

## OSTERLEY PARK CAA REVIEW - OWGRA comments, November 2018

[Draft by Sheila O'Reilly, Planning Officer, and reviewed by Laurence Hawcroft, Vice Chairman.]

Essentially, the conservation area assessment appears to be good and OWGRA support it subject to the following comments:

1. OWGRA are pleased to see that the opportunity is being taken **to extend the boundaries of the conservation area**. Much has changed since its first designation in 1988 and we believe the extension is right as it includes the historic and architectural characteristics of the area augmented by some recent development.
  - a. We note that the extended boundaries include the Wyke Estate and the much-needed refurbishment of the listed modern sports pavilion now serving Goals Soccer on MacFarlane Lane. Oaklands Avenue and parts of Syon Lane fit well with this too as they add to the history of the area with their mostly well-kept 1930s housing.
  - b. Adding the remainder of the shopping parade and houses on Thornbury Road, the eclectic mix of houses on St Mary's Crescent plus the Library, Bowling Green and Jersey Gardens completes the picture of a compact village centre.
  - c. This is further complemented by adding the adjacent stretch of the Great West Road and Leigham Drive with its mostly well-preserved art deco-style houses, plus Ridgeway Road North and Lingwood Gardens, again interesting of a mostly 1920/30s building design.
  - d. Wood Lane with its varied style of properties together with the new Nishkam School and Grasshoppers Rugby Club, both modern pleasing architecture buildings set well in landscaped grounds, complete the picture.
2. The original Osterley Park Conservation Area was focused on protecting the Park and the surrounding views of it as well as the views from the park of its surroundings. The remit of this revised Conservation area is somewhat wider; to protect the environment of the Osterley area, a critical part of which is Osterley Park. As such we would suggest that the **CA be renamed the Osterley Conservation Area** to reflect this.
3. OWGRA believe the views of Osterley Park from the surrounding areas are of the upmost importance and need to be protected, and that all the existing surrounding open space should be afforded as much protection as is possible. These areas are vital to the ambience of Osterley and of Osterley Park and are highly valued by residents and visitors. **We would therefore strongly recommend that the following open areas be added to the scope of the new Osterley Conservation Area –**
  - a. **the Golf Club and Trumpers Wood east of the park**
  - b. **northwards beyond the M4 almost to Norwood Green**
  - c. **west covering the Brentford FC sports ground,**all within the Osterley and Spring Grove Ward.
4. **Traffic noise and pollution on the A4** - given that vehicles currently have priority over pedestrians on this trunk road OWGRA would recommend a conscious programme to improve pedestrian access across the A4, especially given the planned increase over the next 10-15 years in usage with people living and working next to it.

5. **Suburban roads, particularly those linked to/parallel to the A4.** We would suggest that traffic management of these roads should be focused on discouraging their use by any traffic other than that using them for access to properties, etc. on these roads, and discouraging their use to bypass the A4. Jersey Road is a prime example. This would include measures such as enforcement of 20mph limits.
6. The key issue regarding **the incessant roar of the M4** slicing through the northern area of the original Osterley Park is the effect this has on Osterley Park itself and its visitors. OWGRA suggest the installation of a noise barrier along this stretch of the M4.
7. Of similar concern is **the noise and pollution generated by air traffic**; it is of especial importance that the current air traffic is limited by the alternation policy so that at least one part of the day is relatively noise-free. It would be a source of great concern should flight patterns change to residents' detriment, particularly with the proposed third runway.
8. **Street furniture** makes a material contribution to the appearance of the Conservation area and we believe the design, installation and management of these need to be improved. All planned installation of new furniture, and its ongoing management, should be assessed as to whether it contributes to, and enhances, the Conservation Area. It would also help if there were proper management by LBH of the **proliferation of mobile phone masts and especially junction boxes**; one eyesore is the cluster of 15 of them outside Jersey Gardens on the A4. They are an intimidating barrier to walking or cycling there and they have an ugly and unco-ordinated appearance.
9. We agree the statement regarding **a good mix of shops and services** on Thornbury Road. All such shops should be tested against their ability to contribute to the ambience of Thornbury Road as a local village centre, with signage and usage controls appropriate for the maintenance of this. This should include
  - a. sensible limits over street signage (to reflect that this is a Conservation Area) to ensure they are in keeping with other signage and appropriate for the area in terms of style, size, etc. (e.g. no 6-foot high flashing neon signs)
  - b. guidelines to encourage usage of these facilities by businesses which both support the local neighbourhood as well as bring in customers from further afield (e.g. no businesses solely focused on serving customer from outside the area) and
  - c. limits over opening hours to reflect the residential and local nature of the area (e.g. no all-night barber shops). There are currently no licensing restrictions and we think there should be, possibly via Article 4 Direction.
10. Many **street trees** have already disappeared especially on the Great West Road, Thornbury Road and Jersey Road, and have not been replaced as they conflict with vehicle crossovers etc. Better management and replacement of street trees is necessary from LBH, in OWGRA's view. We would recommend the introduction of a sponsorship scheme (or similar) whereby Hounslow Council would accept contributions from residents towards trees being planted outside their properties where appropriate.

