

# **WOODCOTE CONSERVATION AREA**

## **CHARACTER APPRAISAL & MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS**

**Epsom and Ewell Borough Council**

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This document has been written on behalf of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council by:

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## **WOODCOTE CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL & MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS**

The Woodcote Conservation Area lies between the conservation areas which cover Epsom Town Centre and Chalk Lane on the south side of Epsom. The historic hamlet of Woodcote, from which it gets its name, lies about two kilometres further south, and is still based on Woodcote Hall, a 1930s rebuild of a substantial Georgian mansion. The Woodcote Conservation Area is relatively small and is centred on the junction of South Street, Woodcote Road and Dorking Road. It includes just four listed buildings (or groups of buildings) the most important of which is Woodcote Hall, a large mid 18<sup>th</sup> century stuccoed house. Also included are Nos. 73 and 75, and Nos. 58 to 64 (even) South Street, 17<sup>th</sup> century cottages with later additions or refrontings, and The Haywain Public House, an early 19<sup>th</sup> century house, also stuccoed, which was once a convent. Well detailed late 19<sup>th</sup> century houses along the north west side of South Street add to the area's architectural attractions. Despite some modern development, the conservation area retains a somewhat rural character which is enhanced by the close proximity of the open green spaces of Rosebery Park and Mount Hill Gardens, which separate it from the busy Town Centre.

This document seeks to define and describe the various elements which gives the Woodcote Conservation Area its unique character (the Character Appraisal), and provides recommendations (the Management Proposals) which will ensure its future protection and enhancement. It is our duty as Local Planning Authority to ensure, in our decision-making, that this special character is not only preserved but, wherever possible, enhanced. It is vital for those drawing up development proposals to understand the character of a place, and for decision-makers to ensure that proposals are in keeping. It is also important for the local community to understand how those changes which they wish to make to the physical fabric of their properties can significantly affect the visual appearance of the area.

We are confident that this statutory Appraisal document will provide the necessary tool for the positive management of the area by all concerned. It will help to ensure that change does not erode the essential spirit of the place and that positive enhancements are achieved.

Councillor Michael Arthur  
Chairman Planning Policy Sub-Committee

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Head of Planning

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## **Part 1 CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Description of the Woodcote Conservation Area**

The Woodcote Conservation Area lies immediately to the south of the historic settlement of Epsom, and developed from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards as Epsom grew as an important spa town. The conservation area lies along a busy route out of Epsom and focuses on the junction of South Street with Woodcote Road and Dorking Road. There is a great variety of both historic and more modern buildings, of which four are listed grade II, either individually or in groups. There is one particularly large house (Woodcote Hall) a building of the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, but otherwise the buildings are mainly 19<sup>th</sup> century or later in date, with two short rows of 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century cottages (Nos. 73 and 75 South Street and Nos. 58-62 South Street – Abele Cottages). Another building of merit is a former convent, now The Haywain Public House, and dating to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Substantial brick walls relating to the former kitchen garden to Woodcote Hall are a feature along Woodcote Road and are also listed grade II.

Given the location, it is not surprising that the conservation area contains both residential and commercial properties, including an over-dominant petrol-filling station on the road junction which was built on the site of an old smithy. The name 'Woodcote' is due to the close proximity of Woodcote Park, a former Tudor mansion which lies to the south of Epsom but has been rebuilt twice – in 1753 and again, following a fire, in 1934. This is separated from the more historic core of Epsom and from the Woodcote Conservation Area by Inter-War development of varying degrees of quality, interspersed with a number of historic buildings along Dorking Road.

The Woodcote Conservation Area was designated on 16 April 1982.

#### **1.2 The implications of conservation area designation**

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”.

Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these conservation areas. Section 72 also specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development within a conservation area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

#### **1.3 Conservation area character appraisals and management proposals**

In response to these statutory requirements, this document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area and identifies opportunities for enhancement. It is in conformity with English Heritage guidance as set out in *Guidance on conservation area appraisals* (August 2005) and *Guidance on the management of conservation areas* (August 2005). Additional government guidance

regarding the management of historic buildings and conservation areas is set out within *Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment* (PPG15).

