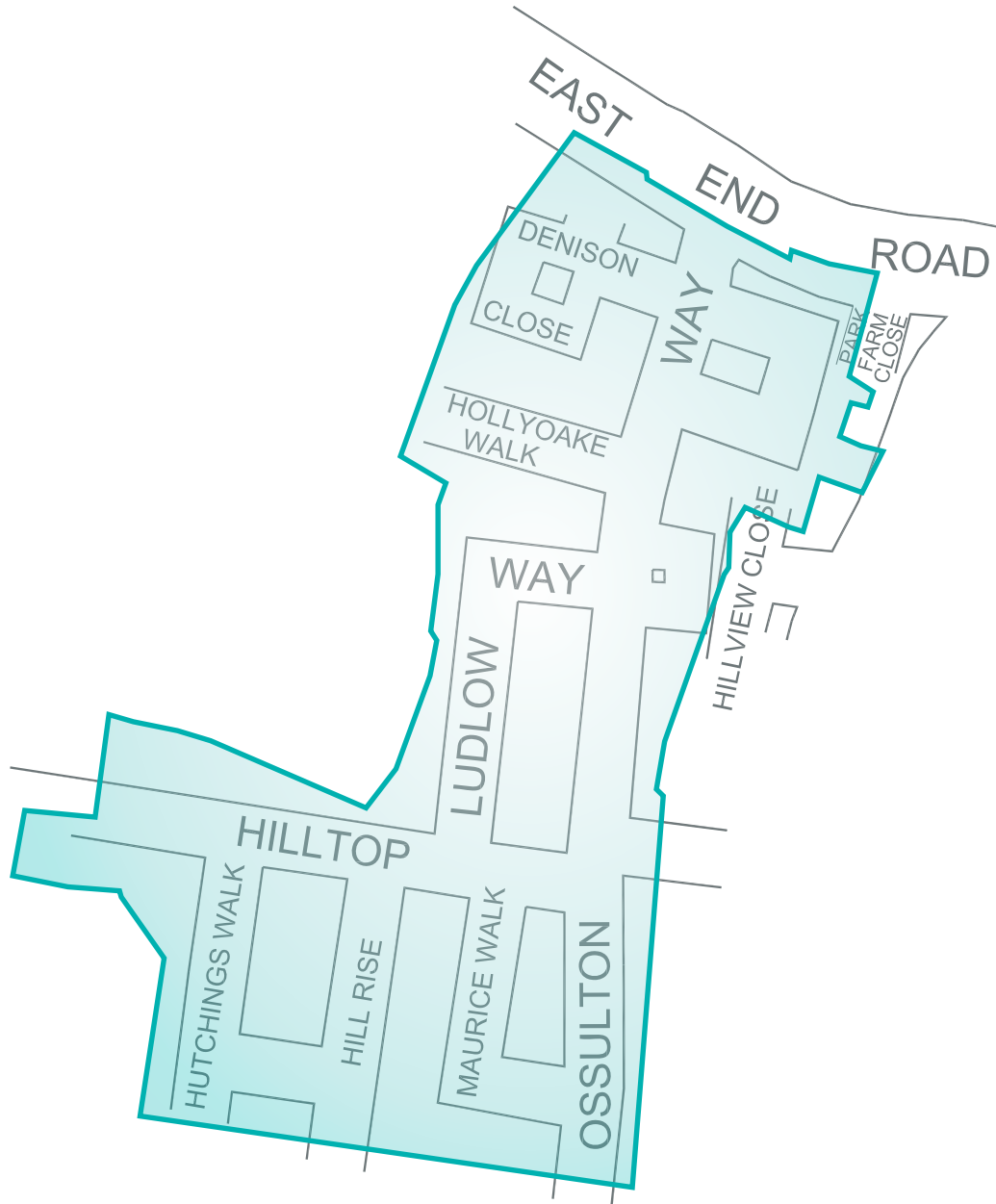


Hampstead Garden Suburb

Ossulton Way and Hill Top – Area 10

Character Appraisal



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Character appraisal

Section 1 Background historical and architectural information

1.1 Location and topography

The Ossulton Way and Hill Top area is situated in the north of the Suburb. Ossulton Way rises steeply from Market Place running northwards to meet East End Road which forms the northern boundary of both the Suburb and the Conservation Area at this point. There are closes and roads that lead off from Ossulton Way and take advantage of the south facing slope. St. Marylebone Cemetery, a large open, green space with mature trees, forms the north-west boundary to this area.

