Borough of Southwark, so it is not

possible to extend the conservation area to cover both sides of the street, which would be a logical improvement.



An impressive late 19th century parade of shops at Wood Vale, including some well preserved shopfronts and a listed K2 telephone box

4.7 Character Area 7: Inter-war housing at Thorpewood Avenue

Thorpewood Avenue comprises some good quality development of inter-war semis whose design and street-layout make the most of the hilly terrain. The buildings display a range of styles and forms of that period, though many of them form distinctive groups within the streetscene. A notable example are Nos. 60-92, which are fine houses set high above the street with steep, well-planted front gardens. They have survived nearly unaltered with the original doors, clay tile roofs and fine leaded windows still in place. Most of the properties are relatively modest sized family houses, which seems to account for the fact that the majority so far has escaped the fate of subdivision into flats and remained in single family dwelling use.

The northern side contains a greater variety of buildings with some large detached houses, such as No. 43, which prominently addresses the corner of Thorpewood Avenue and Featherstone Avenue. Despite this variety there is a cohesive character to the street due to comparable scale, materials and building forms and a common building line with the houses set behind front gardens. As elsewhere in the area, the topography of the street enhances the character, leading down the

hill in gentle curves towards Dartmouth Road and offering fine views towards the east. Thorpewood Avenue constitutes its own distinctive Character Area within the Forest Hill Conservation Area, representing a phase of quality suburban development during the first half of the 20th century as the area continued to expand beyond its established 19th century boundaries.



Some of the well detailed interwar housing at Thorpewood Avenue

5 Materials and details

Materials and details are an important part of the character of the conservation area, giving the area its special identity and quality. Some of those details have already been described in the Character Area section, but are also outlined below.

Shopfronts

Although many of the shopfronts in the conservation area have been altered or replaced a number do preserve historic elements such as pilasters, consoled brackets, fascias and panelled front doors. These can be seen particularly on the east side of Dartmouth Road, such as Kelly's (No. 51) and No. 8 Dartmouth Road, which retains much of its original joinery, including arched transom lights and original shop awning fixings. The Council has produced a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Shopfront Design which owners and tenants of commercial properties should refer to when considering changes to their shopfronts. When applications are received, the Council will insist on high-quality new shopfronts and signage appropriate to the conservation area. Enforcement action can be taken against unauthorised alterations to shopfronts.



Details of historic shopfronts including mosaic tiled doorstep at No. 6 London Road and engaged pilasters and dentiled cornices at Dartmouth Road



Building styles

Because most of the historic buildings in the conservation area were built between 1850 and the 1890s, there are two prevalent architectural styles; Italianate, based on classical details, and

Gothic Revival, based on more vernacular roof shapes and details. However, the majority of the buildings follow the Italianate style and are symmetrically arranged, with sash windows and panelled front doors, framed by front porticoes. Roofs tend to be shallow pitched and not prominent, or even hidden behind parapets. Other buildings relating to the Gothic Revival of the 1870s have a more informal shape, with steeply pitched roofs, gabled frontages and foliage decoration.

Red or yellow London stock brick

Most of the buildings in the conservation area were built in the mid to late 19th century and used a yellow London stock brick which has now weathered to a mid-brown colour. Red brick is used either to provide decoration to the yellow brick, or in its own right. Both are usually laid in Flemish bond with a lime mortar.



Semi-detached villas on London Road exhibiting the characteristic details of yellow London stock brick with stucco and red brick detailing, three storey construction, with basements and shallow pitched hipped roofs of Welsh slate

White painted stucco

Most of the Italianate villas dating from the 1850-1880s period have part-stuccoed facades, combined with stock brick and use stucco for architectural details such as the moulded architraves which usually define the window, door surrounds, porticos and corbel brackets. Where stucco is used, it is usually painted in white.

Roofs

Most of the historic buildings in the conservation area were originally roofed using Welsh slate, brought in by the railway. Occasionally, roofs are covered in hand or machine made clay tile. Attractive brick chimneys, often with contrasting string courses and other features such as original decorative chimney pots, add interest at high level. All of these features need to be protected and owners encouraged to use matching traditional materials when repairing their buildings.

Windows

Windows are a key feature of the conservation area. Most of the windows are traditional vertically sliding sashes, the earlier ones (pre1850) being subdivided into six panes each with a single narrow glazing bars. Later versions, when plate glass became available, are very simple, with single pane of glass for each window. Sometimes, as for example in Wood Vale, the sash windows are paired or are set in canted ground floor bay windows, which add an interesting rhythm to the street. In David's Road, the canted bays are two storeys high with a flat, leaded roof, or the ground floor windows are tripartite (three sashes) set flush with the front elevation.