This document therefore seeks to:

- Define the special interest of the conservation area and identify the issues which threaten the special qualities of the conservation area (in the form of the 'Character Appraisal');
- Provide guidelines to prevent harm and achieve enhancement (in the form of the 'Management Proposals').

These documents provide a firm basis on which applications for development within the Woodcote Conservation Area can be assessed. The omission of any feature in either the appraisal or the management proposals does not imply that it is of no interest, and because both will be subject to regular review, it will be possible to amend any future documents accordingly.

Once approved by the Planning Policy Sub Committee, these documents will be a 'material' consideration in the determination of any planning applications in the conservation area, and they will also replace the Council's former guidance on the conservation area *Planning Policy Guidance Note 4*.

#### **1.4 Policy framework**

These documents should be read in conjunction with the wider adopted development plan policy framework produced by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, as well as documents produced by Surrey County Council and the South-East Regional Assembly. These documents include:

- *The Epsom and Ewell District-Wide Local Plan* dated May 2000: Chapter 6 addresses the built environment. The management of conservation areas is covered by policies BE2, BE3, BE4 and BE5.
- The Epsom and Ewell Local Development Framework (LDF) contains a Core Strategy which was adopted in July 2007. This document identifies key issues and objectives for the future development of the Borough up to 2022, and a strategy to achieve them.
- Detailed Policies will be dealt with in later documents, but meanwhile the Core Strategy has saved a number of the Policies in the Local Plan (as described above). It also contains CS5 – a broad Policy which emphasises the Council's commitment to protect and enhance the heritage of the Borough. Item 3.7.8 in the Strategy describes and explains the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans which the Council is undertaking.
- *The Adopted Surrey Structure Plan 2004*: Provides strategic guidance for the built environment for the period to 2016.

- *The South East Plan Core Document March 2006*: Provides an overall framework for development in the south-east. Useful guidance is set out in Chapter 8 *Management of the Historic Environment*, and is detailed in Policy BE7.

### 1.5 Key Characteristics of the Woodcote Conservation Area

This character appraisal concludes that the key characteristics of the conservation area are:

- Modestly sized urban conservation area located just to the south of Epsom Town Centre Conservation Area, and focused on the busy junction of South Street with Woodcote Road and Dorking Road;
- The more rural Chalk Lane Conservation Area lies close by with its outstanding collection of prestigious 17<sup>th</sup> century houses;
- Varied building lines and plot sizes;
- There are four listed buildings, some arranged in groups, plus a listed boundary wall:
  - Woodcote Hall, a substantial stuccoed mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, now converted into apartments;
  - The Haywain Public House, another slightly smaller stuccoed house dating to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century;
  - Two groups of 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century cottages - Nos. 73 and 75 South Street and Nos. 58-62 South Street (Abele Cottages);
  - Substantial brick walls relating to the former kitchen garden to Woodcote Hall are a feature along Woodcote Road and are also listed grade II;
- A number of late 19<sup>th</sup> century detached or semi-detached cottages along South Street which although not listed, are considered to be 'positive' in their contribution to the character of the conservation area;
- The Queen's Head Public House, a well detailed late 19<sup>th</sup> century inn on a prominent site;
- Further early 19<sup>th</sup> century stuccoed houses in Woodcote Road;
- The use of red brick, white-painted stucco, clay handmade tiles, natural slate, varied window types including both sashes and casement, and some interesting front door details;
- A variety of modern buildings, mainly neutral in their impact apart from the petrol-filling station on the main road junction.

### 1.6 Summary of Issues (from Chapter 6):

A number of detrimental features have been identified as part of the survey work for this Character Appraisal, and the list below includes the most importance 'Issues' for the Woodcote Conservation Area which need to be addressed, mainly by the Borough Council or by Surrey County Council. Further details can be found in the Management Proposals.

