

SOUTH PARK CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL



Reading BC

March 2008

SOUTH PARK CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

CONTENTS	Page
1.0 Introduction	4
1.1 Purpose of the appraisal	4
1.2 Summary of special interest	4
2.0 The planning policy context	6
2.1 Local planning policy	6
3.0 Location and setting	7
3.1 Location topography and setting	7
4.0 Historic development	8
4.1 History	8
4.2 The effect of historic development on plan form	9
5.0 Spatial analysis	9
5.1 Key views and vistas	9
5.2 The character of spaces within the area	10
6.0 Definition of the special interest of the conservation area	10
6.1 Definition of character areas:	10
6.2 Activities and uses	12
6.3 Architectural and historic character; building methods and materials	13
6.4 Buildings of Townscape Merit	13
6.5 Public realm: Floorscape, street lighting and street furniture	14
6.6 Local details and features	14
6.7 Green spaces, trees and other natural elements	14
6.8 General condition of the area: The extent of loss, intrusions or damage i.e negative features	15
6.9 Problems, pressures and issues	15
7.0 Areas for further work	16
7.1 Consideration of conservation area boundary changes	16
7.2 Opportunities for enhancement	17
7.3 Monitoring and review	17
Appendix 1 - Important buildings within the Conservation Area	18
Appendix 2 - Relevant Local Plan Policies	25
Appendix 3 - Townscape Appraisal Map	26

Document researched and prepared by Dennis Greenway, Chartered Town Planner and Building Conservation Advisor.

SOUTH PARK CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the appraisal

This appraisal seeks to record and analyse the various features which give the South Park Conservation Area its special architectural and historic interest. The area's buildings and spaces are noted and described, and marked on the Townscape Appraisal map (Appendix 3) along with listed buildings, buildings of townscape merit, significant trees and spaces, and important views into and out of the conservation area. There is a presumption that all of these features should be "preserved or enhanced", as required by legislation.

This appraisal builds upon national policy, as set out in *Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG 15) - Planning and the Historic Environment*, and local policy, as set out in the *Reading Borough Local Plan 1991-2006*, and provides a firm basis on which applications for development within the South Park Conservation Area can be assessed. It also forms a basis for further work on design guidance and enhancement proposals for the area.

This appraisal follows the suggested format contained in Appendix 2 of the English Heritage document "Guidance on conservation area appraisals" August 2005.

1.2 Summary of special interest

The South Park Conservation Area comprises an essentially mid to late Victorian and Edwardian suburb of Reading, mainly centered on Eastern Avenue and Hamilton Road, which run north-south between the main Wokingham Road (A329) east out of Reading to the north and to and across Crescent Road to the south. The boundaries of the area are indicated on the Appraisal Map appended to this report (Appendix 3). It was formally designated on 28 April 1988 following a period of public consultation, which resulted in the enlargement of the originally proposed area. The planning background to this Conservation Area designation requires some explanation.

The background to the designation of South Park as a Conservation Area lies first in the drawing up of a planning brief for a wider area, whose full title was "South Park: A Planning Policy to Protect the Physical Character of a Victorian Suburb". This was dated January 1976.

The Planning Policy was drawn up for a wider area than was to subsequently become the Conservation Area subject of this appraisal, and indeed the Conservation Area as originally proposed was actually much smaller than was subsequently designated. The original proposal was for two small fairly coherent areas concentrating on what were considered to be the very best buildings in the area. However, as a result of public consultation, further areas were recommended for inclusion which would have resulted in a series of rather irregular areas being designated. As a result, the Conservation Area as finally approved was defined by drawing a line round the perimeter "to make it more manageable". The resulting area therefore contained a considerable variety of properties, but which together demonstrated a special architectural and historic interest the character and appearance of which it was desirable to preserve or enhance. The Conservation Area boundary as drawn was therefore considered to be justified. Essentially, this was the guiding principle behind the 1976 Planning Policy document, the designation of the core part of which as a Conservation Area in 1988 reinforces. The key principles were to avoid redeveloping designated "important buildings"; minimum plot sizes for redevelopment in comprehensive schemes; new buildings to be designed to a similar scale, massing, and building line to existing buildings; materials used to match those in the locality; and the retention and enhancement of the area's "open", tree covered character. This has generally been adhered to since the designation of the Conservation Area.



Apart from two pairs of properties in Eastern Avenue, the area has no listed buildings. Notwithstanding this, the area contains a wide variety of house types and architectural styles from the Victorian and Edwardian periods, many of which retain their original character.

The sheer variety, exuberance and blending of the architectural styles of the mainly Victorian period in such close proximity makes the area attractive and worthy of Conservation Area status. This is reinforced by the retention of many boundary walls and railings throughout the area which, together with mature tree cover, also give the area its coherence.

The earliest houses date from around the 1840s (for example the listed buildings), with a steady spread of development through the nineteenth century. The area is however interspersed with a number of more modern flat developments which tend to offer less to the character of the Conservation Area than the older buildings, although there are good examples of modern infill developments of individual houses, which preserve the character and appearance of the area.

