



OWGRA

Osterley & Wyke Green Residents' Association

OSTERLEY PARK CAA REVIEW - Comments from OWGRA, Dec 2018

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 moderne 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. **To complement this grouping, the Council might consider adding in Thistleworth Close, a typical 1960s cul-de-sac development, and Osterley Avenue, another cul-de-sac of mainly Victorian, 1930s and 1960s housing next to the Thornbury Road shops.**
 - 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-designed 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. We also believe that the Council should continue its welcome crackdown on unauthorised development as set out in the latest version of the Residential Extension Guidelines, which include controls on side extensions, 2-storey extensions, cladding, dormer windows, extensions to additional structures, front-facing chimneys, flues, soil pipes, front satellite dishes, front solar panels, advertisements, plus works to trees with stem diameters 75mm, etc.
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** all the way to and including the Victorian waterway, the Grand Union Canal...(5.2.5), and including the location of Trumpers Wood (an ancient woodland adjacent to the Long Wood Wetlands Nature Reserve) originally part of the Osterley estate established in the 16th Century by Sir Thomas Gresham.
- b. **northwards beyond the M4 almost to Norwood Green** to the council's boundary with Norwood Green, to include National Trust open land (see 4.1.2) originally purchased by Robert Child in the 18th Century to extend Osterley Park to the North. The northern boundary of the Park is marked by a stream crossed by the 'Roman Bridge', designed by Robert Adam, dated 1780, and is a Grade II listed building for which the LB Hounslow is the Local Planning Authority (11.3).
- c. **west covering the Brentford FC sports ground**, comprising open fields, scrub and woodlands and forming an attractive biodiverse western approach to Osterley Park criss-crossed by numerous historic Rights of Way and other footpaths linking the Park to Heston and across the M4 via a footbridge to Osterley Lane and Norwood Green. This former area of pasture and farm land was originally added to the Osterley Park estate in the 16th century under a royal licence granted to Sir Thomas Gresham, and included Osterley Farm which he already owned, and comprised of 200 acres stretching westwards from Osterley House to Heston Village. The area also contains the 'Ramblers' Sculpture (2000) by Ray Smith, commissioned to celebrate the theme of family strolls in suburban open fields.

4. Rights of Way and Footpaths within the Osterley Conservation Area

The appraisal document makes little or no reference to the historic Rights of Way (RoW) and other footpaths that criss-cross the current Osterley Conservation Area (1988) and surrounding areas of special character, that are used and enjoyed by walkers, cyclists and horse-riders in the borough. OWGRA believe that the appraisal should include references to the detailed Council plan, published in 2008, "Rights of Way Improvement Plan", which clearly and strongly makes the case for conserving, maintaining and improving the quality and signage of the borough's RoW, and indeed the need to protect them from property developer and landowner encroachment. In particular, it identifies the importance of RoW footpaths across listed Grade I and II sites of borough importance within the current Osterley Conservation Area (1988) and surrounding areas of special character, providing access to wildlife sites and the biodiversity of the Osterley Conservation area: Osterley Park (Grade I); Wyke Green/Golf Course to the Grand Union Canal (Grade I); Osterley Fields (Grade II); Norwood Fields (Grade II); St Marys Wood and Pastures; Trumpers Triangle (Grade II).

The current Osterley Conservation Plan, and any extensions into surrounding areas of special character, should make specific reference to its RoW and footpaths that provide significant character and amenity to the area, and for which the borough has particular responsibilities.

5. Biodiversity of the Osterley Conservation Area

The Osterley Park Conservation Area Appraisal Consultation Draft document makes little or no reference to the biodiversity of the current conservation area (1988) and surrounding areas of special character. OWGRA consider that there should be references to the Council's Hounslow Biodiversity Action Plan (2011) clearly and strongly makes the case for conserving, maintaining and improving the quality of the borough's sites for nature conservation (SINCs) and identifies the following listed Grade I and II listed sites of importance within the Osterley Conservation area (1988) and surrounding areas of special character, as having particular importance in its Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP): Osterley Park (Grade I); Wyke Green/Golf Course to the Grand Union Canal (Grade I); Osterley

Fields (Grade II); Norwood Fields (Grade II); St Marys Wood and Pastures (Grade II); Trumpers Triangle (Grade II). The BAP aims to include the above areas, collectively the largest biodiversity area in the borough, in its plan to:

- a. Prioritise actions for protecting, conserving and enhancing wildlife and habitats
- b. Enable monitoring of biodiversity
- c. Gauge the quality of our surroundings through the indicators provided by the health of habitats and species provided.

Clearly, any appraisal of the current Osterley Conservation Plan (1988), and proposed extensions into surrounding areas of special character, should make specific reference to the substantial biodiversity of such areas and the contribution that this makes to their character and amenity, and for which the borough has particular responsibilities in protecting and supporting through its BAP.

6. **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.
7. **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.
8. 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 and where possible road surface improvements.
9. 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.
10. **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**; 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.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.