11. Before the Residential Extension Guidelines (REGs), there were some badly designed roof and side **extensions to dwellings** causing a terracing effect plus loss of vegetation in front gardens **with vehicle crossovers**. Some more recent rebuilding and extensions and loss of gardens to vehicles have been much better managed and add to the street scene; OWGRA supports the Conservation assessment and the continued use of the REGs to that purpose. We think that the use of Article 4 Direction should be considered. We also agree that there is a threat to **the rural edge** in the area from the increasing demand for gates and walls of unsympathetic style and materials. This might also be included in Article 4 Direction.
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To help OWGRA members respond to the consultation, below is a summary of the CAA strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, taken from pages 34/35 of the review. These are used as parameters in planning application decisions; they are reactive, but the assessment is an opportunity to provide proactive guidance.

Extract from CAA assessment:

#### Strengths

- Osterley House and other buildings dominate the heritage value of the area with four listings at the highest level, the park (including the area to the north of the motorway) being a Registered Park and Garden.
- The suburban housing around the park, which reflects the railways suburb expansion. The housing has great integrity of roof and other architectural features and details.
- Thornbury Road has a retail element which provides a village street character.
- Wide range of architectural styles of houses in the area.
- Open spaces and spaces between buildings and 'scrub areas' form part of

the setting

#### Weaknesses

- Motorway blight from noise.
- New development, backland development and large side and roof extensions can have an effect on the park.
- Proliferation of cable and paraphernalia on house exteriors.
- Some harmful extensions and alterations.

#### Opportunities

- More acceptable redevelopment of the BFC training ground.
- Restoration and possible relocation of Roman Bridge in Osterley Park.
- Selective, sensitive and high quality design redevelopment, maintaining the characteristic form, spacing and scale, of existing properties that are not architecturally special.
- Enhancing the value of the shopping area by retaining mixed use.

- Mending the boundary fabric where this has been eroded for hardstandings and encouraging appropriate edges and replanting.
- Street tree planting.
- Boundary treatments should be carefully considered and not over-formalised. Opportunity for Article 4 Direction.
- The redevelopment of Osterley Station car park should not adversely affect views into and from the conservation area.
- New development should respect the size and scale of the area and consider architectural quality.

#### Threats

- Needs for security and statutory requirements in conflict with the historic character and fabric of Osterley House.
- Need for alterations to improve viability of the house and park (and associated buildings) whilst maintaining historic imperatives.
- Costs of repairs to the park's extensive boundary walls.
- Outside the park: scale of proposed development because of high values, particularly extensions and alterations to rooflines, which can affect vistas and settings.
- Erosion of setting through poor architectural quality of construction, especially pastiche with crude overlarge detailing using unsympathetic materials.
- Infill of gardens by proposed development and extensions.
- Erosion of the rural edge by increased demand for gates and walls, often inappropriate in style and material.
- Potential erosion of long distance views from as well as of the park.
- Loss of trees.
- Demolition of interesting and well preserved earlier properties in Jersey Road should be avoided.
- 'Beds in sheds': substandard and usually illegal housing characterised by garden sheds being converted into living accommodation for private rent.
- Loss of green open space.