1.2 Development dates

The land was part of the '300 acres' leased initially to the Co-partners in 1919. The Trust did not have control over the development but the Co-partnership paid a fee to be able to call this land part of the Garden Suburb. The earliest buildings, dating from 1927, are mainly in the south of the area, in Hill Top and Hill Rise. Development moved northwards, continuing into the mid 1930s. Neale Close, built in 1929, is an unusual early project in the north.

1.3 Originating architect(s) and planners

A large number of architects contributed to this area, making it one of the most diverse in character in the Suburb. There are coherent groups by different designers all along Ossulton Way. Architects who dominate include C.G. Butler (the Co-partnership Tenants architect), A. Newman, and Crickmer and Foxley. Other architects such as J. A. Bateman, G. E. Clare and A. Bryett designed single closes. The road layout was largely by J.C. Soutar modifying and expanding Sutcliffe's plans which were, themselves, based on Unwin's original plan for the 'New Suburb'.

1.4 Intended purpose of original development

By the late 1920s, the era of philanthropic building was over. This area was meant as a residential suburb for the middle classes and designs were influenced by the perception of their tastes and aspirations, for example, almost all the houses built in this area have provision for cars in garages and drives. There are also flats and maisonettes, which provided less expensive housing for a greater range of income groups.

1.5 Density and nature of the buildings

There is a mixture of low density housing in the form of large semi-detached and detached houses with garages and large gardens, and higher density provision in flats and maisonettes.

Section 2 Overall character of the area

This is an area of quiet roads and closes leading off the spine of Ossulton Way, a busy north-south route through the Suburb. The overall character is green and pleasant with tree-lined streets, well-maintained hedges and a sense of space emphasised by the small greens in the closes and in set back areas on Ossulton Way and Hill Top. There are fine views from Hill Top and Ossulton Way towards St Jude's spire. The trees of Marylebone Cemetery form a green background for all the houses on that north-west boundary.

The area was developed during a period of transition; the earliest houses were built between 1926 and 1930 and are predominantly Arts and Crafts in style, while later houses show the influence of Moderne and Streamline architecture. This change can be seen travelling northwards up Ossulton Way. Near the junction with Market Place the houses are mainly of brick with traditional Arts and Crafts detailing, but further to the north there are white rendered houses with the distinctive curved windows and chevron decorated doors typical of Moderne architecture.

The closes and surrounding roads tend each to have a consistent architectural style associated with the originating architect. To the south, Hill Top, Hill Rise and Maurice Walk are predominantly of red brick and tile, with Arts and Crafts decorative brickwork. Hutchings Walk, which was built later, in 1935, is an enclave of striking Moderne houses with pitched roofs. In the same year in Ludlow Way, Crickmer used a similar style as that in Hutchings Walk, but introduced some houses with both brick and render. Holyoake Walk also has brick and render houses with modernist influences. Neale Close is an extensive group of cottages in styles reminiscent of the pre-World War I cottages found in the older part of the Suburb, whereas the flats in Denison Close, built only four years later in 1933, have a more modern feel, with horizontal paned casement windows.

All this architectural variety contributes to the distinctive character of this area particularly since the trees and spacious layout provide a strong framework and the different groupings sit comfortably together. Twittens link Denison Close, Holyoake Walk and Ludlow Way, and also link Maurice Walk to Market Place, providing glimpsed views through to very different streetscapes.

2.1 Principal positive features

Layout and public realm

- the layout exploits the slope of the land; houses step up the slope on north-south running roads, and east-west roads follow the contour lines
- set-backs on Ossulton Way and Hill Top provide interesting variety to the built frontage
- a mixture of through roads and quieter, intimate closes and walks
- twittens create convenient pedestrian access routes between closes and offer views of the different architecture beyond.