2.0 The planning policy context

Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A conservation area is defined as *“an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”*. It is the quality and interest of an *area*, rather than that of individual buildings, which is the prime consideration in identifying a conservation area.

Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas. Section 72 specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development in a Conservation Area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

This document should be read in conjunction with national planning policy guidance, particularly PPG 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment. The layout and content of this conservation area appraisal follows guidance produced by English Heritage, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the English Historic Towns Forum, published in February 2006.

2.1 Local planning policy

The Reading Borough core strategy was found to be “sound” in December 2007 and was adopted in January 2008. Policy CS33 provides a strategic level policy that indicates that the historic environment including their settings will be preserved and enhanced. This policy will, in part, replace the Reading Borough

Local Plan policies, including some of the saved policies discussed below. Proposals will have to have regard to the provisions set out in PPG15.

The Local Plan policies which seek the preservation and enhancement of archaeological sites, historic parks and gardens, listed buildings and conservation areas are set out in Chapter 6 of the *Reading Borough Local Plan 1991-2006* which was adopted on 14th October 1998, the majority of policies of which were “saved” by Direction of the Secretary of State on 24 September 2007 (with effect from 27 September 2007). The saved policies of particular note are Policies CUD 6 (Demolition of Unlisted Buildings in Conservation Areas) and CUD7 (New Development in Conservation Areas), which outline Reading Borough Council’s approach to development in Conservation Areas. Copies of these policies can be found at Appendix 2 of this document. With regard to listed buildings in the Conservation Area, Policies CUD 1 (Works Affecting Listed Buildings), CUD 2 (Change of Use of Listed Buildings), CUD 3 (Maintenance of Listed Buildings) and CUD 4 (Setting of Listed Buildings) also apply.

The Local Plan’s conservation objectives are stated as:

- (i) to conserve or enhance the Borough's stock of listed buildings and other buildings of architectural quality or historical significance;
- (ii) to identify protect or enhance areas of character;
- (iii) to identify and conserve areas of archaeological significance and to protect or enhance finds and sites for the education and enjoyment of Reading residents.

There is an approved Planning Brief for the wider South Park area which is referred to in paragraph 1.2 above. This reinforces the conservation objectives of the Local Plan.

3.0 Location and setting

3.1 Location, topography and setting

The boundaries of the South Park Conservation Area are shown at Appendix 3. The area lies about 2km east and south of Reading centre, south of the main Wokingham Road (A329) out of Reading. To the north of the main road and the Conservation Area lies Reading Cemetery, a Victorian response to overcrowded church yards within the Borough of Reading, and dating from 1842. The Cemetery’s historic importance is testified by its inclusion in English Heritage’s Register of Parks and Gardens. Buildings and tombs within the cemetery are

also listed in their own right. Properties immediately surrounding the defined Conservation Area are of a similar mix in terms of age and architecture, particularly to the east and south, but streets of small terraced houses prevail to the west.

The area is generally flat, which limits views into and out of the area.

4.0 Historic development

4.1 History

Reading is named after the Readingas, Saxon followers of Reada, 'the Red', who settled in the spit of land in the fork of the Thames and Kennet in the 6th century. At the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086, Reading belonged to the king and included a small borough and two manors. Reading Abbey was founded by Henry I in 1121. The abbey dominated the town and became one of the richest religious houses in England, making Reading a wealthy place, and a centre of religion and pilgrimage.

Wool and leather were Reading's principal trades in the 16th and early 17th centuries, making good use of the town's road and river links. In the 18th century Reading was an important market and coaching town; new industries developed, notably brewing, iron-founding and brick and tile making. Early 19th century maps show the town had hardly extended beyond its medieval core but a fast town expansion was stimulated by the development of new transport links. The Kennet and Avon Canal was opened in 1810 bringing London and Bristol, two major sea ports, into direct communication by water. Of much greater significance, however, was the construction of the Great Western Railway which reached the town in 1840. The coming of the railway resulted in a rapid growth of major industries, notably Huntley & Palmers, Suttons Seeds and Simmonds Brewery, which provided work for a rapidly increasing population.

Between 1850 and 1900 the population of the Borough more than trebled from 21,456 to 72,217 and the housing stock increased accordingly. Development east of the town was part of the post-railway late 19th century during which period large numbers of houses were built and growing civic pride was celebrated in the building of Reading's Town Hall (1875), the Concert Hall (1882), the Museum and Library (1883-4) and Reading Grammar School (1865-71).

This area represent a middle-class area, similar to recently designated Conservation Areas in nearby "Alexandra Road", "Redlands", etc., which are

generally untouched by commerce and industry, and were clearly designed as such, to be more spacious and leafy area than the artisans' terraces which lie closer to their employers to the north and west of this Conservation Area.

Although development was already taking place in this area, it lay outside the Reading Borough boundary until 1887.