#### Spatial Issues

- Poor quality public realm, including pavements, signage and lighting;
- Traffic speed and density;

- Repairs are need to the pavements;
- Loss of front boundaries, mainly to car parking;
- Protection of the listed walls in Woodcote Road and Woodcote Close.

#### Buildings

- The modern petrol filling station is a negative building;
- The protection of the unlisted historic buildings from unsympathetic alterations
- The preservation of front gardens and front boundaries;
- The control of satellite dishes.

#### Conservation area boundary review

- Several changes required – delete area to north; delete 1930s house in Woodcote Close;
- Add 1930s houses, pond and open space, and the Clock House in Dorking Road;

#### Education and publicity

- Prepare a new Woodcote Road Conservation Area guidance leaflet.

## 2 THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

### 2.1 Historical development

The Woodcote Conservation Area is a modestly sized area which forms part of the southern edge of Epsom Town Centre, between the more built-up commercial core and the greener residential suburbs associated with the Chalk Lane Conservation Area. Its historical development should therefore be considered as part of the development of Epsom, particularly its growth as a spa town from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

The name of Epsom derives from 'Ebba's ham', meaning Ebba's farmstead or settlement, Ebba being the name of the Saxon founder or landowner. By 933 AD the ownership had passed to the Abbey of Chertsey, where a charter confirmed by King Athelstan refers to it as 'Ebbisham'. In the Domesday Book of 1086 it is called 'Evesham' and has 38 households grouped around the church of St Martin, located slightly outside the present Town Centre. At some stage Chertsey Abbey laid out a new settlement to the west of the church which developed into today's High Street. This settlement was largely agricultural, though brick making, based on local clays, began in the 1660s. A flint tower was added to St Martin's Church in about 1450.

In the 1620s the presence of magnesium sulphate in a local spring led to the development of the area as a spa, and being only 18 miles from the capital, Epsom became a popular country retreat for Londoners, who were keen to take the medicinal waters. This led to the development of the High Street with new inns and lodgings, and some of the buildings erected during Epsom's heyday as a spa still survive in the town centre, such as the Assembly Room of 1690, the Albion Inn, Nos. 127-9 High Street, and the Spread Eagle Inn of 1700.

Prestigious new country residences were also built just outside the town, particularly towards the Wells on the western side of the town. Several of these lie within the Chalk Lane Conservation Area, which lies immediately to the south of the Woodcote Conservation Area. These were built in the late 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century, of which Woodcote Grove and The Durdans are the most prestigious. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the grounds of The Durdans butted up to the parkland which surrounded Woodcote Park, a large house of 1934 which lies to the south of the Woodcote Conservation Area. This was rebuilt, following a fire, to replace Isaac Ware's Georgian mansion of 1753. In the late 17<sup>th</sup> century Woodcote Park was owned by Richard Evelyn, brother of John Evelyn, the diarist and friend of Pepys. Richard Evelyn had married Elizabeth Mynn of Woodcote Park, a tall chimneyed Tudor building standing at one end of a courtyard and set amongst the trees of a deer park. Outside the park lay a straggle of cottages around a pond and a green, along what is now Wilmerhatch Lane which connects, via Woodcote Green Road, Woodcote Road and South Street, to Epsom Town Centre. Today, Woodcote Park is used by the RAC Country Club and Golf Club.

In the late 17<sup>th</sup> century The Durdans was owned by Lord George Berkeley, who used it when he needed a house which was convenient for London. Berkeley was keeper of Nonsuch Palace, Henry VIII's once splendid residence which stood just two miles away at Ewell. It has been falling into disrepair since the Civil War and by 1682 was owned by Barbara Villiers, a former mistress of Charles II, who allowed it to be looted for building materials. Berkeley acquired several wagon loads of stone and timber, using them to rebuild his house at Durdans in a more gracious, classical style. Many of the other

houses in Epsom which were built at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century still retain characteristic quoins or other architectural embellishments of white stone set in old red bricks which were similarly 'recycled' from Nonsuch. The opening of a local brickworks by George Parsons just outside Epsom in 1663 must also have promoted the use of brick as improved methods of firing and local availability made bricks cheaper and brick houses more fashionable.