Landscape and trees

- well-maintained privet hedges form boundaries of most properties
- street trees also soften the streetscape; cherry, birch and hawthorn predominate
- views towards St Jude's from Ossulton Way and Hill Top
- some pavements have grass verges, others engineering brick
- attractively maintained greens, particularly the well-planted central courtyard in Denison Close.

Building type and design

- very varied architecture providing examples of all the styles used in the New Suburb e.g. Arts and Crafts, Moderne, Streamline, Vernacular Revival
- cohesive groupings in Ossulton Way with core consistencies in scale and proportion
- closes and smaller roads are the work of single architects and have strong uniformities of style
- use of symmetry and asymmetry and varied patterns of repetition within groups adds visual appeal
- variety of housing types, detached, semi-detached, linked terraces, maisonettes and flats of particularly well-thought-out designs
- some individual houses of interest.

Materials and detailing

- uniformity of materials within each architectural tradition
- traditional houses, mainly brick with render or tile decoration, tile roofs, casement windows; some high-quality decorative brickwork
- moderne style houses, white rendered with metal windows, often curved or with strong horizontal lines, consciously modern doors, sometimes with decorative chevron patterns.

2.2 Principal negative features

Layout and public realm

- heavy traffic on Ossulton Way and in Hill Top at school run times
- damaged, poorly-maintained pavements and engineering brick verges; some sections replaced in concrete.

Landscape and trees

- overgrown hedges mask architectural features
- loss of front gardens to hardstanding.

Building type and design

- alterations which affect the symmetrical sequence within a group, for example, incorporation of garages, enclosure or extension of porches.

Materials and detailing

- considerable numbers of inappropriate replacement doors and windows detract from the integrity of the original designs
- garage doors of a style which jars with the architecture of the houses
- unsympathetic paving materials in drives and areas of hardstanding
- lack of maintenance and repainting detracts from the appearance of some buildings.

Section 3 The different parts of the main area in greater detail

The above features are found throughout the area, although certain features are more characteristic of particular parts of the area. To illustrate some of these features the area can be divided into four sections.

- 3.1 Ossulton Way
- 3.2 Neale Close, Denison Close and Holyoake Walk
- 3.2 Hutchings Walk and Ludlow Way
- 3.3 Hill Top, Hill Rise and Maurice Walk

3.1 Ossulton Way

Character and landscape

Ossulton Way initially rises steeply from the junction with Market Place; the houses step up the hill creating attractively varied rooflines. The hedge lines are particularly trim, and together with the grass verges and trees, this provides a surprisingly green and picturesque feel for a busy, main thoroughfare. A change occurs about halfway up the road; here the slope is less steep and the landscape more open, the architecture is sharper and more dramatic with strong Moderne features. The loss of a number of front gardens here contributes to a 'harder' character. The junction with East End Road is marked by small shopping parades with flats above. This is a very low-key entrance to the Suburb.

Architecture

Ossulton Way has examples of most of the architectural styles and distinctive decorative features found in inter-war Suburb houses. At the southern end are Nos. 1-3 and 2-12, a group of maisonettes by A.H.



North in 1934, using designs that he went on to use in the much larger grouping on Lyttelton Road. The buildings look like semi-detached or detached houses with jettied first floors, projecting gables with bays and oriel first floor windows ([Photograph 1](#)). The ground floors are brick with either white rendered or half timbered first floors. The original windows and doors appear to be intact.

Beyond this grouping is a sequence of mostly Arts and Crafts influenced houses.