4.2 The effect of historic development on plan form

The designated Conservation Area is essentially defined by the parallel streets of Eastern Avenue and Hamilton Road. The 1873 First Edition OS Map shows these roads to be already home to some fairly substantial detached and semi-detached villas both within the area itself and further to the east, but it is not until the 1899 OS Map that the historic core of the area becomes more apparent, particularly in the following areas: the middle part of Eastern Avenue between Wokingham Road and Crescent Road; a small group at the northern end of Hamilton Road; the east side of Eastern Avenue around the Crescent Road junction; and the southern end of Hamilton Road and Bulmershe Road including part of Crescent Road. It would therefore be difficult to describe this area as a planned development in any strict sense, although clearly the area forms part of the post-railway expansion and development of Reading.

5.0 Spatial analysis

5.1 Key views and vistas

The Conservation Area is relatively flat, although the land rises gently upwards from the area to the south, via the unmade up section of Bulmershe Road (which adjoins the Thames Valley University Campus to the east) and Hamilton and Bulmershe Roads towards Whiteknights Road and the Reading University Campus beyond. Views to the south therefore encompass the slopes up past houses to the wooded "ridge" of Whiteknights Road beyond. Views out of the area to the east and west along Crescent Road are unattractive, but views in to the area along Crescent Road encompass important "Townscape" and corner buildings referred to on the Appraisal Map. Views out of the area to the north are directly on to the busy main Wokingham Road and the wall and railings of Reading Cemetery beyond. Views into the area from the north are marred by buildings immediately outside the Conservation Area. The best views are therefore to be seen within the Conservation Area along broad sweeps of fine Victorian and Edwardian houses. There are a number of individual buildings which stand out within the Conservation Area, with corner buildings tending to be particularly prominent in the street scene, although often not visible from any distance.

5.2 The character of spaces within the area

The Conservation Area is, generally speaking, a fully built up urban area composed of continuous frontages of two and three-storey buildings with front gardens to the back of pavement edge, albeit with a prevalence of large properties on large plots, allowing significant tree cover within plots. There are no areas of public open space within the Conservation Area itself, but the nearby Palmer Park is available to residents for informal and formal recreation.

The presence of many fairly substantial properties in commensurately large grounds, typically bounded brick walls and railings and containing significant tree cover, provide a good setting for individual properties and the character of the Conservation Area as a whole.

6.0 Definition of the special interest of the conservation area

6.1 Definition of character areas

“South Park” appears to be a local name given to the residential area approximately south of Palmer Park and Reading Cemetery, but is also situated in the Park Ward of Reading.

It is a residential area, which local residents in recent history have seen as being under pressure for redevelopment and/or conversion of existing properties as a result of: the character of the wider area; type of buildings/plots; accessibility to the town centre; and the proximity of Royal Berkshire Hospital and Reading University, which were seen as contributing factors to problems the area was experiencing in providing accommodation for all age groups, particularly students and young professionals. This culminated in the production of a Planning Policy for the area in 1979. An external examination of the area suggests that the combination of the Planning Policy and the Conservation Area designation has been successful since in resisting the worst excesses of redevelopment and/or conversion, since the area is generally in a good state of repair, with high occupancy rates (only one property currently obviously empty). Single family occupation of properties still appears to prevail, although there are a number of purpose built flats and conversions within and around the area, which are not always in character with the area. In flatted developments, garage courts also tend to prevail, which also detract from the character of the area.

Generally, the area has a Victorian and Edwardian feel to it, but there are a number of more recent buildings within the area, including some good examples of modern infill developments.

It is customary in appraising the character of Conservation Areas to describe them in terms of defining the “character areas” within them. Ideally, a Conservation Area would have the same definable character throughout, but typically a Conservation Area will normally comprise a small number of distinct and definable areas within it.

The South Park Conservation Area, because of the way it was drawn up, combining the Council’s original proposals, local residents’ suggestions and the “rounding off” previously referred to is difficult to define with real precision, but the following are the key features of the area:

- a significant number and mix of large Victorian and Edwardian detached, semi-detached and terraced houses in spacious plots with mature trees and well stocked gardens;
- a large variety of interesting and often unique design features to many of these buildings, and in particular intricate and decorative brick and tile work;
- plot frontages defined by brick walls and or railings (although some have been removed to allow frontage parking);
- generally quiet roads with little through traffic, notwithstanding the fact that Wokingham Road to the north is a very busy main road, with Crescent Road to the south less so;

Appendix 1 to this appraisal lists examples of important buildings in the area which give “a flavour” of the various architectural styles found in the area. This is not an exhaustive list. The Appraisal Map (Appendix 3) also seeks to pinpoint the best buildings in the area.

Features that make a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:

- Retention of original buildings and their settings;
- Retention of original features in buildings;
- Retention of original brick walls and/or railings (original and replacement) throughout the area;
- Good tree cover within the grounds of individual properties and throughout the area;
- Some good modern infill developments.

Features that have a negative impact on the historic character and appearance of the conservation area:

- Out of character flat developments and associated garage courts;
- Some detrimental changes to individual properties by way of additions and/or use of non-traditional materials;
- Loss of original brick walls and/or railings to create frontage parking plus some replacement of walls/railings with brick walls and/or timber fencing;
- Some walls/railings in need of repair;
- Whilst not inherently unattractive in itself, some overgrowth of railings with hedges;
- Lack of traditional street furniture, including street lighting;
- Over-reliance on individual telegraph poles throughout the area with attendant wires radiating out to the houses within it;
- Poor appearance of entrances to the Conservation Area at its northern end with Wokingham Road;
- Poor views out of the Conservation Area to the north.