By 1730, Epsom's popularity as a spa resort was already being eclipsed by the growing fame of Bath, and its significance as a spa abated. This was despite the establishment of the popular racecourse on Epsom Downs, the first race being run on an informal track in 1780, and a grandstand being constructed in 1830. The present town of Epsom began to take shape from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, with the remodelling of St Martin's Church in 1825. Further buildings were added in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as the Post Office, in 1897, and the premises of the London and County Bank and of William Dorset, agricultural and garden merchant. In 1907 St Martin's Church was again altered, confirming the growth of the local population.

*Insert 1867, 1895 and 1913 historic maps*

In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century the land which now makes up the Woodcote Conservation Area appears to have been in use as fields which lay to either side of the main route to the south of Epsom. During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries there were some changes, with the construction of cottages along South Street and, in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, the building of Woodcote Hall at the junction of South Street with Woodcote Road/Dorking Road. Celia Fiennes visited the Surrey area between 1708 and 1712 and described an ice house of c1700 and canal in what later became the garden to The Haywain. This early 19<sup>th</sup> century house was built on land owned by The Elms Estate.

The First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1867 confirms that by this time Woodcote Hall was called The Poplars and lay within a rural setting with fields to the east. To the south lay a large kitchen garden with glass houses, and part of the very substantial red brick wall which once must have enclosed all of it now remains facing Woodcote Close and Woodcote Road, and is grade II listed. The map also confirms that Nos. 2 and 4, and No. 6 Woodcote Road had been built (No. 6 being named 'Durdans Lodge') and also Adele Grove on Dorking Road. Nos. 58-64 are 17<sup>th</sup> century but were refronted in 1896 (date plaque) when they were renamed Adele Cottages. Further south along Dorking Road, and currently outside the conservation area, Clock House and its associated lodge and stables were built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, possibly on the site of an earlier building.

Rosebery Park on the north side of the conservation area was created out of land donated by Lord Rosebery of the Durdans in 1913. Later on, Inter-War housing was built along Woodcote Road and Woodcote Close but is largely unobtrusive. More noticeable are the houses which can be seen to the west of Dorking Road, where the land rises. The two storey hotel block (Premier Inn) behind The Haywain is another building of little merit and is suggested for removal from the conservation area. The most negative building is the modern petrol-filling station on the road junction, probably dating to the 1980s, which dominated the junction and, indeed, most of the central part of the conservation area.

## **2.2 Archaeology**

Prehistoric and Roman settlers were attracted to the area by the springs that occur where the North Downs chalk meets the impervious London clay, though there is no evidence of pre-medieval archaeology within Epsom town centre, where the only find of any significance is 7<sup>th</sup> century brooch, probably from a burial, now in the British Museum. There are no scheduled monuments in the conservation area.

### **3 LOCATION, ACTIVITIES AND SETTING**

#### **3.1 Location and setting**

The Woodcote Conservation Area lies immediately to the south of Epsom Town Centre on the main A24 road (Dorking Road) which connects Epsom to the M25. The conservation areas which encompass Epsom Town Centre and Chalk Lane therefore lie to the immediate north and south, creating an almost continuous area of historic interest which is only divided by areas of open space or Inter-War development.

These open spaces, Mounthill Gardens and Rosebery Park, lie to the north of the Woodcote Conservation Area, and further open spaces, used as sports fields and tennis courts, lie to the south off Woodcote Road. This occupies a large site between Dorking Road and Woodcote Road. Otherwise, the conservation area is largely surrounded by Inter-War or later residential development.

To the south lies the undulating downland associated with Epsom Downs and the racecourse, although the conservation area itself is mainly flat. To the west of Dorking Road the land also rises along St Margaret Drive, and some open space and a pond are suggested for inclusion within the conservation area boundary.

