

Hall Drive Area of Special Local Character

This document provides a short description of this Area of Special Local Character, and a statement of significance. It should be used to inform planning applications within the ASLC.

Description of the area

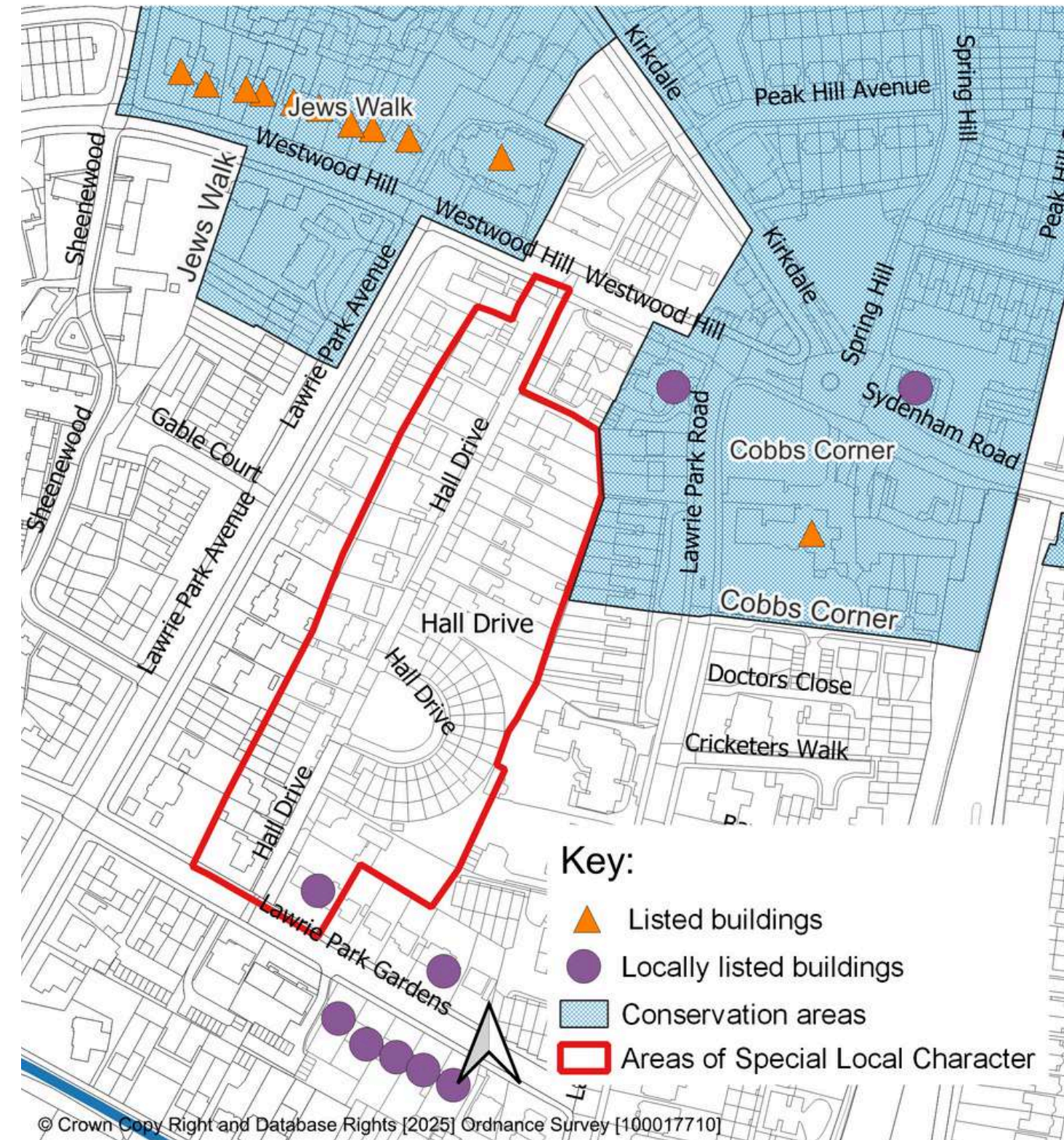
Hall Drive is a private road between Westwood Hill and Lawrie Park Gardens, built on the grounds of Sydenham Hall, which was demolished at some point between the 1930s and 1950s. It has a very peaceful, green and almost bucolic character created by wide green verges with a chain and post fence, detached houses in a variety of styles set back far from the road behind soft planted front gardens, and several large trees and a central planted lawn.

1. Architecture

Hall Drive contains an eclectic and interesting mix of typologies built at different times which create a visually harmonious group. Of interest are:

- locally listed 183 Lawrie Park Gardens
- 37-75 Hall Drive, a terrace of houses designed by Squire & Partners and developed by Wren Ltd in the early 1960s in a semi-circular arrangement around a lawn
- 1-19 Hall Drive (good quality detached and semi detached 1930s houses with mock Tudor timber framing and brick ground floors)
- High quality 20th century houses in a variety of styles including 12-16 Hall Drive, arts & crafts inspired houses with hung tiles, in cottage and Dutch styles, 18 Hall Drive, an imposing double fronted house in the Cape Dutch style, and 20 Hall Drive, a distinctive Art Deco family home.

Boundary Map



2. Historical, social, cultural, archaeological interest

- Hall Drive was historically the carriage road of Sydenham Hall, the home of the Lawrie family built in 1805. The Lawrie family owned extensive land in Sydenham.
- Sydenham Hall, former home of the Lawrie family, was sold to the Crystal Palace Company and its grounds were built upon. The Hall was demolished between the 1930s and 1950s, and nothing remains of it today except the reference in the name. The road was named Hall Drive in 1936.
- In 1871 Camille Pissarro painted the famous view looking along Lawrie Park Avenue towards St Bartholomew's church. It shows a chain and post fence, which has disappeared in Lawrie Park Avenue today but is still present in places on Hall Drive.