The Conservation Area itself and the buildings within it have, however, generally retained their Victorian/Edwardian charm (despite pressures to redevelop certain sites in the past). However there is clearly scope to redress some failings apparent in the foregoing list.

6.2 Activities and uses

Historically and currently, the Conservation Area is essentially a residential area of a rich variety of detached, semi-detached and some terraced properties, interspersed with more modern residential developments. Some non-residential uses have been apparent historically. Former offices at 112 Crescent Road are currently being converted/extended for residential use. The listed 29/31 Eastern Avenue was formerly used by Reading University School of Education, but is now in residential use. Both therefore reinforce the residential character of the area. The listed 41 Eastern Avenue houses a chiropractic clinic, but from a visual inspection there are otherwise no other non-residential uses in the area.

The older properties in the area generally appear to be retained in single family occupation, although there are some examples of subdivision or multi-occupancy. The properties in the area appear to be very much in demand and are therefore generally fully occupied and in a good state of repair. Only one property, at 18 Eastern Avenue appears to be in need of attention, being boarded up and "for sale".

The area generally has a quiet residential atmosphere, but the peripheral roads, particularly Wokingham Road to the north (a premier bus route), are busy through routes. There is some evidence of daytime parking for commuters and/or people working in the locality, but there are few parking restrictions in the locality (except near road junctions) and no reported requests for a resident's parking scheme for the area. A number of older properties do not have their own parking provision, which has resulted in some removal of front garden walls and/or railings to provide frontage parking, but the area does benefit from good accessibility by public transport and is close to significant major employers, making this an attractive area to live.

6.3 Architectural and historic character: building methods and materials

The Conservation Area is essentially a Victorian/Edwardian residential suburb of Reading, which retains its historical character and special architectural interest.

With the exception of a few stucco buildings, the buildings in the Conservation area are generally of brick, which is one of the distinguishing features of Reading's architecture. Brick was a popular building material in the nineteenth century and the ready availability of different coloured bricks provided the opportunity for the lively polychromatic brickwork found throughout this part of Victorian/Edwardian Reading. The town had several brickworks, the most notable being S & E Collier Ltd at Water Road and Elgar Road and two brick works in the Tilehurst area.

6.4 Buildings of Townscape Merit

Buildings identified as having "townscape merit" will vary, but commonly they will be good examples of relatively unaltered 19th century and later buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provides the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a positive contribution to the special interest of a conservation area.

Buildings of Townscape Merit help create a conservation area's distinctive and interesting historic townscape. As suggested in Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment, the general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Clearly, all the buildings within the Conservation area are important to its "townscape", but it is generally unlisted corner buildings which strictly have a more commanding presence. The Appraisal Map at Appendix 3 and the list at

Appendix 1 indicate the important buildings in the area. These buildings are considered worthy as being “Buildings of Townscape Merit”.

6.5 Public realm. Floorscape, street lighting and street furniture.

Road and footway surfaces are predominantly modern i.e. tarmac, with concrete kerbs prevalent throughout the area. Whilst generally in average condition (there is evidence of repairs by “utilities” throughout the area), these surfaces are not attractive and not “traditional” in conservation area terms.

Street lighting columns, signage and street furniture are modern, and this is another area with considerable potential for improvement. There are no examples of traditional lighting in the area. One example of a traditional cast iron street sign was found in Eastern Avenue opposite its junction with Junction Road.

Properties in the Conservation Area often rely on individual telegraph poles throughout the area with attendant wires radiating out to the houses.

Street planting is limited by narrow pavements throughout the area but this is compensated for by a considerable amount of tree cover within property frontages, a significant amount of which is protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

Brick walls and railings are to be found throughout the area and are clearly an essential part of the public realm and character of the Conservation Area.

6.6 Local details and features

The pre-eminent local detail throughout this Conservation Area is the presence of brick walls and/or brick walls and railings at the front of the properties.

6.7 Green spaces, trees and other natural elements

There is no public open space within the Conservation Area. However, throughout the area are mature properties situated in mature gardens, with extensive tree cover throughout, giving a general verdant feel to the area of buildings and trees in harmony. A significant number of Tree Preservation Orders are in place throughout the area.

Trees therefore make a significant contribution to this suburban Conservation Area's special character and sense of identity. Significant trees and tree groups are shown on the Appraisal Map at Appendix 3.

Because of their importance to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area, where they are not already protected by a Tree Preservation Order it is necessary to give the local planning authority 6 weeks notice of any intention to cut down, top or lop any tree in a Conservation Area, which also enables a local planning authority to consider whether the trees should be formally protected by the making of a Tree Preservation Order.