The chalk and associated flints which can be found beneath the Downs have in the past been used as a fertiliser or as a building material. Local clay from the edges of Epsom Common has also been used for brick making, although this is no longer a local industry.

#### **3.2 Uses and activities**

The conservation area is in very mixed uses with both residential and commercial properties, although residential predominates. There are two public houses, The Haywain and The Queen's Head, both located in historic buildings. A modern petrol-filling station dominates the centre of the conservation area. On the west side of the junction, a group of possibly 1930s buildings sit back from the road behind a high wall and appear to have once been a builder's yard called Mitchell's. A print works is now located on the site.

Woodcote Hall, a substantial mid 18<sup>th</sup> century mansion has been converted into apartments. Further south along Dorking Road and currently just outside the conservation area is another listed building, Clock House, which is now used as the Clock House Medical Centre. Most of the residential properties are located in two storey houses or cottages, some of which are detached or semi-detached.

### **4 SPATIAL ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Street pattern and building plots**

The conservation centres on the junction of Dorking Road (from the south west), Woodcote Road (which leads in a south easterly direction towards Chalk Lane), and South Street (which leads northwards into Epsom Town Centre). This junction is marked by traffic lights and is dominated by the modern petrol-filling station. These streets are all historic routes which would have provided access into the countryside from Epsom, including the Tudor mansion at Woodcote Park. Sweet Briar Lane, an historic alleyway which is marked on the 1867 map, forms the northern boundary to the conservation area, separating it from Rosebery Park.

The conservation area boundary encompasses the properties which face these three streets and generally follows the back boundary of the plots. These vary in size but generally the buildings lie close to or on the back of the pavement with modest gardens to the rear. The largest gardens are associated with the 20<sup>th</sup> century houses which lie within the former kitchen garden to Woodcote Hall, behind the listed wall. To the north, the late 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages along the west side of South Street are regularly laid out with a common building line and equal-sized plots, but in the rest of the conservation area there is much greater variety of plot size, with some modern infilling which has subdivided the former gardens to Woodcote Hall. These houses, dating mainly to the 1960s, sit back further from the road without attempting to follow any historic building pattern.

Woodcote Close, which curves around Woodcote Hall, is an Inter-War development of detached houses, and the first part of the road is included within the conservation boundary where it is notable for the high red brick walls on the south side and the 'soft' mainly green boundary to the side gardens to Woodcote Hall. The wide grass verges which add a more rural quality to this part of the conservation area are typical of Inter-War housing and are protected from vehicular over-run by concrete markers painted white.

#### **4.2 Open spaces, landscape and trees**

There are no formal or public open spaces, the only open space being created by the wide traffic junction and the three streets. Mounthill Park and Rosebery Gardens provide some public open space and mature trees but both lie just outside the conservation area on its northern boundary. The most noticeable trees in the conservation area lie around Woodcote Hall, particularly between the house and the main road. The proposed extension to the conservation along Dorking Road will however add an area of open green space and an attractive pond and trees.

#### **4.3 Focal points, focal buildings, views and vistas**

The layout of the conservation area, centred on the junction of the three main roads, provides a natural focus which is however somewhat compromised by the dominant canopy and sales area of the modern petrol-filling station. Woodcote Hall, which stands close by, would have historically been the most visually significant building in the conservation area but its garden and grounds have been lost to modern development although it still has some presence. The Haywain Public House is another focal building as it does at least retain some open land around it and, most importantly, its (listed) front boundary railings. Abele Cottages, on the west side of South Street, and The Queen's

Head Public House, are also focal buildings due to their close proximity to the road as it bends slightly towards Epsom.

Views within the conservation area are limited to short vistas along the streets, which terminate in buildings of varied value including the petrol-filling station. Views northwards along South Street terminate in the large modern office buildings which mark the beginning of Epsom Town Centre.

