

## FOREWORD

### **What is a Conservation Area?**

Conservation areas were introduced through the Civic Amenities Act 1967, and there are now more than 9000 across the country. They are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Section 69(1)(a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

The Bishop's Avenue falls within the Hampstead Garden Suburb Conservation Area. This was designated by the council in 1968 and was one of the first conservation areas in the country. Although The Bishops Avenue was laid out prior to the Hampstead Garden Suburb, apart from one or two early houses the majority of the buildings are contemporaneous with either the 'old' or 'new' Suburb. Of course The Bishops Avenue has not the planned feel which characterises the Suburb nor Dame Henrietta's social purpose but they are inextricably linked. Although The Bishop's Avenue shares many of the characteristics of the Suburb (and Numbers 1 and 3 and 2-16 are in the Trust area) it has its own unique qualities. This Character Appraisal Statement seeks to identify these characteristics so that they may be better preserved and enhanced in the future.

### **What are the Implications?**

Conservation Area status acknowledges the importance of an area, highlighting its real and potential attractiveness. It also means that the council's efforts in the area are geared to preserving and enhancing its special character.

One way of protecting conservation areas is through the planning system, which is designed to protect local amenity, whatever the area. However in conservation areas planning legislation requires local authorities to ensure in particular that development proposals do not detract from the character or appearance of the area.

In conservation areas local authorities have more say over some minor changes to buildings, trees and gardens. This does not mean owners can not change their properties but the controls allow proposals to be checked to make sure they are in keeping with the area.

Grant funding from bodies such as English Heritage and the National Lottery is sometimes available for enhancement projects in conservation areas. However the priorities for such funding often change and not all work in all conservation areas will be eligible for this type of help.

### **What is a Character Appraisal Statement?**

Conservation areas are designated by local planning authorities after careful local assessment. This assessment forms the basis for a character appraisal statement. The format and scope of such statements are guided by English Heritage.

A character appraisal statement includes information to explain and justify the conservation area status. It therefore forms a basis for planning decisions in the area and provides the groundwork for any future policies and projects to preserve or enhance the area. The statement does not include specific projects itself.

### **Other Controls**

The council have identified on the Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map The Bishop's Avenue as an Area Requiring Coordinated Protection. It has adapted design and form criteria in recognition of The Bishops Avenue's intrinsic character and its relationship to areas with similar protection in adjoining boroughs.

(Cf UDP Policies 3.4.5 The Bishop's Avenue N2 p. 25).

Many of the buildings on The Bishop's Avenue are listed on the Schedule of Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest. It is the council's intention to preserve or enhance these historic buildings. Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of these buildings will normally be refused.

(Cf UDP Policy T4.4 p.25 and 3.4.5 p.25)

In addition, Numbers 1-3 and 2-16 The Bishop's Avenue are covered by the Article 4 Direction for the Hampstead Garden Suburb Conservation Area.

# CHARACTER APPRAISAL

## 1

### Location and Population

The Bishop's Avenue runs north to south from the Great North Road, Cherry Tree Hill at East Finchley to Hampstead Lane and is crossed by Lyttleton Road, the A1. It is part of Hampstead Garden Suburb Conservation Area and forms its eastern boundary. There are approximately 110 properties on The Bishops Avenue and its cul-de-sacs.

## 2

### Origins, Development and Social Mix of the Area

**2.1 History** The Bishop's Avenue was constructed in c1887 on land which had at one time been part of the Bishop of London's hunting park (The Bishop of London was Lord of the Manor of Finchley until the transfer of all episcopal land to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1868). In a pleasingly meandering form it cut through the Bishops Wood to the south and across farm land to the north.

**2.2 Development** From the beginning it was intended to be the setting for expensive houses. The area around East Finchley station had already been urbanised with many new inhabitants coming from inner London, but the open spaces of land that is now the Hampstead Heath extension, Hampstead Garden Suburb and the Hampstead Golf Course helped to provide an exceptionally rural setting which has continued to make for high house prices. Plots were originally let on 99 year and, more rarely 999 year leases and in 1894 building began.

**2.2.1 First Phase** Most leases were to single individuals. Rich lessees included George Sainsbury, the provision merchant, in 1898 and Christian Carl Lorensen, a chronometer manufacturer in 1901. Twelve houses with large grounds existed by 1906. The Ordnance Survey map of 1912 shows the group of Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust houses (which had bought plots to the north of Deansway), the convalescent home at

East Finchley, a scattering of unnamed houses to the west along the middle and, grouped together at the southern (Hampstead) end by far the largest houses and plots; East Weald, Bishop's Mead, Baron's Court, Kenmore and Dane Court.