6.8 General condition of the area: The extent of loss, intrusions or damage i.e. negative features.

The general state of repair of the properties in the Conservation Area is reasonably good with properties not remaining vacant for any length of time. Some attention to detail is however required in individual (particularly older) properties because of inappropriate alterations, and continued vigilance will be required in considering all new development proposals in the area to ensure that they are in keeping with the general character and appearance of the Conservation Area. More recent developments have taken this into account, whereas previous house and flat developments have not always done so.

In common with many of Reading's Conservation Areas, the area is lacking in the quality, if not the state of repair of the highway environment (roadways, footways and street furniture). This is an area which would benefit from continued monitoring, and the seizing of opportunities for improvement as they arise.

6.9 Problems, pressures and issues

Design of new development

Within the Conservation Area itself there are a number of "newer" infill developments, the most recent of which have generally respected the character, scale of buildings and materials used in the Conservation Area, thus maintaining its character and appearance. Earlier developments, however, detract from its character, and have a notably negative effect on its character and appearance. The design of new development within and near the Conservation Area therefore remains a major issue.

Loss of original architectural details

The loss of original features, particularly front elevation and boundary features (e.g. to provide parking) remains an issue. There are also examples of non-traditional windows and alterations to buildings in the Conservation Area. There is a clear issue here in terms of respecting the character and setting of individual buildings as well as enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as a whole, in accordance with advice contained in PPG15 and policies contained in the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Traffic noise and pollution

The character and environmental quality of the main streets within the Conservation Area per se is generally quite good, although Wokingham Road to the north of the Conservation Area, and Cemetery Junction (of Wokingham, London and Kings Roads) in particular, immediately to the north east is a recognized pollution "hot spot".

Street clutter

This is not generally an issue with regard to the overall character and appearance of the Conservation Area as a whole, except at the main road junctions with Wokingham Road.

Attention has also been drawn to the detrimental impact of individual telegraph poles and wires radiating out from them.

7.0 Areas for further work

7.1 Consideration of conservation area boundary changes (to be the subject of a public consultation exercise)

The only area which is suggested for exclusion from the Conservation Area at this stage is 1-5 Marquis Place, Granby Gardens, which appears to have been redeveloped since the Conservation Area was originally designated. It was originally shown as part of the rear gardens of numbers 22-28 Eastern Avenue on the Conservation Area designation map, but now clearly relates to the terraced houses in Granby Gardens and not Eastern Avenue. It is separated from 22-28 Eastern Avenue by a brick wall.

In general terms, there have been no changes in planning circumstances since the Conservation Area was originally designated (notwithstanding more recent developments within in the Conservation Area), and therefore no other changes are suggested for the Conservation Area boundary. There is, however, an argument to be made for a full inventory to be made of all the properties within the Conservation Area and in the adjoining parts of the wider South Park

Planning Policy Area to properly review the boundaries of the Conservation Area in accordance with paragraph 4.3 of PPG15 and Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Bulmershe Road, for example, is largely excluded from the South Park Conservation Area, but contains similar properties (as well as many newer properties) to those identified within the current Area, and therefore warrants further examination.

7.2 Opportunities for enhancement

Floorscape and street furniture improvements should be considered in this area, including replacing telegraph poles.

It may be expedient, subject to the requisite publicity and the views of local people, to consider whether the local planning authority should consider using its powers to withdraw permitted development rights which affect the external appearance of the most important buildings in the Conservation Area, namely alterations to doors, windows, roofs and frontages. One such Article 4 direction already relates to the terrace of houses at 23-31 Junction Road.

7.3 Monitoring and review

This document should be reviewed every five years in the light of the Local Development Framework and emerging government policy. A review should include the following:

- A survey of the area to identify changes in its character and appearance;
- An assessment of whether the various recommendations detailed in this document have been acted upon, including proposed enhancements;
- A building condition survey;
- The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and any necessary action;
- Publicity and advertising.

Appendix 1 - Important buildings in the Conservation Area

This Appendix acknowledges information contained in the reports (and appendices attached to them, which included information provided by the Sutton Community Association) presented to Reading Borough Council's Planning Committee (a) proposing the designation of a South Park Conservation Area on 25 February 1988, and (b) confirming the designation of a South Park Conservation Area on 28 April 1988. Any errors in updating the information are of course the authors.

Properties with an asterisk were specifically mentioned in the 25 February 1988 report.

Hamilton Road

*19-21 Hamilton Road: Two pairs of matching semis. Imposing 4 storeys (including semi-basement). Gothic style. Brickwork a mixture of purple, grey and cream. Highly ornate stone carvings around main entrance (centrally grouped) and lintels to bays and first floor windows. Lancet arches to main windows.

*23 Hamilton Road: Unique later building with strong Edwardian influences. Imposing. Half-timbered. Clay tile roof. Impressive highly decorated front entrance in terracotta. Extensive original coloured leaded light glass panels in upper half of all windows.

*25 Hamilton Road: In the style of "Hillside". Grey brick with red detailing. Good terracotta detailing to main porch. Balustraded parapet over ground floor square bay. Interesting dormer to north with decorative rendered/stucco panel.