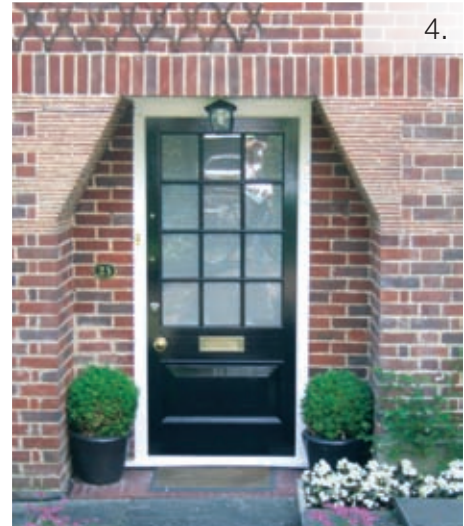
- Nos. 13-27 by Crickmer and Foxley. Four pairs of semi-detached houses, the end two of which are identical. There are three designs here, each with distinctive doorcases, porches, and decorative brick features ([Photographs 2, 3, 4](#)). The end two blocks have keystone doorcases and gallery glazing at first floor level



2.



3.



4.

- Nos. 20-38 is a run of semi-detached houses by Newman 1930. Nos. 20-34 form a symmetrical grouping. Distinctive features include large staircase windows, decorative brickwork on gable ends and ground floor bay windows
- No. 42 stands out as transitional, a brick detached house with hipped tiled roof and very deep eaves, curved metal bay windows and an Art Deco doorcase ([Photograph 5](#))



5.



6.

- No. 46 is a modern 1960s design unsympathetic to the character of the road
- Two semi-detached pairs by T. Berrington, 1934, have integral garages and balconies over the front porch ([Photograph 6](#)). Nos. 48-50 are largely the original design, Nos. 52-54 have been modified with glazed-in porches, inappropriate front doors and replacement garage doors.



The central section of Ossulton Way has a run of Moderne houses by Welch, Cachemaille-Day and Lander (east side) and J. Oliphant (west side). On the eastern side of the road, the houses are set back around a green with semis linked at first floor level above rectangular arches leading to garages (Photograph 7). There are curved bay windows, corner windows and some houses have large staircase



8.

windows to the side, and rear balconies which can be glimpsed from the road (Photograph 8).

In many cases replacement doors and poor maintenance have detracted from the architectural effect which depends very much on the sharpness of the contrast between render and metal and on the pristine whiteness of the walls. There is substantial loss of front gardens to hardstanding, which are of varied, and sometimes unsympathetic, materials.

Northwards, the architecture is different on the two sides of Ossulton Way. To

the west, there are flats and maisonettes. Nos. 77-115 are two-storey maisonette blocks with direct access to each dwelling on the ground floor and access to first floor maisonettes via a centrally placed door with tall staircase window above. The blocks, by B. Ewart Dixon 1935, have strong horizontal lines

in the windows, in the brick and render banding and balconies at first floor level. Green painted doors with chevron decoration give an Art Deco feel ([Photograph 9](#)).



Beyond the junction with Dennison Close is a three-storey block of 1930s flats which turns the corner into East End Road, where shops occupy the ground floor. They have dark Flemish bond brickwork, and tile-hung bays. A little grandeur is added by the stone door surround and pedimented window above. The timber casement windows have horizontal glazing – many in need of re-painting.

On the eastern side of the road are semi-detached houses by Crickmer, very plain with central garages. Nos. 98-104 are two pairs of asymmetrical semi-detached houses by Butler, which form a mirror-image group. One side has a tile-hung double height bay window, the other features a shallow central brick gable with arched doorway. This pattern was also used by Butler in Deansway. The

flats of Warwick Court mark both the end of the road and the entrance to Neale Close. These are almost identical to the maisonettes by Dixon on the other side of the road, with strong horizontal banding and chevron doors.

Ossulton Place, on East End Road, is a 1950s terrace of six small houses with the boxed casement windows and coloured metal porches characteristic of that decade. To the east, beyond Branksome Court is a 1930s block of flats of very little interest and much altered.

3.2 Neale Close, Denison Close and Holyoake Walk

Character and landscape

These three closes are at the northern end of Ossulton Way and have a different ambiance to that of the through route. Neale Close is a very attractive group of Arts and Crafts maisonettes. It is an enclosed, intimate area with many road trees, mainly cherry and birches, and most of the groups are set back behind hedges or accessed by hedged twittens. The wealth of greenery gives the close a rural feel. Old-fashioned street lamps add character as do the narrow red tiled herringbone verges.