**2.2.2 Second Phase** Following the interruption of the First World War, the next ordnance survey was published in 1935/6. This shows that on many of the plots, houses and other features familiar today had been built. Deansway was laid out in 1928, Lyttelton Road and Aylmer Road in 1931-2, and Bancroft Avenue in 1933. To the south of Bishop's Mead the area is identified as a Sports Ground, while opposite, and completing the southern end of The Bishop's Avenue, the land had been divided into three plots featuring Eaglecliff, Chelwood and Heath Lodge. Along the centre most plots had been built on, notable houses included Wyldewood, Oak Lodge, Kenstead Hall, Gable Lodge, Stratheden, Turquoise, White Walls and the original Wacousta and the Towers. North of Deansway the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust had built a number of smaller houses in its more restrained vernacular revival style. With the exception of one or two plots, The Bishop's Avenue street scene was largely complete. Development had proceeded during these years at a fairly leisurely pace yet despite becoming known as Millionaires Row (largely because of the mansions built for famous stars of the time like Gracie Fields), the road remained un-tarmacked until 1935.

Although some of the houses built between the wars are of high architectural quality (some by Hepworth, Smith and Brewer, Sutcliffe and Soutar) and all carried forward vernacular revival details and materials, a number fail to exhibit the architectural skill to be found at Hampstead Garden Suburb. Indeed some are a little architecturally showy, no doubt influenced by the styles of the homes of the stars in Hollywood.

**2.2.3 Third Phase** Little appears to have changed thereafter until the mid 60s when Canons Close and the houses on it were built on the north and east grounds of East Weald. Similar cul-de-sac developments at White Lodge Close, Bishop's Grove, Byron Close and Arden Court Gardens followed to meet the high demand for an address on The Bishop's Avenue whose fame had now spread abroad. These developments have considerably

increased the density levels, somewhat eroding the original character of large houses in large grounds of this part of The Bishop's Avenue. The quality of architecture is often unscholarly and dull or aggressively modern and incongruous.

**2.2.4 Fourth Phase** Development pressure since the early 80s has seen a number of the earlier houses along the middle part of The Bishop's Avenue demolished and replaced with often much larger properties. Many of these have taken the desire to impress to new heights and pay no regard to the vernacular architecture which characterises the area but rather reflect the vagaries of international architectural fashion and the individual whim of their owners.

### **2.3 Social Mix of the Area**

The Bishop's Avenue was from the beginning intended for, and continues to be, the setting for homes for the rich and was already known as 'Millionaires Row' by the 1930s. House prices have always mitigated against occupation by other less well off members of society.

Early residents of The Bishop's Avenue were often successful businessmen and show business stars and, from the beginning, public attitudes were tinged with a certain snobbery about new money and poorly educated taste. For a while 'East Finchley' (that is The Bishop's Avenue) was the butt of Variety show jokes.

The Avenue has long had an exclusive atmosphere which separates it, and its residents, from many of the surrounding areas.

Such riches quickly became the target of criminals and the Avenue was known for a while as 'Burglars' Avenue. Equally, scandal and notoriety have long been associated with The Bishop's Avenue, its history being embellished with many famous incidents and, some infamous residents.

The Bishop's Avenue enjoys a degree of international fame amongst the 'jet set' and millionaire classes which, together with the high property values and consequent profits to be made here, has encouraged its reputation as a safe haven for investment in the UK. Instability abroad led to Greek and later

Iranian millionaires acquiring property on The Avenue, whilst there has been since the 60s rich Middle Eastern (and later Nigerian and now Russian) buyers.

There is little, outward appearance of community along The Avenue with privacy, exclusion and security dominating more recent development.

**3**

**Prevailing or former  
uses within the area,  
their historic  
patronage and the  
influence of these on  
plan form and  
building types**

As the whole of this area was owned by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners this allowed for a cohesive approach to the layout of the road in 1887. A nicely judged use of the topography of the land took the winding road through Bishop's Wood to the south and the farm land to the north. Prior to its creation no development is known of except Bishop's Lodge to the east. Buildings were mainly in various aspects of the vernacular revival and Arts and Crafts style, each being detached and distinct individual designs (the only exceptions being the pairs designed by Sutcliffe and Soutor for the Trust at the north end and a mirroring building to Jersey House which was never built). In the 1920s Hepworth introduced more exotic elements but a certain uniformity of domestic scale, massing and detailing prevailed in new development until recently. Of late The Avenue has become the renewed butt of public mockery, largely due to the erection of a small number of lavishly appointed yet architecturally incongruous huge mansions in a variety of styles.

