

Rockbourne Road 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.

Boundary Map

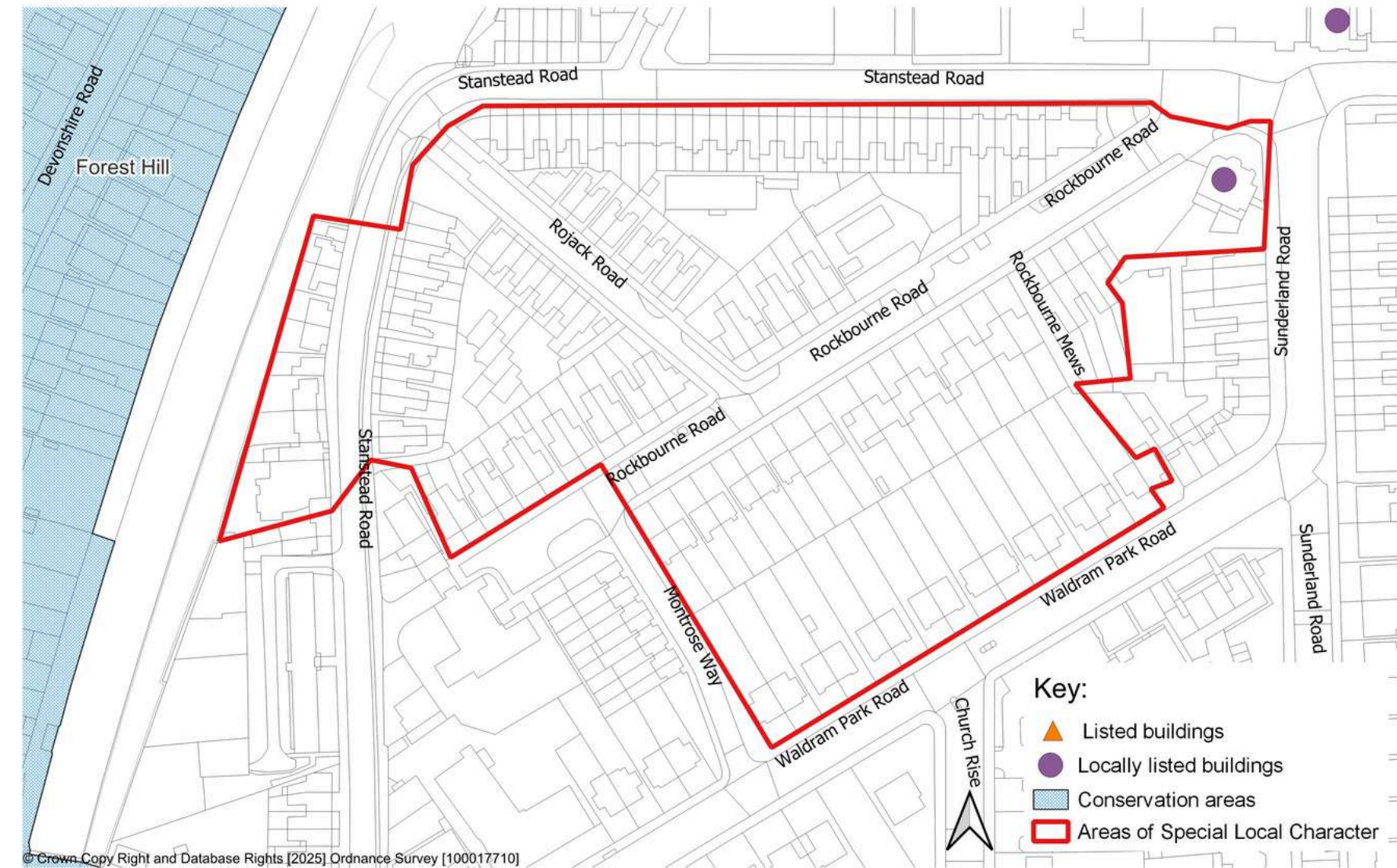
Description of the area

This area encompasses four roads on flat land laid out in a triangle around Rockbourne Road and Rojack Road, and edged by Stanstead Road and Waldram Park Road, with a variety of architectural typologies constructed through the 19th century. The houses range from small, simple two storey paired or terraced dwellings (on Stanstead Rd and Rojack Rd) to larger three and four storey paired villas and terraces (on Rockbourne and Waldram Park Rd). Despite a variety of boundary treatments, the houses have for the most part retained soft planted front gardens, and the presence of large, mature street trees give the area a peaceful, verdant feeling. This is especially true in Stanstead, Rockbourne and Rojack roads, where there is little traffic.