#### **4.4 Boundaries**

There is a great variety of boundaries in the conservation area, some of them of little merit. The most visually significant is the high (approximately three metres) red brick 18<sup>th</sup> century wall which faces Woodcote Grove and Woodcote road and once formed the boundary to the kitchen garden of Woodcote Hall. Parts of this wall are in poor condition.

On the opposite side of Dorking Road, the listed cast iron railings and gates to The Haywain date to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and retain interesting details including urn and anthemion finials. To the south, and adjoining these railings, which sit immediately in front of the building, is another high brick wall which appears to be 18<sup>th</sup> century although the section which turns into St Margaret Drive is modern. Similarly, a high brick wall on the north side of The Haywain has been substantially although not totally rebuilt, and as such contributes to the character of the area and also helps to conceal the 1960s houses behind. However, part of the wall has been extended using green-painted boarding, presumably to conceal a lean-to building behind (this forms part of the Mitchell site which retains a possibly 1930s building).

Along the north west side of South Street, where the 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages sit back slightly from the street, most of the boundaries have been removed to create parking spaces. A low clipped hedge in front of Nos. 73 and 75 South Street, which sit down from the road, is a more attractive feature. A high close boarded timber fence to the south in front of The Cottage is a rather dominant, and still further south the low brick wall with metal railings in front of Woodcote Hall appears to be a rebuild of the listed walls and railings which are included in the list description.

Some wrought iron 'park' fencing, possibly dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, can be seen at the back of Woodcote Hall, facing Woodcote Close. Here the overall character is more rural with hedging and small trees. This is similar to the general appearance of Woodcote Road where the properties on the western side have either open lawns (for the modern bungalows) or high clipped hedges or low brick walls (for the historic houses).

#### **4.5 Public realm**

The "public realm" covers street lighting, street furniture, paving, road surfaces, and other features of interest within the streets which make up the conservation area, as follows:

Street lighting:

Given that two of the roads are principal routes it is perhaps not surprising that the street lights along Dorking Road and South Street are high output modern steel and concrete standards of no special merit. In Woodcote Road, the lights are shorter and made from concrete. Telegraph poles with overhead cables are also a feature in Woodcote Road.

#### Street furniture:

Because there are no public open spaces in the conservation area apart from the streets themselves, there are no examples of public seating or other street furniture. The only feature of note is the bright red cast iron post box on the corner of Woodcote Close and Woodcote Road, adjacent to the listed wall.

#### Pavements and roads

There are no examples of traditional paving in the conservation area, which is mainly paved using modern black tarmac which has been disturbed in places by trenching for utility providers. The widened pavement around the main junction is covered in a mixture of modern surfaces and would benefit from some enhancements. The best feature however is the survival of lengths of wide (300 mm) granite kerbing along South Street and Dorking Road, on both sides. These must be retained if any road works are undertaken.

#### Street name plates

The Borough Council has adopted a standard form with black letters on a white background, made from metal and fixed to a black timber plate fixed in turn to buildings or to low timber posts. These are simple and well detailed and fit in with the character of the conservation area. One of the signs (Woodcote Road) outside Woodcote Hall is in need of some maintenance.

#### Traffic management

The busy traffic along Dorking Road and South Street is the most detrimental feature within the conservation area apart from the modern petrol-filling station. The traffic lights do provide some control and allow pedestrians to cross safely, but in other parts of the conservation area crossing the roads can be hazardous.

## 5.1 Building types

All of the historic buildings in the conservation area were built as family houses or cottages between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, one of them (Woodcote Hall) being an extremely prestigious 18<sup>th</sup> century mansion, although this has now been divided into apartments and new buildings built in its former garden. The Haywain Public House is the only other building of any size, the remaining properties being paired or detached houses or cottages no more than two windows high and two storeys high. A short stretch of terraced cottages can be seen along the north east side of South Street.