#### 4 Archaeological significance and potential of the area

To date no significant archeological finds have come to light on The Bishop's Avenue.

Although it is possible that items may yet be discovered relating to the previous land uses as hunting woods, and farm land it is unlikely that the area has great potential.

#### 5 Architectural and historic qualities of buildings

As noted above The Bishop's Avenue developed in four phases. It can be shown that these phases are, to a reasonable degree visible in the street scene as geographical zones. Of course there are anomalies and exceptions (for example Kendene and Canons Close) but general characteristics are observable. It is surprising to note, for example, how the demolition and redevelopment which has occurred recently to create the new 'Super houses' is focussed on a relatively small area in the middle section of The Avenue. These zones are shown on Map 001.

**5.1 Zone 1** This includes the level section of the road running towards and across Lyttleton Road. Houses tend to be more modest than those in zones 2 and 4 and sit within smaller plots. Buildings are relatively close to the road and



*10 The Bishop's Avenue, 1914-15, by G L Sutcliffe for the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust*

with only dwarf walls or hedges at the boundary with the footway, they are generally visible in their entirety. There is a sense of integration between plots, across the road and between buildings and the road itself.

Many of the buildings follow vernacular styles, using traditional materials and design features. However the buildings do not tend to display the same richness of detail and unusual, quality features to be found in Zone 4.

**5.2 Zone 2** Although relatively small, this zone is easily identifiable, greatly influencing its public image. This is the area of new 'Super houses'. The designs and materials vary and tend to be highly contemporary to the time they were built (ranging from the 1980s to the present day). The houses are designed and sited to be bold and impressive. They seem to cry out for attention and compete to catch the viewer's eye. The buildings pay little regard to the vernacular architecture which characterises the rest of The Bishop's Avenue and surrounding area nor do they use traditional materials. Design influences vary from the Mediterranean villa to the classical temple.

This Zone is atypical within the Avenue. The area is extremely dramatic, visible and ostentatious. By its very nature and purpose it demands attention and influences perceptions of the wider area. The area is however relatively small and should not be taken as the main character of the Avenue as a whole, which is much more discrete and restrained in its vernacular and architectural expression.

**5.3 Zone 3** This zone contains most of the cul-de-sacs which have been created off the Avenue (although not Canons Close, built on the grounds to the rear of East Weald in the 1960s, which shares many of this zone's characteristics) interspersed with large houses along the Avenue. Bishops Grove was probably the earliest cul-de-sac, the roadway being visible on the 1935 Ordnance Survey map (but no houses built at that time). Houses and plots are of a generous size. Byron Drive and White Lodge Close followed and, after Canons Close, Arden Court Gardens. The houses in these cul-de-sacs are smaller and sit within more modest plots. In this zone much of the interest is turned away from the main road. The cul-de-sacs tend to have a secluded air with building sizes on a smaller domestic scale resembling the adjacent Hampstead Garden Suburb.

**5.4 Zone 4** Zone 4 includes all the locally listed properties running from Hampstead Lane to Kenstead Hall. The zone includes the straight, strong entrance to The Bishop's Avenue and runs along the first bend. Many houses in this zone are of a high quality in the vernacular style. As a group they can be described as organic and generally on a human scale. This is in part due to the generally domestic scale of doors, windows and other building components.



*Bishop's Mead (now Leo Baeck House), 1900 in Neo-Jacobean style.*

Many buildings are well screened and glimpsed views help to break up building bulk. Such glimpses also help to draw the eye to quality features which help to express the importance and individuality of The Bishop's Avenue. For example brick chimneys, stone porches, the ornamented arch at Dane Court and the arched entrance to East Weald.

Houses in this zone tend to be set back from the road. The land slopes gently away towards the west making the houses on that side particularly secluded. This is reinforced by a strong tree screen on the west side of the road from Dane Court to the northern end of the zone.

In summary this part of The Bishop's Avenue is characterised by relatively secluded properties which, although substantial, retain a domestic and human scale through the scale and design of their components and their relationship to gardens and trees. The buildings are generally of high quality with some unusual and interesting details. The secluded nature of the

properties combines with the strong and open nature of public space to heighten the road's character as a thoroughfare. The car traveller sits within a grand and open public space whilst the pedestrian has the opportunity to value the secluded and in part secret quality of private spaces and buildings.