Denison Close comprises four blocks of yellow brick flats set well back from Ossulton Way behind maisonettes which shield the close from traffic noise. To the rear is a car park and communal gardens. A twitten links the close to Ludlow Way and the distinctive mansard roofs can be seen from this approach. In the centre of the close is an attractively planted formal garden with large corner willow trees and stone paths. In front of the flats are narrow grass lawns with low hedges; small trees are planted along the pavement which has a narrow tiled herringbone verge. The street lamps are of modern design.

Architecture

Neale Close was designed by Butler in 1929, in a unified Arts and Crafts style. It consists of eight blocks of maisonettes deploying four different designs, which share characteristic features such as red Flemish

bond brickwork, timber casement windows, and arched porches with set back doors. Decorative brickwork panels decorate end elevations.

At each entrance to the close, Nos. 53-56 and 1-4 repeat designs Butler used previously in Hill Top and Midholm Close. On the distinctive end elevations, the central door is framed by full height pilasters. The



doors have a porch canopy and brick herringbone detailing above. An adjoining brick wall has a built-in arch to the gardens (Photograph 10). No. 22 Neale Close, which forms the corner of the northerly block in the T-shape, mirrors the end elevation of No. 56 and the garden wall feature. Unfortunately much of the garden hedge has been replaced with a fence.

The long, most northerly, block and its neighbour to the east have hexagonal windows on either side of tiled tunnelback arches and bay windows at each end of the blocks. There is a tile-hung central gable, the tile creasing just below the gable highlights the flared curves of the roof.

The three blocks around the T-shape extension to Neale Close have simple hipped roofs. They also have a central tunnelback arch leading to the gardens which are approached between hedges. Some hedges are overgrown and some have died and been replaced by a wire fence. Each block has a more modernist, long balcony over the tunnelback with a round window above (Photograph 11). On the southerly block this round opening is a brick and tile vent.



The block at the southern entrance to Neale Close (Nos. 45-52) is of a unique design. The long terrace of maisonettes has two symmetrical projecting façades with gabled roofs adjacent to 47 and 49. In the centre there is a brick detailed (rather than tile detailed) tunnelback arch. This detailing is echoed in the arched doorways of the adjacent Nos. 48 and 50 (Photograph 12). These two doors are themselves attractively painted, one in a cheerful royal blue and the other in red. Above the archway is a brick ventilator feature in a rectangular shape. Most of the front doors look as if they are of the original design with two fan shaped fan-lights set into the top of the doors. The ground floor maisonettes at each end of the block have bay windows.

The distinctive 1930s flats in Denison Close embody the transition from an Arts and Crafts style to Modernist design. The blocks are all three stories high and have steep pitched mansard roofs



13.



14.

(Photograph 13). Access to the flat roofs is from pyramid-roofed turrets which are present on each block. The flats are in London stock brick with red brick highlights around the windows and main doorways.

The doorways also have a wide, white ribbed border, typical of 1930s Art Deco design and double swing panelled doors

(Photograph 14). All the casement windows are of a 1930s rectangular shaped style. Tile hung bay windows extend to the second floor. Three of the blocks have been re-roofed in rather hard, machine-made tiles and painted. The most westerly block still has the original roof in a poor condition and has yet to be renovated.

At the entrance to Denison Close from Ossulton Way, is the former caretaker's lodge, an Arts and Crafts bungalow. It has a projecting tiled gabled central section with a bay window, and the 1930s casement windows tie in with those of the flats in Denison Close.



15.



16.

Holyoake Walk is linked to Denison Close by a twitten. It is a small close of distinctive semi-detached houses which are rendered at ground floor level and of brick at first floor level. Most have integral garages with metal horizontal railings around the balconies above (Photograph 15).

Others have, instead, corner porches under the balconies. On the northern side of the

close, a variation of this pattern forms a terrace of two sets of linked semi-detached houses. Around the curve of the turning circle, the houses have traditional, pointed, tiled porches (Photograph 16).