Of the more recent buildings, No. 64 South Street (Mitchells) appears to be a 1930s two storey building which may once have been a workshop or in an industrial use – it is now a printers but retains a domestic scale. Woodcote Court, Nos. 1-7 (consec.) Dorking Road, is a well detailed block of 1930s flats. A number of 1930s and later detached houses are hidden by the listed wall off Woodcote Road, and sitting opposite, between two ‘positive’ stuccoed houses (Nos. 2, 4 and 46 Woodcote Road) are six paired or detached properties, probably also dating to the 1930s or later. The modern petrol-filling station is the most recent complex of buildings and the least attractive.

## 5.2 Listed buildings

There are currently eight listed buildings or structures within the conservation area. They are all listed grade II and are:

### Woodcote Hall, South Street

Woodcote Hall is a substantial three storey mid 18<sup>th</sup> century houses faced in stucco though built mainly of red brick. The attic floor is shallow with a dividing string course and central pediment over a Diocletian window. A two storey canted bay has been added to the front in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, which may be when the stucco was added over the original red brick. The building has been much altered and extended but retains a mid 18<sup>th</sup> century staircase and a mid 19<sup>th</sup> century cast iron verandah on the rear elevation.

This building had a large kitchen garden which is shown on the historic maps and which was separated from the house in the 1930s when Woodcote Close was built. Part of the surrounding brick wall remains facing Woodcote Road and Woodcote Close and is separately listed.

### The Haywain Public House, No. 2 Dorking Road

This early 19<sup>th</sup> century house is two storeys high and simply detailed. It retains its sash windows, shallow hipped slate roofs and a central portico with square piers. The cast iron railings to the front are also listed. A listed ice house of c1700 is located some distance away outside the conservation area boundary.

### Nos. 73 and 75 South Street

This long row of brick-built cottages has steeply pitched peg-tiled roofs and sashes or Yorkshire casement windows. No. 73 has a huge chimney stack at its northern end. Whilst the appearance is mainly of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, they probably date originally to the 17<sup>th</sup> century and were presumably timber framed.

### Abele Cottages, Nos. 58-62 South Street

Two of these properties, Nos. 60 and 62, appear to date to the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and have a modern date plaque saying '1690'. They have a very steeply pitched roof, a deep moulded eaves cornice, and a possibly jettied front concealing what is probably a timber frame behind. However they have been bricked over and a third cottage added, possibly in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Alterations were carried out in 1898 (another plaque) when, presumably Abele Villas (No. 56) was added next door, which is also dated 1898.

### 5.3 Locally listed buildings

There are currently about 80 buildings or structures on the Borough-wide list that has been drawn up by the Borough Council and Surrey County Council. 'Locally Important Buildings' are valued for their contribution to the local scene, or for their local historic associations, but are not considered to be of national importance, so they are not eligible for statutory listing. Policies to control them were included in the former Local Plan (Policy BE15).

There are currently no locally listed buildings in the conservation area but additions may be made in the future.

### 5.4 Positive buildings

The Townscape Analysis Map identifies a number of unlisted historic buildings, mainly dating to between 1870 and the 1930s, as being *positive*. Later buildings, or those which have been heavily altered or indeed rebuilt, have been omitted. The identified buildings are considered to make this *positive* contribution to the special interest of the conservation area due to their architectural quality, the consistently high quality of their materials, and the survival of their original details.

To the north, along South Street, the 'positive' buildings are small houses or cottages, the ones on the east side being earlier (they are shown on the 1867 map) and the ones on the west side dating to between 1895 and 1913. The earlier buildings (Nos. 63, 65 and 67) are rendered and painted and have lost their original windows though No. 67 does have sash windows (probably modern) and a well detailed early 20<sup>th</sup> century shopfront – a rare survival. Opposite, Nos. 44-56 retain more original features and an interesting mix of yellow brick, painted brick, and, for Nos. 48- 52, more yellow brick elevations decorated with red brick dressings and half timbered gables. These have steeply pitched roofs which are covered in machine made clay tiles.

Woodcote Road retains two interesting villas, both marked on the 1867 map. Nos. 2 and 4 are a matching pair of semi-detached houses, two storeys high with shallow pitched roofs. No. 6 is a more substantial detached house with a portico with square piers similar to The Haywain, and is called 'Durdans Lodge' on the 1867 map, suggesting a link with The Durdans. Both appear to date to c.1850.