**5.5 Summary** It is recognised that The Bishop's Avenue is 'Millionaires Row' and that this is part of its special character. The new buildings reflect the cultures and affluence of their various owners but recent architectural expression is now undermining the special character and historic interest of the conservation area. The quality vernacular architecture found most predominantly in Zone 1 and Zone 4 is vitally important and displays the tastes of a previous generation of wealthy owners. Although this character is more subdued and understated, it is nevertheless key to the area's special architectural and historic interest.

## **6 The contribution made by key buildings**

The following buildings are considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area.

**Zone 1 (East Side)** Bishop's Court - 1914 by Soutar. Locally listed. Two-storey Neo Georgian block of flats, well canted at the corner of the Avenue with the Great North Road. The Hampstead Heath Extension Tenants Ltd had their Estate Office here.

1 St Margaret's (later Little Walcott). 1914-15 (architect unknown). Locally listed. Plain in Garden City style after Lutyen's early half-timbered manner. Clifford Bax, author, was the first occupier of number 1 in 1915.

3 Inlesby. 1915-15. Locally listed. Pair with number 1.

13 Mount View (now Moreton). 1928. Neo-Georgian, possibly much remodelled.

15 Brookhouse. After 1935. Locally listed.

19 Bishopsbourne. 1929. Locally listed. Symmetrical and ingenious.

- 21 Avenue House. c1930. Symmetrical with central first floor brick balcony and two storey bays each side.

### Aylmer Road

- 4 Asymmetrical brick and tile vernacular.

Walbrook House. Well proportioned. Good balcony/porch with round bays to each side. Notable gothic pattern leaded windows.

### The Bishop's Avenue continued/...

- 27 Red Mays. 1927. Locally listed. Much altered with new porch, tiles and windows.
- 29 Woodland House. 1927. Plain vernacular. Re-elevated with new brickwork and door case.
- 31 Oldways. 1926. Picturesque vernacular with a wealth of detail. Well preserved.



- 33 Bishop's Close (later Rubislaw, now Bishop's Manor). 1927. Locally listed. Much altered.
- 35 Bishops Wood. 1927. Locally listed. Symmetrical Neo-Georgian, with post war portico. Leaded windows.
- 39 Deans Cote (now The Fountains). 1926. Locally listed. Grey brick with red dressings. Very deep boxy eaves. Town Hall classical style centrepiece.
- 41 Eastwood. 1926. Locally listed. Centre gable and brick patterning. Later porch.

**Zone 1 West Side**

2-12 1914-1915 by G L Sutcliffe for the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust. Built as a symmetrical group of six, set out as three linked pairs of large houses in a restrained white-walled Tudor, some with fine stone doorways. All six houses are served from the rear, ensuring the front gardens are laid to lawn and shrubs without driveways and hard standings.

2 The Nest. Locally listed.

4 Higham. Locally listed.

6 The Birches. Locally listed.

8 The Firs. (Later Wayside). Locally listed.  
Forms a pair with Number 6.

10 Yardley House. Locally listed.

12 Davaar. Locally listed.

14 Tudor Lodge. c1938 by R.H. Williams of 13 Village Road, Finchley, for Ivan Meering, textile manufacturer. Earlier Williams and Meering had built number 59 Deansway which was much admired and they went on in 1936 to build houses along Vivian Way (Numbers 3, 11, 17, 19 and 12-24 (even) and Edmund's Walk. Williams had apparently failed his exams as an architect but had a good eye for a picturesque frontage with brick nogging and half-timbering. Number 14 was their largest house.

16 Deansgarth. 1933. Locally listed. L-shaped corner house with brick details in the 'New Suburb' style. Neo-Georgian doorcase with wrought iron balcony over.

Numbers 18, 20, 22 and 24. All to the same Neo-Georgian pattern, rather old fashioned for their date.