1. Architecture

Rockbourne Road ASLC contains an eclectic mix of typologies built at different times which create a visually interesting group:

- 53-61 Stanstead Rd are some of the oldest buildings in the area, they were built directly to the building line with no front gardens. The gaps between them have been infilled with smaller structures so that they read as a terrace, but they are more likely originally to have been pairs.
- High status paired villas on Rockbourne Road and Waldram Park Road, with different typologies, built between the 1860s and the 1890s. They are



very ornate buildings with decorative elements in neo-Gothic and Italianate style.

- The houses on the east side of Stanstead Road are modest two storey pairs and terraces built between the 1870s – 1890s with pitched roofs and tall chimneys at the party walls. Though the windows have been changed, their simplicity and coherence creates an attractive group. The houses on Rojack Road are similar, but slightly later, and have bay windows, which elevates them somewhat from the other modest houses in the area.
- Two former/current public houses:
 - The Forest Hill Hotel: former public house (and presumably inn) converted to residential accommodation now called Wenlock House (41 Stanstead Rd). This early building appears on the 1868/1871 OS Map.
 - The Railway Telegraph: locally listed public house on the corner of Rockbourne Road, Stanstead Rd and Sunderland Rd, first licensed in 1853.
- Post war housing developments include the residential block at 19-37a Stanstead Rd, built following the destruction of a terrace by a bomb during the blitz. Map evidence indicates that post war prefabricated bungalows were installed on the site of 19-37a Stanstead Rd after the war.

2. Historical, social, cultural, archaeological

No evidence available to address this criteria.

3. Townscape

- Unusual lynchpin shape to Stanstead Road creates triangular layout of ASLC.
- Generous width to Rockbourne Road.
- Waldram Park Road was laid out as a wide avenue with large trees and grand houses; this original street layout is well preserved.



Modest 19th century houses in Stanstead Road



High-status, elaborately detailed paired villas on Rockbourne Road



- Street furniture: the benches of Rockbourn Rd are well used and appreciated by the local community.

4.Landscape

- Rockbourne Road has a particularly dense tree canopy, formed both by street trees and the large planted front gardens.
- Stanstead Road and Rojack Road have fewer trees and smaller front gardens but where vegetation exists it lends a green character. Waldram Park Road has a more urban character dominated by the wide road (A205), but has an avenue of mature plane trees.

Summary of Significance

A distinct group of residential buildings of a number of types, developed partly in groups and partly in an ad hoc manner, and typifying mid-late 19th century urban developments with housing which spanned the social classes. It is tightly bounded by the railway to the west, the A205 to the south and by the curve of Stanstead Road to the north, and lies on flat land at the foot of the Sydenham Hill Ridge. The houses are generally well-preserved and different groups demonstrate an array of architectural approaches and decoration. Two public houses formerly served this area, but only one (The Railway Telegraph) survives in its original use, and this occupies a prominent position in the area. The presence of prominent street trees and soft planted front gardens serves to give the area a peaceful, verdant character. At the centre, Rockbourne Road has a particularly dense tree canopy and benefits from places to sit in the public realm, which are particularly appreciated by local residents.

Issues, threats & opportunities

- Inappropriate render obscuring brickwork.
- Loss of boundary treatments and paving of front gardens to create off-street parking.

- Erosion of the shopping parade at the southern end of Stanstead Rd with the removal of shopfronts and the insertion of insensitive ground floor residential elevations.
- Large car park for post-war development at the eastern junction of Rockbourne and Stanstead Roads weakens the street enclosure and creates a large area of hard landscaping.
- Railway Telegraph Pub is in poor condition and has a non-traditional, run down boundary treatment to its external terrace, which detracts from the corner of the ASLC.
- Removal of some street trees in Rojack Rd.
- Opportunity for more street tree planting on Stanstead Road and Rojack Road, as this would enhance the existing green character, as well as at the corner of Rockbourne and Stansted Rds.



The Old Forest Hill Hotel, now Wenlock House



The Railway Telegraph