3.3 Hutchings Walk and Ludlow Way

Character and landscape

Hutchings Walk runs south from Hill Top turning eastwards at the bottom of the hill to join Hill Rise. There is a turning circle at this corner and a pair of 1930s garages form a focal point. The walk has an open character with small street trees and engineering brick verges. Hedges are largely intact and some front paths and gardens have been partially, but not totally, paved over. The layout of Ludlow Way is a mirror-image of that of Hutchings Walk. It runs north from Hill Top, turning eastwards to form a turning circle joining Ossulton Way. It also has an open aspect with distant views to trees. There are mixed street trees though some are recent replacements. Verges are also of engineering brick. Some of the front gardens have been half paved over, joining the driveway and footpath which detracts from the character (Photograph 17).



17.

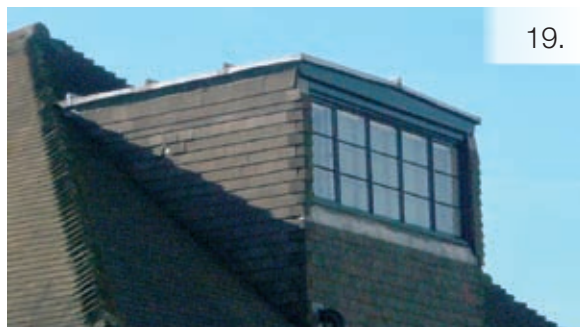


18.

Architecture

The architecture of Hutchings Walk is uniform, mostly semi-detached houses, in a Moderne style, but with pitched roofs. Designed by Crickmer in 1935, the house types vary between those with a curved central section, including curved windows, (Photograph 18) and those with a flat centre. The semi-detached houses are of three slightly different sizes. The larger ones have square-cornered downstairs front windows. There are three detached houses.

The roof hips were originally bonnet tiled, but some have been replaced with ridge tiles. Many of the original double wooden garage doors, with windows in the upper third, have been replaced with metal up-and-over doors. Some loft extensions include obtrusive dormer windows (Photograph 19).



19.

Two front doors have added porches of inappropriate style (Photograph 20). One front door has been replaced with a modern door incorporating a Neo-Georgian fanlight. Most front doors have been painted various colours or stripped; the original colour was green. These changes detract from the coherent architectural character of the walk although, overall, the architectural effect has survived.



Ludlow Way is also by Crickmer but the architecture is rather less uniform. There is a detached brick house at the corner of Hill Top, built after bomb damage, which bears no relation to others on the street (Photograph 21). The first two detached houses on the western side are mirror images of each other (Photograph 22).



Unlike the other houses on the street, they have solid wooden shutters, pantile roofs and striking recessed porches. Around the L-bend at the top of Ludlow Way are two further pairs of semi-detached houses which are mirror images of each other. In general, houses on the west side of the road are white

rendered whereas many on the east side are brick and render (skirt and blouse) (Photograph 23). Most of the chimney stacks are unpainted brick, but on a few houses they have been painted white. A few of the brick doorcases project out from the rendered wall, many of these have unfortunately been painted over, thereby diminishing the effect.



23.



24.

Several of the garages have been made into rooms and linked to the house. Some front doors have been replaced with a wide variety of modern designs and regrettably, some upper windows have been replaced with modern plastic frames of a totally different design. A feature of the original design of some windows is an Art Deco square with chevrons in the central upper panel (Photograph 24), which in many cases has not been preserved. On some houses, the exterior pipe work is visually poor.

3.4 Hill Top, Hill Rise and Maurice Walk

Character and landscape

These three roads are built on the south-facing slope with houses by Butler in Hill Top (1927-29) and Crickmer and Foxley in Hill Rise and Maurice Walk (1926-28). The pavement verges are of engineering brick but the street trees, garden planting, varied frontages and roof lines which follow the sloping site, all contribute to a green and informal ambience. Hill Top runs west from Ossulton Way and, at the junction with Hill Rise, there are views towards Central Square and St Jude's spire. At the western end of Hill Top, maisonettes are set back in a rectangle behind a large green giving an open character to this section of the road.