18 Invergordon (was Sherwood, now Patralonia). 1930. Locally listed. Large Neo-classical porch.

20 Arlington. 1928. Locally listed.

22 Colwyn House. 1931. Locally listed. Dormers and unusual timber screened entrance.

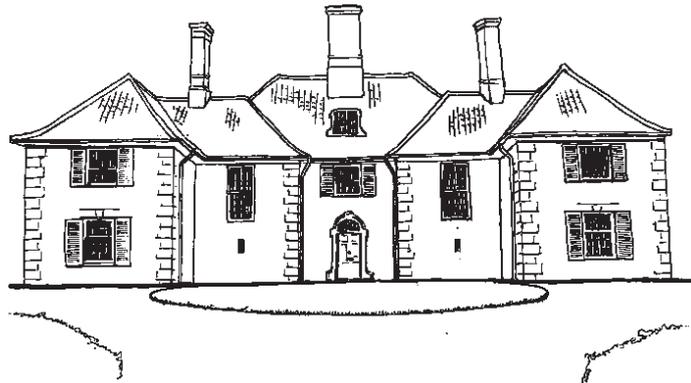
24 Overbrook. 1931. Locally listed. Ionic porch.

- 26 Crossways. 1936. Asymmetrical Neo-Georgian. Stone arched porch.
- 28 Bishops Corner. 1933. With new Corinthian loggia to ground floor.
- 30 Gable Lodge. 1928 by Philip Hepworth. Locally listed. In Cape Dutch style with a big curly gable, Lutyens inspired chimney balanced asymmetrically, white painted brick walls and a roof in glazed pantiles mottled in dark green and brown. The garage and gate piers complete the design. Hepworth was a leading 'exoticist' and Gable Lodge and his other two houses on The Bishop's Avenue (see Stratheden and White Walls) are regarded as amongst his choicest work. A colour perspective of Gable Lodge was reproduced in Architectural Drawing in 1931.



- 32 Norgrove. 1928. Locally listed. Plain vernacular style. Planning permission given for new house in Sutcliffe inspired vernacular revival style.
- 34 Arkeden (now Stratheden). c1925 by Philip Hepworth. Locally listed. The best of his 'Pseudish' style with a crow-stepped gable, bright green glazed pantiles over white-washed brick walls, extra-ordinary windows with squashed baluster mullions and (on the upper floor) curved corners. Original details included galleon weathervane and Chinese dragons on the door case. Photographs were published in Architecture Illustrated December. 1930.

- 36 Oak Tree Court (now Inlaks). 1926. Locally listed. Symmetrical with three gables. Variegated brick work with tile creasing and diaper work.
- 40 White Walls (now Eliot House). 1926 by Philip Hepworth for Charles Ryan. Locally listed. The first of Hepworth's three 'Pseudish' style houses in The Bishop's Avenue, the composition is claimed to be based on Lutyen's Middlefield (Shelford, Cambridge 1908) and his Hill House (Herts, 1912) with a recessed centre between symmetrical wings and a central chimney stack dominating the continuous hipped roof covered in glazed pantiles in a mottled turquoise. White-washed walls with shutters, originally painted turquoise. A perspective of this house was exhibited at the Royal Academy 1925 and published in the Builder 13 May 1925.



- 42 Clive House (later Shirah, now Turquoise). 1914 by Smith and Brewer. Locally listed. Smith and Brewer were the architects of Heal's and the Mary Ward Settlement. It is a sophisticated interpretation of Georgian, typical of Cecil Brewer, with a high main block in brown brick dressed with red, crowned by a hipped roof with a big Venetian window in a tile-hung dormer. Single storey wings each side with mansard roofs at right angles to the courtyard.

### Zone 3 (East Side)

Bishop's Grove leads to further Neo-Georgian houses:-

Templars, Nusantara (Now Embassy of Republic of Indonesia) and number 3 (the best preserved).

High Trees. Post war. Discrete Neo-Georgian.

White Lodge. 1916. A large house well set back originally occupying extensive grounds, which have now been laid out as White Lodge Close complete with relatively small plots and houses.

The Towers. 1992. Massive classical pile dramatically set back from the Avenue (with, consequently, no grounds behind). With its cocky angle to the street scene it's too theatrical for some but, from a distance, is well handled and a landmark.

### **Zone 3 (west side)**

Dryades. Post war. Long asymmetrical red brick Neo-Georgian with simple stone Tuscan porch. Turret and weathervane to the south end.

Westwood. 1900. For John Grove Johnson. Upper storey half timbered over brick base with deep arched brick entrance. Pargetted gables. Interesting roof scape. Now divided to form:-

Inglestone Manor (now Ha Kha Manor). Both with interesting 'Renaissance' pargetting to the gables to Byron Close.

Byron House. Post war. Discrete Neo-Georgian.

### **Zone 4 (east side)**

Houses in this zone are important as they positively established the character of The Bishop's Avenue.

Wyldewood. 1926. Locally listed. Informal vernacular divided into two to form:-

Fernwood. Locally listed.

Knole Hurst to the north and Hornbeams to the south are later.