Above left: Detail of tripartite sash window with cast metal window guard at Devonshire Road.



Above right: First and second floor windows above shops at Dartmouth Road with elaborately decorated widow hoods, polychrome brick window arches and well preserved chimney stacks above.



Right: Unusual ten-over-one pane sash windows above shops at Dartmouth Road.

Doors

Historic doors have a great deal of character and are usually designed to complement the style and age of the building. Historic doors in the conservation area are made from timber and usually are arranged with four or six recessed panels, often decorated with decorative mouldings. Sometime the doors retain examples of coloured glass, which with traditional door furniture such as brass door handles, knockers and letter boxes all add to the special interest of the conservation area. Sometimes, as in David's Road, the door has a fanlight above to provide light into the hall. The higher status houses, for instance in Waldenshaw Road (Nos. 6 and 8) have well-detailed front doors with a single moulded panel below glazed upper panels.



Details of front door treatments at Waldenshaw Road (left) and a simple Tuscan porch at Devonshire Road (left)

The surrounds of these doors are also of significance and include classically-inspired porticoes, supported by Tuscan columns, as can be seen in Devonshire Road, or recessed porches, as can be seen in Westwood Park or Waldenshaw Road.

6 The condition of the conservation area

As part of the assessment of Forest Hill conservation area, a brief visual condition survey of some of the properties and the area in general was carried out in 2008.

Most of the buildings in the conservation area date from between the 1840s and 1890s, with the greatest amount dating from the latter part of this period. These buildings are therefore at least 150 years old, so it is not surprising that that some of them require repair and restoration. However, the general condition of the buildings is relatively good, given their age, and no particular 'Buildings at Risk' were noted during the survey work for this document.

Vacant buildings or premises are largely restricted to the shops which face the principal streets although a certain vacancy rate is to be expected in a commercial area as businesses move on. However, the turnover of shops has led to a gradual decline in the overall quality of the shopfronts which the Council is gradually seeking to address through the imposition of the advice contained in its Shopfronts Guidance Leaflet. Where elements of the historic shopfront remain, these should be protected and incorporated into any proposed changes. For these buildings, the condition of the upper floors is also a concern, as often these are in separate ownership or use, and can be neglected or altered in inappropriate ways, such as the insertion of uPVC windows. The abundance of satellite dishes on these commercial properties is another major issue which the Council can address through its enforcement powers.



Long term vacancy of shop units such as this one on Dartmouth Road has resulted in cases of dereliction that threaten the



Poor quality replacement of shop fronts and lack of control of alterations has degraded the street scene on Dartmouth Road

preservation of historic properties

For the buildings in residential uses, small changes have been noted which cumulatively will have an adverse effect on the special character of the conservation area. These include the insertion of uPVC windows and doors, changes to the traditional roof materials with modern ones, and the loss of decorative mouldings and other features. Again, satellite dishes, especially on buildings which have been subdivided into flats, are visually discordant and should be relocated in less prominent locations or removed altogether.

Many of the houses have converted their front gardens to car parking, requiring the removal of the original front boundary, usually a brick wall. Not only is the removal of the wall and garden regrettable in terms of the loss of historic fabric and sense of enclosure, but also because of the loss of an urban wildlife habitat and the adverse effect of hard surfacing on water run-off during heavy rain.