Architecture

The main architectural influence is Arts and Crafts, in that traditional materials are used and inventive decorative features are based on building crafts. Both architects draw on a restricted palette of stylistic features which they repeat in different ways within groups of houses. This provides variety within a

cohesive framework and, where these patterns have been maintained, the architecture is shown to best advantage.

In Hill Top the majority of the houses are by Butler. They are mostly semi-detached but there is a group of detached houses, Nos. 22-34, which include some dormer bungalow designs. Many houses have inappropriate replacement doors and the materials used for hardstandings are varied and sometimes ill-fitting. No. 26 has an extended side porch attached which detracts from the architecture of the house.

- No. 3 is a half-timbered, double-gabled house by Newman with central dormer window and tiled porch. It is very different from the other houses and enlivens the street
- Nos. 5 and 7 are asymmetrical semi-detached houses displaying many of Butler's distinctive marks, notably shallow projecting gables with hipped roofs, integral garages, downswept roofs with dormer windows, and differing door treatments (arched and flat topped)
- Nos. 12-14 have central garages linked at first floor level by a pierced brick balcony (Photograph 25)



- Nos. 16-20 are an unusual grouping of three with the same decorative features
- Nos. 28-32 are early dormer bungalow designs with integral garages, dormer windows to front and side, tile hung gables with small hipped roof. No. 28 is the mirror image of 32 (Photograph 26)
- Nos. 15-41 are plain Butler houses with a repeat pattern in which the variations in door treatments, gable and garage positioning create an elegant, cohesive group. They complement the formal composition of the Hill Top maisonettes which lie opposite.

The attractive Butler grouping of three maisonette blocks, Nos. 34a-72 (even) Hill Top are set in a half rectangle around a green. There are no prominent trees, which allows a clear view of the architectural details. The blocks are in an Arts and Crafts style with the addition of formal Georgian elements. The stylistic elements are identical to those of Neale Close; brick arches, porches, tunnelbacks, casement, bay and hexagonal windows.

The end houses facing Hill Top, and set forward, have low relief brick pilasters on each side of the doors. These houses have a porch canopy shelter, above which there is brick herringbone detailing. As with other Butler groupings, these houses have an adjoining brick garden wall with a built in arch to the gardens. Unfortunately the archway on No. 34 has completely collapsed.

The central block has a formal Georgian square façade which is stepped forward under a parapet roof with ball finials ([Photograph 27](#)). On each side of this central feature, the houses have an arched tunnelback leading to their gardens with a hexagonal window on either side. Above the arches are round windows. The facing blocks are simpler in design with central chimney stacks and a hexagonal window on the walls nearest to the road. All upper casement windows (as with the central block) are set just below the line of the roof.



Hill Rise joins Market Place to Hill Top and has, therefore, substantial through traffic. The majority of houses are by Crickmer and Foxley. Nos. 2-16, 7-13 are white rendered and cottage-like with roofs downswept over integral garages, some of which have the original hinged doors. Nos. 15-19 constitute a terrace of three brick houses with a pierced brick balcony joining the two end gables at first floor level,



forming a porch for the front door of the middle house. Beyond this, the houses are larger, with bay windows on both floors, integral garages with square, pierced balconies above. The pierced brick theme is used again, in the group of four semi-detached houses further up the Rise, but in a more stark manner ([Photograph 28](#)).

Maurice Walk has a more intimate feel. It is narrower and the hedges and garden planting make for a very green ambiance. A tritten links the road directly to Market Place. The houses are all by Crickmer and Foxley; some, 9-11, 19-21 and 23-25, 33-35 are the same designs as the 'pierced brick' semi-detached houses in Hill Rise. The detached houses are more idiosyncratic in design. Nos. 2, 4, 27 and 31 have timbered, central gables enclosing the front door and forming a balcony at first floor level.



29.

These make a distinctive contribution to the character of the street ([Photograph 29](#)). Nos. 3 -7 are half-timbered maisonettes which form part of the first group on Ossulton Way. There are no front dormers in this road, but there are poor replacement front and garage doors, and a loss of substantial parts of front gardens to hardstanding. Unusually, No. 2 has no hedge at all.