- 59 East Weald (known as Heath Hall and Vernon Hall for a time). 1910 by H.V. Ashley and F Winton Newman for William Park Lyle (descendant of the Lyle family of Tate and Lyle). Locally listed. The architects are best known for the Birmingham Council House Extension (Grade II\*) and the Masonic Peace Memorial Hall, Covent Garden (Grade II). East Weald is a remarkable muscular interpretation of the Arts and Crafts style with notable front entrance and successful ornate brickwork, leadwork and other detailing. An important



landmark building which together with the other pre-First World War buildings have set the tone and character of the Avenue.

- 63 Bishop's Mead (now Leo Baeck House). 1900. Locally listed. Built for Herbert Neild, MP, JP. Big half timbered gables and Neo-Jacobean stone porch with unusual stained glass windows behind.

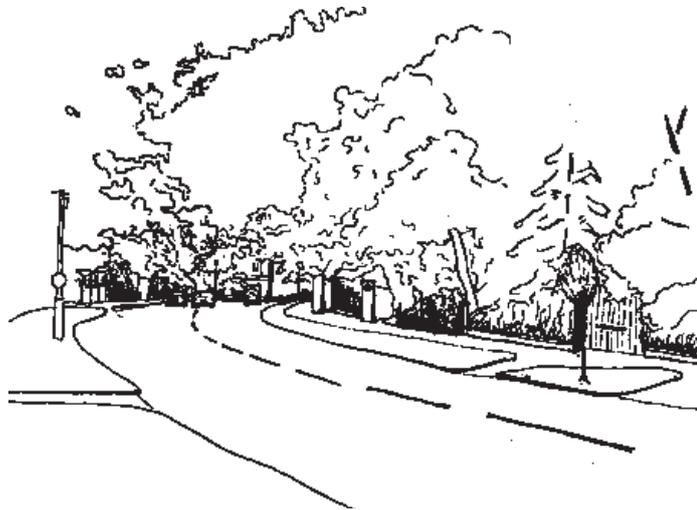
#### **Zone 4 (west side)**

- 52 Kenstead Hall. 1936. Locally listed. Hollywood Tudor style. Upper storey half-timbered over brick base with elaborate two storey stone bay window. Stable block with cupola. Well screened from road by high brick wall.
- 54 Oak Lodge. 1927. Locally listed. Restrained brick and tile vernacular.
- 56 Barons Court. 1900. Locally listed. Colonial Georgian in red brick with huge Tuscan tetrastyle portico. Extended and altered over the years.
- 58 Kenmore (now Murtaza). 1896. Locally listed. Remodelled in 1905 in Old English 'Domestic Style' after Norman Shaw. Tile hung and half timbered gables as at Dane Court. Extended and altered including vast unsympathetic porte cochere.
- 60 Dane Court. 1900. Locally listed. Neo-Jacobean with turret and stone door case.

- 62 Eaglescliff (now Jersey House). 1929. Locally listed. Looks earlier than its date with dumpy-columned porch.
- 64 Chelwood. - 1930. Locally listed. The original proposal to build a mirroring house to Eaglescliff was abandoned in favour of the present design. Acute angled oriel over an impressive later stone porch.
- 66 Heath Lodge. 1931. Locally listed. Neo-Georgian with fine stone semi-circular porch and Corinthian columns facing Hampstead Lane.

## 7

**The character and  
relationship of spaces**



The Bishop's Avenue is a wide road which gently meanders along its length. The land rises to the south and west. These characteristics allow for an interesting variation in views along its length with many enticing deflected views and elevated positions. The sweep up to Hampstead Lane is particularly impressive which, when viewed from the south, becomes a strong elegant entrance. This is enhanced by the lines of trees which form a link between the treed bank within Kenwood and the Arcadian quality of the Avenue itself. Hampstead Lane forms a strong visual stop to enclose this end of the Avenue. Breaks between trees allow for glimpsed views of the buildings and grounds with the horizon filled with roof scapes and trees behind, further enclosing the Avenue. Occasional views up cul-de-sacs and along crossing roads relieve this introspection. With one or two modern exceptions there is a discernable building line and moderate building height.

The winding nature of the Avenue adds a certain relaxed informality to the area which the woodland and Arts and Crafts nature of many original building reinforces to create a 'natural' vernacular air and much sought after benign relationship between the built and natural environment. (It is this context which makes so many of the modern cod-classical superhouses so jarring - they belong in the more formal settings at the end of long straight drives or within 'Renaissance' grid patterned roads).