Sydenham Hall before its demolition. Photo courtesy of Steve Grindlay.

3. Townscape

Hall Drive is an example of a planned layout, it is a straight road with no pavement, the road is lined by wide green verges and chain and post fence which create a green, rustic atmosphere. 37-75 Hall Drive, located centrally in Hall Drive, is an unusual semi-circular development that curves and embraces the sloping of the terrain. It has a positive impact on the townscape.

4. Landscape

The green verges, soft planted front gardens with mature trees and dense shrubs, the presence of coherent boundary treatments, and the planted lawn in front of 37-75 Hall Drive, with trees, bushes and landscape features, create a very green and peaceful environment, which contrasts with the busy neighbouring roads.



Eclectic mix of housing, abundant vegetation and chain and post fence

Hall Drive's planting makes it a haven for wildlife, with foxes, 52 different

species of birds (including falcons, sparrow hawks and owls), hedgehogs, bats, frogs, newts, stag beetles, elephant hawk and old lady moths.

Since 2012 the banks of the Green are host to a large and growing colony of solitary bees. Flower beds and planting by residents, to support biodiversity, enhance the area and attract pollinators, birds and butterflies, have resulted in a green, lush environment and elaborate, locally celebrated flower displays in spring.

The Hall Drive Residents Committee is actively engaged in managing the landscape and plants bulbs in the grass verges for spring flower displays, with an emphasis on species diversity. The residents of Hall Drive have also added flower beds, bird boxes, hedgehog houses and bug hotels in the communal areas to encourage wildlife.

Summary of Significance

Hall Drive contains an eclectic mix of house types, the majority of which postdate the demolition of Sydenham Hall, and the variety is essential to the architectural interest of the street. Just one house (183 Lawrie Park Gardens) is of late 19th century date. A number of early 20th century houses are at 40, 1-19 and 20-12 Hall Drive. 37-75 Hall Drive date to the 1960s and there are post war housing blocks at northern end of the Drive (2c, 2b, 4, 6a, 6d Hall Drive and 5-11 Westwood Hill). The street has wide green verges, deep, soft planted front gardens with mature trees, and the large central planted lawn to no. 37-75 Hall Drive. These create a very peaceful, almost rural, atmosphere. Some houses do not have boundary treatments behind the post and chain fence on the grass verges, which creates a porosity between the street and the front gardens. This visual permeability between public and private spheres creates an open, welcoming environment. The post and chain fence recalls the one shown in an 1871 Camille Pissarro painting of Lawrie Park Avenue

which runs parallel to Hall Drive, towards St Bartholomew's church. That post and chain fence has now disappeared in Lawrie Park Avenue and the one in Hall Drive is an important reminder of it.

Features of interest

- The planted green, the verges and the post and chain fence.



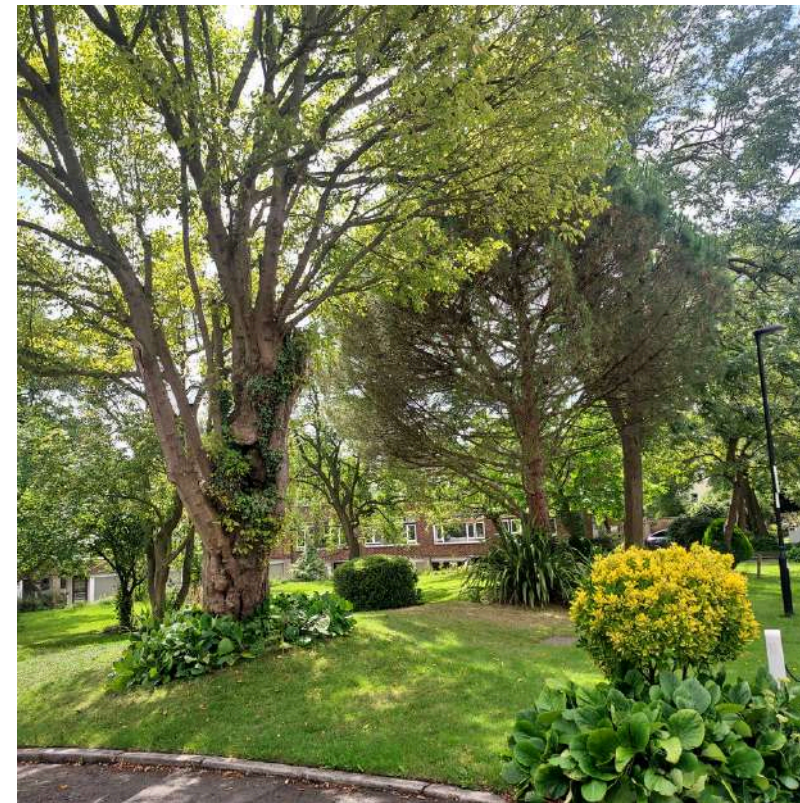
37-75 Hall Drive

Issues, threats & opportunities

- Large areas of parking in front of the smaller blocks of flats (2a,b,c,d and 22-34 Hall Drive), partially hidden by vegetation. The loss of vegetation would result in the car parking becoming more visible and prominent, which would detract from the green character of the ASLC.
- Visually impermeable boundaries (e.g. timber fences on top of boundary wall, taller brick and stone walls) detract from the open character of Hall Drive.
- Reduction in green landscaping through enlarged areas for parking or gravel surfacing which contrast with the attractive soft planting everywhere else.
- The removal of or breakage of the post and chain fence in some parts diminishes the character of the ASLC. Opportunities for repairs should be explored.



Chain and post fence



Central lawn



Extensive planting in green verges, central lawn and front gardens