33-43 Hamilton Road: Largely unaltered group of mid-Victorian semi-detached properties. Good variety of decorative features, including the side elevation of number 43.

45 and 47 Hamilton Road: 45 is a large prominent red brick property with projecting bracketed eaves and tall arched windows. 47 is a double fronted cream brick property. There are two fine trees between them.

63-71 Hamilton Road: Interesting mix of larger detached Victorian properties, but including two small modern infills arguably not in keeping with the character of the Conservation Area (but pre-dating its designation). Number 63 is particularly prominent, with a tile hung frontage and stained glass windows,

and having a virtually identical twin at number 69. Between them, numbers 65 (red brick) and 67 (grey brick) form a distinct contrast. Number 67 appears to have benefited from recent attention, including pale blue paint to ground floor masonry and new wall, railings and gate piers.

*81 Hamilton Road ("Rosehill"): 2 storey detached villa. Gabled slate roof. Projecting bracketed eaves. Decorative verandah with curved roof (part removed to accommodate later bay).

*83 Hamilton Road: Grey and red brick diamond patterned brickwork. Pitched slate roof. Distinctive front bays. Post 1899 rear addition in red brick with interesting terra cotta string course between windows. Ornate stone clad porch.

*85 Hamilton Road: Gabled slate roof. Bracketed eaves. Bath stone mouldings around windows and string courses. Ornate stone-clad porch.

*87 Hamilton Road: 1860s detached villa divided into two. One has decorated verandah like 81. Original front door with etched glass fanlight and stucco surrounds. Plain gable slate roof. Twin coach house at rear.

*89-95 Hamilton Road: Fine group of four terraced houses built 1902-3. Red, yellow, grey brick patterning. Projecting ground floor bays with interesting eaves detailing (beading and finials). Repeated on main eaves. Recessed porch entrances with stone archways. Original 3-panel front doors with etched glass side windows and fanlight. Decorative cream paneling above ground floor windows. Highly ornate Italianate front railings. Very much in their original condition. Builder also responsible for 92-94 Bulmershe Road.

*97-99 Hamilton Road: Pair of Victorian semi-detached villas. Gabled roof but centrally divided wall. 99: slates replaced with clay tiles. Bracketed eaves with finials. Mainly red brick with cream brick detailing and string courses. Recessed porches with original front doors. Painted projecting bays with cream brickwork beneath. Plain iron railings and divides.

*101-103 Hamilton Road: Pair large semis in Colonial style. Low gabled slate roof with bracketed eaves. Distinctive rear elevation. Front boundary wall and railings.

*26-28 Hamilton Road: 1863. Unique local example of "Second Empire French Renaissance" style. Mainly red brick with some patterning and moulded string course. Full mansard roof. Decorative scallop slates and ornate round headed dormers on all elevations. First floor windows in Venetian grouping. Original

main entrance doors with circular fanlight over. Projecting bays. Attractive original cast iron verandah with curved sheet roof. Main entrance steps with cappings. Original front boundary railings and piers.

66-102 Hamilton Road: Unbroken group of mainly semi-detached Victorian villas, showing extensive use of contrasting string courses, ornate brickwork and decorative features, showing subtle differences in detailed design, e.g. decorative treatments over doorways of 66/68 and 70/72. Little adverse alteration or improvement.

74 Hamilton Road ("Glenthorne"): Contrasts with the above group. One of the earliest in the road. Double fronted detached house with sizeable garden containing a double storey brick and tiled coach house with hay loft door. House has contrasting cream brickwork around the stained glass front door and windows. The alternate light and dark chequerboard effect on the side walls is particularly interesting.

104 Hamilton Road: New house. Size and design generally in keeping with neighbours to the north.

*114 Hamilton Road: Late Victorian. Red brick. 2 storey detached villa. Gabled roof but replacement clay tiles. Original ground and first floor windows set in stone surrounds with scroll supports to ledges. Highly ornate frontage railings set in low brick wall with curved stone cap.

*116-118 Hamilton Road: Matching pair of semis. Late Victorian. Red brick. Yellow patterning. Slate gabled roof. Original flank dormer windows. Curve headed first floor windows. Ground floor hexagonal bays. Original walling and decorative front railings.

*120 Hamilton Road ("Lakefoot"): 1883 date on front porch. Good front and flank elevations. Flecked grey brick with red brick details. Clay tiled roof. Prominent chimney stacks. Decorative ridge tiles and ends. Original front wall and gates. Cobbled yard at side leads to coach house.

Eastern Avenue

*13-15 Eastern Avenue: Luther and Burnett Cottages dated 1871. Unique mix of Gothic and Romanesque inspired stonework details of a high quality.

*19-21 Eastern Avenue: Pair but of classical proportions and with good stone detailing. Carved decorative barge boards to gable ends. Front railings removed to gain access for parking.

*29-31 Eastern Avenue. Listed. 1840s stucco villa with slate roof. Faces south (i.e. not to road). Rusticated quoins. 3 bays, cross glazed and plate glass windows with hood moulds, outer tri-partite. Parapet. Projecting box porch with rounded corners and pierced parapet. Porch door half glazed with sop chamfered reveals. 4 panel door with glazed side panels and lozenge glazing to rectangular overlight.