From the north the sweep of the road guides the viewer into the Avenue but, unlike Hampstead Lane, the Great North Road is not such an effective view stop. Here the houses are closer to the road as in the rest of Hampstead Garden Suburb, although this more intimate relationship to the east is off-set by the elevated position of the houses to the west.

It is of some importance to note that there are no public open spaces along The Avenue apart from some grass verges at the major crossing and the playing fields at the south end (which are outside the Borough and therefore the conservation area). The area is given over to large private grounds. With nowhere to rest, the viewer can enjoy only a fleeting, transient appreciation of the area as they pass through. Recent developments to 'secure' premises by the erection of high walls and the sheeting over of gate railings are highly detrimental to this relationship and the character of the area. Similarly, side extensions and the building of ever larger houses are reducing the spaces between properties. The attendant loss of trees and greenery and denser levels of building are eroding the special semi-rural character of this part of the conservation area and replacing it with a more urban feel.

## **8 Prevalent and traditional materials**

The materials used on the earlier and original buildings are in the vernacular and Arts and Crafts traditions. Red brick and tile enlivened with stone Neo-classical embellishments or Neo-Jacobean half-timbered upper floors are enriched with often substantial oak doors and white painted timber windows with Neo-Georgian or simple glazing patterns or steel frames and lead comes as appropriate. The

Trust buildings are rendered and now painted white. The Hepworth buildings are in exotic variants on traditional materials (for example, glazed pantiles). This use of vernacular and traditional materials is a unifying factor drawing together the individually designed houses into a cohesive street scene. The recent introduction of new, often alien materials, (for example, concrete and stone walling, copper sheet roofing, plain metal picture windows) has disrupted this relationship between buildings, further eroding the special character of this part of the conservation area.

## 9

### Local details

Although clearly rooted in the vernacular and Arts and Crafts traditions it should be remembered that these houses were often built for the nouveau riche who wished to display their wealth. A little applied grandeur was not therefore amiss and many of the earlier buildings, especially to the south, had some applied 'classical' details - for example, a bottle balustraded balcony, stone mullioned bay, or columned entrance. Indeed it became fashionable to erect a stone porch (often Neo-classical) onto the original Arts and Crafts vernacular frontage. The more modest of these, often Tuscan, are highly successful and are an important part of the character of the area. By and large these embellishments were rarely overstated and served to spice the elevation and, via the implied historical reference, elevate the owner. As previously stated, houses to the north are in the more restrained Trust style.

Boundaries onto the Avenue are formed either in brick walls and railings, or towards the north, hedges.

The Avenue itself was unmade until 1935 and remains today a relatively uncluttered street scene. Grass verges with trees predominate and, unusually, the paving is in pink slabs.

## 10

### The contribution made by green spaces and trees

With the exception of wider grass verges at the major road crossing and the playing fields at the south end, there are no public green

spaces. Green spaces in The Bishop's Avenue take the form of large private gardens which can be glimpsed between trees, bushes and railings along the footway. The large size and scale of planting of these gardens form an important part of the semi-rural character of the Avenue which recent infill and enlarged development has in part diminished. The lines of trees in verges and along front boundaries add grandeur to the Avenue, guide the eye along, and clearly define spaces. This boundary between public and private further underlines the exclusivity of properties and the area providing soft screening and privacy. As such they are a vital part of its special character.

## **11 Setting of The Bishop's Avenue - its relationship with surrounding areas**

The Bishop's Avenue sits between Highgate to the east, Hampstead and Hampstead Heath/Kenwood to the south and Hampstead Garden Suburb to the west. These surrounding areas are of architectural, historic and social importance and all are protected whether as conservation areas, Metropolitan Open Land or as areas of Special Scientific Interest. The Bishop's Avenue also falls within the 'Area of Special Character' identified on the Greater London Development Plan. It can be appreciated therefore that The Bishop's Avenue is in the middle of a large area of north London of considerable historic importance.

The Bishop's Avenue is an important link between central and north London. Due to Hampstead Heath and Parliament Hill Fields, roads running to the south are limited. The main routes into and out of central London run through the historic centres of Highgate and Hampstead, then on through North Hill towards East Finchley or through Golders Green further to the west. These two major north-south routes are linked by Hampstead Lane/Spaniards Road to the south and the North Circular and Falloden Way to the north. The Bishop's Avenue acts as an important link between these two major north south routes and plays a vital role within the wider road network.