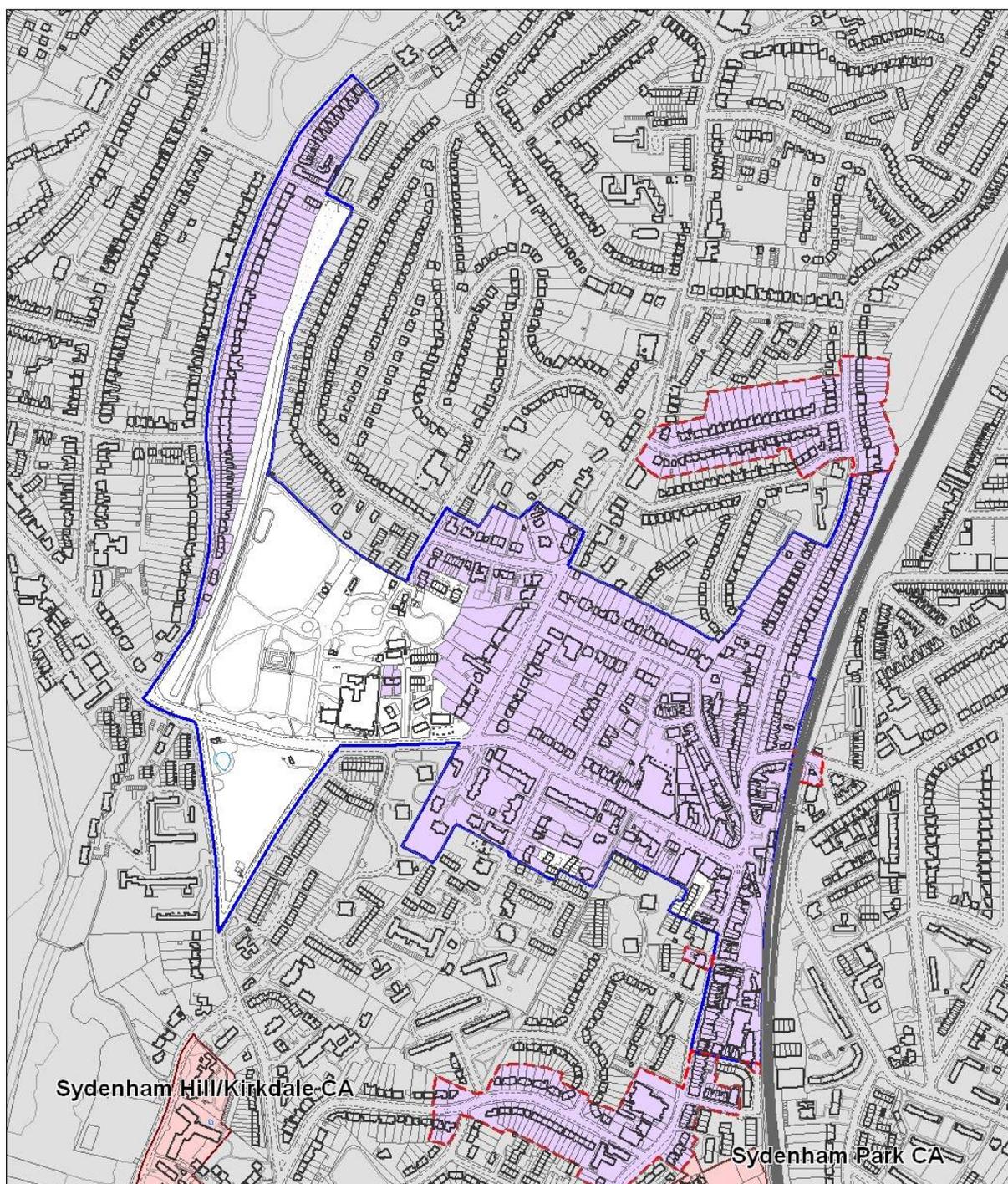
A profusion of satellite dishes on the main elevation of a property on Devonshire Road which has been divided into flats



Properties on Devonshire Road which have lost their front boundaries to provide off road car parking

Some of these changes may not have required planning permission and have been carried out lawfully under the householder's existing 'permitted development rights'. However, the Council has powers to restrict these rights by means of an Article 4 Direction, which brings these changes under planning control. As a result of this conservation area review, an Article 4 Direction was made to most residential properties in the area to encourage good quality and appropriate alterations. The Notice came into effect on 24th November 2010.

Forest Hill Conservation Area



-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Extensions as of July 2010
-  Area covered by Article 4 Direction
-  Adjoining Conservation Areas



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Forest Hill Conservation Area Map highlighting properties which, since 24 November 2010, are covered by an Article 4 Direction removing permitted development rights.



Two houses at Manor Mount that have lost character through the replacement of traditional timber sash windows with uPVC units

The quality of the public realm throughout the conservation area is poor with the use of modern materials for pavements, although the Council has used a fairly standard range of materials and details for street furniture to provide a more cohesive look. There is however an issue with maintenance, as some of the pavements are in poor condition. The protection and future enhancement of the granite setts in Havelock Walk must be a priority.

The many trees throughout the conservation area make a very important contribution and must be protected. Where the trees are in private ownership, residents are encouraged to look after their trees. Street trees, in public ownership, must similarly be looked after and replaced when diseased. The use of species such as horse chestnuts, oaks and limes should continue, rather than flowering cherries or similar smaller trees which are not typical of the conservation area.



The profusion of mature broad leaved trees within the conservation area makes a contribution to its character and appearance that needs protecting through proactive management