*39-41 Eastern Avenue: Listed. 1845. C20 additions. Impressive pair of white stuccoed semi-detached houses in Regency style. Welsh slate roof. 2 storeys. 6 bays, lower set back. Side bays. Entrances either end have internal porches with pilasters supporting entablature, narrow round arched openings in return walls and inside (Art Nouveau glazing in 41). 2 steps up to door of 4 flush panels under overlight. Hipped oversailing roof with central cross ridged stack. Roofs have hipped ends with brick stacks at rear. Additions have monocline roofs. Large cedar tree in garden.

*43-45 Eastern Avenue. White rendered matching pair. Pre 1864. Projecting gables. Highly decorative barge boards. Ground floor windows have low cills and are over 2m high. Recessed porches. 43 largely unaltered.

*47 Eastern Avenue: Three and a half storey square corner property. Low pitched pyramid roof. Two and a half storey wings to side and rear with hipped slate roofs. Stucco on all elevations. Painted cream and white. Reminiscent of 82-84 Crescent Road.

*49-59 Eastern Avenue: 1903-5. Similar group to 66-102 Hamilton Road. Three pairs of semis. Extensive highly ornate patterned brickwork. Grey/cream bricks. Cream terracotta inset panels. Diamond pattern/dogstooth edging to main gables. Impressive moulded brick entrance porches. Double doors. Good example of Edwardian style.

*67 Eastern Avenue: "Woodlands". Pre 1864. Romanesque style. Matching projecting bays. 3 circular headed windows at first floor. Corner entrance porch with original door and furniture. Low pitch slate roof. Gables over bays. Rendered. Painted white.

*36 Eastern Avenue: Late Victorian detached. Gabled roof. Corbelled eaves. Stripped (red/white) rubbed arches with marbled keystones. Highly decorated and ornate main entrance archway with original ironwork in front of first floor windows over.

*38 Eastern Avenue: Red brick detached Victorian villa. Classic style. Mix of gabled/hipped roofs. South facing elevation with interesting projecting bays and classical treatment of gable end. Pediment possibly a later addition. Stone lintels. Carved keystones. Original front porch and trellis. Classical entrance steps and urns.

*40 Eastern Avenue: "Pilgrims". Pre 1899. Rendered flanks but main wall a mix of cream, red and grey brick patterning. One and a half storey front bay with lead roof and decorative eaves. Latter matching main eaves. Modern first floor casements.

*42 Eastern Avenue: Red and grey brick "Waterhouse" style. Slate roof, gabled ends. Half dormer projecting gables at front. Decorative barge boards to eaves and gable ends. Ground floor projecting bays in red brick with lancet parapet.

*44-46 Eastern Avenue: Pre 1875 semis. Grey and cream brick. Moulded string course. Gabled slate roof spoilt by 1950s dormer. Interesting decorative bracketed supports to main eaves. Distinctive round headed windows at first floor and ground floor projecting bays with crenellated tops. Recessed porch entrances. Original doors and fanlights.

*58 Eastern Avenue: Pre 1864. Main elevation faces south with single storey ground floor bay (possibly a later addition). Low pitched slate roof. Large overhanging bracketed eaves. Eastern Avenue elevation rather plain. Rendered and painted all round. North east corner feature with oriel windows (but with aluminum inserts). Coach house at rear converted to residential but spoilt with pebble-dash.

*84 Eastern Avenue: "Cardigan Lodge". Shown on 1864 OS Map. Possibly mid 1830s). Faces away from Eastern Avenue. Plain red brick. Symmetrical design. Low pitched hipped slate roof. Bracketed eaves.

Crescent Road

*83 Crescent Road: "Milverton". Large detached property split into 83 and 83A. Important front and rear elevations on prominent corner location. Patterned brick. Decorative stone carved lintels, portico/entrance and pediment detailing to front gable. Hipped slate roof. Impressive decorative chimney stacks. Original boundary wall to Bulmershe Road. Railings on Crescent Road. Distinctive "lion headed" capping to entrance piers.

*85-91 Crescent Road: Two pairs of semis in need of some attention.

*93 Crescent Road: Detached property. Mix of gabled and hipped roofs. Stucco on main elevation and east flank. Previous pink and blue painted colour now replaced with more appropriate cream and white.

*99 Crescent Road: "The Cedars". Distinctive corner property. High pitched double gable slate roof. Circular headed first floor windows with painted stone surrounds. Matching curved barge boards.

*111 Crescent Road: "The Orchard". Modern. Replacement clay tiles spoil otherwise period feel. Railings at front.

*82-84 Crescent Road: (82, "Baytree House", formerly "Park View"; 84 originally "Chewla"). Similar to 47 Eastern Avenue. Pair of semis in classical style. Three and a half storeys with semi-basement. Two and a half storey side additions. Stucco treatment to both. String courses and quoins picked out. 82 light lime/lime. 84 cream/white.