There are no side turnings off the road except short cul-de-sacs. Consequently, traffic is either heading for properties within the road itself, or is heading out of the area. This adds to the feeling of transition and movement along the road.

The Bishop's Avenue acts as a well-defined boundary between the surrounding neighbourhoods whilst at the same time the road acts as a link, in terms of both access and built form and character. This unique position is illustrated by the surrounding borough boundaries. Three boroughs meet at the southern end of The Bishop's Avenue: the London Boroughs of Barnet, Camden and Haringey. The boundary between Haringey and Barnet runs northward along the eastern side of The Avenue at the rear boundaries of the properties, whilst the boundary with Camden is at Hampstead Lane.

This central position, along with the historic development of the road has helped to mould the overall character of the area. It displays examples of the vernacular architecture characteristic of Hampstead Garden Suburb, forms a green corridor leading away from the woods at its boundary with Kenwood and includes imposing residences synonymous with this prosperous and exclusive part of north London. The Bishop's Avenue is a local land mark and focus, drawing together the surrounding areas while retaining its own special identity.

## **12 Extent of loss, intrusion or damage**

A number of the cul-de-sac developments to be found particularly in Zone 3 of Map 001 and the attendant loss of open gardens have a negative impact on the semi-rural character of the area.

Large institutional-looking buildings, for example Heinrich Stahl House, Osmond House, Balant House and Hammerson House are not in keeping with the domestic dwelling character of the area.

Bahar House and a number of the new 'Super houses' to be seen in Zone 2 of Map 001 are at odds with the vernacular traditions of architecture and materials of The Bishop's

Avenue and impact detrimentally on the character of the original houses and the special interest of the area by the introduction of inappropriate styles and materials. The ever-increasing size, scale and massing of many of these properties (even when dressed in Neo-Georgian as at Fairhill) is also considered to be out of scale with the character of the area.

Fortunately this recent spate of demolish and redevelop is focussed on a small part of The Bishop's Avenue. However, because of their ostentation and excess these properties have a disproportionate influence on public perception of the area.

High levels of security have also had a damaging effect on the character of the area. Recent high walls and the application of steel sheeting to gate railings screen off important views to the buildings and grounds behind. These are of questionable value as security measures, have an intimidating feel and reduce The Avenue to a corridor for cars. Similarly, a number of buildings have had internal security grilles fitted to windows. These have the effect of interfering with the reading of the windows which substantially erodes the onlooker's enjoyment of the building.

### 13

#### Neutral areas

Certain buildings within the Avenue do not in themselves make a positive contribution nor do they form part of a range of buildings of group value. They are listed below by Zone.

#### Zone 1 (East side)

5, 7, 9, 11 (c1901). Appear to be by the same builder, although number 9 has a post war Neo-Georgian refronting. These may be on the land (5 acres) taken in 1898 by William Mattocks Dabbs, builder, of Stamford Hill, mentioned in the Victoria County History.

- 5. Denehurst
- 7. Oakdene (later Le Paradou)
- 9. Dalkeith
- 11. Kenlade (possibly formerly The Homestead)
- 15a Checkmate
- 17. Ditchover. 1928. Altered
- 23.

2. Aylmer Road
3. Aylmer Road
1. Aylmer Road
25. (Corner House) Post war.

#### **Zone 1 (west side)**

- 16a.
48. Lyttelton Road
38. Regden (later Sunningdale) 1928. Tile hung.

#### **Zone 3 (East side)**

The Georgians  
Redcroft  
Ikley House

Arden Court Numbers 1-5 1983 by de Brant  
Joyce and Partners. Built on the site of Isenhurst.

#### **Zone 3 (West side)**

West Wood Cottage  
Byron Close. Built on the site of Glenthorne which was  
built in 1898 for George Sainsbury, provision merchant.  
Byron House, No.50 and Hammerson House built on its  
grounds after the war.

#### **Zone 4 (East side)**

Canons Close. Perhaps belongs in Zone 3. Small houses on  
small plots. A mix of 'Tudor' brick Neo-Georgian and  
1970s contemporary vernacular. No.5 aptly named.

## **Bibliography**

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Various documents and photographs at:-

London Borough of Barnet  
Local Studies and Archives  
Egerton Gardens, NW4

London Borough of Barnet  
Building Control Records  
1255 High Road  
Whetstone N20

For further information on the contents of this document,  
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Larger scale conservation area maps can be purchased at  
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Hampstead Garden Suburb Conservation Area was  
designated in December 1968

This document was approved by the Environment Policy  
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