*86 Crescent Road: Detached property with grey and cream patterned brickwork. Twin decorative gables and bays to Crescent Road. Interesting triangular dormer roof light. Distinctive double window and dormer to rear. Detailed string courses and terracotta panels.

*88 Crescent Road: "Ecclesfield". Impressive late Victorian detached house in Gothic style. Mainly grey brick with red and yellow details. Lancet windows throughout with stripped (red/yellow) arches. Matching decorative timber barge boards to front gable, dormer and porch. Original four paneled door with upper lancet glass panels and curved fanlight over. Good example of its type.

112 Crescent Road: On the corner with Hamilton Road is currently being altered and extended for residential use (formerly offices). This is/was a large double-fronted building set well back with massive contrasting quoins and distinctive inverted finials below the projecting eaves (echoing those found for example at 59 Eastern Avenue and 89-95 Hamilton Road). Previously extensions were largely invisible behind important trees on the site and an original brick wall to Hamilton Road, with a rounded hump at its northern end, masking outhouses (possibly former stables). The extension currently under construction appears to reflect the style and materials of the main building. Allowed on appeal.

Bulmershe Road

28-30 Bulmershe Road: Appear on 1877 OS Map. Interesting pair of detached houses. Main façade of 30 faces away from road (as for example do numbers 29, 58 and 84 Eastern Avenue). Included in CA after representations from the SCA.

*88 Bulmershe Road: Late Victorian detached. Decorative clay tiled roof. South facing gambrel end to roof with tile hanging. Ornate finials and ridge.

*92-94 Bulmershe Road: Same style/builder as 89-95 Hamilton Road.

*96 Bulmershe Road: Plain but distinctive Dutch gabled roof, but original slates replaced with bright red interlocking tiles. Same builder as for 97-99 Hamilton Road.

*98 Bulmershe Road: Modern house but with interesting details. Red brick with yellow details. Distinctive gabled roof and round headed dormer insert and balcony.

Junction Road

*23-31 Junction Road: Attractive late Victorian terrace. Original front dormers. Slate roof. Half hipped ends. Period railings on low brick wall, but 23 and 29 missing for parking access. Good example of a patterned brickwork terrace. Protected by an Article 4 Direction dated January 1988.

Outside the Conservation Area

21-23 Bulmershe Road - Same builder with repeated house designs as 66-102 Hamilton Road.

"Oaklands", between Bulmershe and Hamilton. Distinctly modern, open flat development, with open frontages and very many protected trees on site, and which has its champions as a good example of its type. Clearly not typical of the Victorian character and appearance of the Conservation Area but adds variety to it. The retention of trees on the road frontages is important to the setting of the adjoining Conservation Area, allowing this development to fit in better than other flat developments in the area.

Appendix 2 - Relevant Local Plan Policies

The following policies from the Reading Borough Local Plan (1991-2006) are relevant to the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area:

POLICY CUD 6: DEMOLITION OF UNLISTED BUILDINGS IN CONSERVATION AREAS

CONSENT TO DEMOLISH IN A CONSERVATION AREA WILL NORMALLY ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE IT CAN BE SHOWN THAT IT IS WHOLLY BEYOND REPAIR, INCAPABLE OF REASONABLY BENEFICIAL USE, OF INAPPROPRIATE STRUCTURE OR DESIGN, OR WHERE ITS REMOVAL OR REPLACEMENT WOULD BENEFIT THE APPEARANCE OR CHARACTER OF THE AREA. DEMOLITION WILL BE MORE FAVOURABLY ASSESSED WHERE THERE ARE APPROVED DETAILED PLANS FOR REDEVELOPMENT AND A CONTRACT FOR CARRYING OUT THE WORKS HAS BEEN ENTERED INTO.

POLICY CUD 7: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS

AS APPROPRIATE NEW DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS SHOULD MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO THE AREA BY RESPECTING OR ENHANCING ITS ARCHITECTURAL AND VISUAL QUALITIES AND ACHIEVING A HIGH STANDARD OF DESIGN. DEVELOPMENT WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS WILL NORMALLY BE PERMITTED ONLY WHERE THE PARTICULAR HISTORIC OR ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE AREA WILL BE PRESERVED AND THERE IS NO LIKELIHOOD OF HARM BEING CAUSED TO THE AREAS CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE.

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL AS APPROPRIATE SEEK TO PRESERVE THE EXISTING BALANCE OF USES IN CONSERVATION AREAS.

Because of the high percentage of listed buildings in the Conservation Area. Policies CUD 1 (Works Affecting Listed Buildings), CUD 2 (Change of Use of Listed Buildings), CUD 3 (Maintenance of Listed Buildings) and CUD 4 (Setting of Listed Buildings) also apply.

Appendix 3 - Townscape Appraisal Map

Key



Conservation Area Boundary



Area for possible future deletion



Listed Buildings



Buildings of Townscape Merit



Tree Groups (Note: Trees are important throughout the area)



TPO Trees



Other Important Building Groups



Title: South Park Conservation Area

Drg.No.:

Scale at A3 : 1:2000

Date: 04/08/2008

Produced by Planning Section

Ref : LAP33291