The Queen's Head Public House is another interesting 'positive' building as it appears to be marked on the 1867 map but the front elevation dates to c1910 – it may simply have been refronted.

Government guidance in PPG15 *Planning and the historic environment* advises that a general presumption exists in favour of retaining those buildings which make a *positive* contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area (paragraph 4.27).

The guidance note states that proposals to demolish such buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings. The demolition of non-positive buildings may be allowed, but any redevelopment of the site will have to closely conform to existing Council policies, particularly in terms of site density, scale, materials and details. This means, for instance, that proposals for the demolition of a non-positive single house and its replacement with a much larger building or a block of flats is highly unlikely to be approved.

## **5.5 Materials and details**

The materials and details of the various historic buildings in the conservation area are extremely varied although brick appears to be the most prevalent material after about 1800, replacing timber framing which may still exist beneath later refacing on Nos. 73 and 75 South Street and Nos. 58-62 South Street (Abele Cottages). Stucco can also be found on the more modest cottages as well as on the more prestigious mansions and villas such as Woodcote Hall and The Haywain.

Whilst handmade clay peg tiles can be seen on the listed cottages in South Street, natural slate is more common and is used on The Haywain and the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century villas in Woodcote Road. Woodcote Hall appears to be roofed in a combination of the two.

Within the conservation area there are also a number of windows types, of which the Yorkshire casements on No. 73 South Street and of special note. No. 75 has sashes, again sub-divided into small panes. Woodcote Hall has mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century plate glass sashes, probably dating to the addition of the bay window. The portico with its Ionic columns is of interest, and reflects the slightly less grand porticoes to The Haywain and No. 6 Woodcote Road.

Whilst the overall styles of the buildings are late Georgian or 19<sup>th</sup> century, the two surviving 17<sup>th</sup> century buildings in South Street add a reference of local Surrey vernacular styles although there are no examples of the use of weather-boarding, as can be found in Epsom Town Centre, possibly because the buildings have been refronted in brick.

The listed brick walls in the conservation area are made from the local red brick which is occasionally built with blue headers to create a chequer pattern. This brick would have been made in the area from locally-produced clay dug up from the area around Epsom Common – brick making began in this part of Epsom in the 1660s.

There are no shops in the conservation area, but old shopfronts can be seen on No. 67 South Street and on No. 75b (Paisley House) which forms part of the listed building and juts forwards into the street with a long row of casement windows.

## **6 NEGATIVE FEATURES AND ISSUES**

### **6.1 Negative features**

*Dorking Road:*

- The dominant petrol-filling station, which has compromised the setting to The Haywain and to Woodcote Hall, both listed grade II
- Poor quality pavements and public realm in general
- The busy traffic which makes crossing the road hazardous
- Repairs are needed to The Haywain and to the listed front boundary walls and railings
- A modern fire escape on the south side of The Haywain is a detractor
- The new Premier Inn and new housing development on the west side of Dorking Road has somewhat impinged on the setting of The Haywain
- Poor quality street lights

*South Street*

- Busy traffic
- Many of the positive properties have uPVC windows and modern doors
- Many of them on the west side have also lost their front gardens, which are now used for car parking
- Concrete roofs tiles have been used to replace clay tiles or slate
- 1960s development (Ardingly Court) is rather out of keeping on the east side of the road
- The pavement area in front of Woodcote Hall is in need of improvements
- The green-painted wooden hoarding outside No. 64 South Street and the adjoining metal gates
- Nos. 58-62 South Street (listed grade II) are in need of some improvements
- Poor quality street lights

*Woodcote Road:*

- The listed wall is in need of repair in places
- The use of uPVC windows in some of the positive buildings
- Satellite dish on the front elevation of No. 2
- Overhead wires
- Poor quality street lights

**6.2 Issues****SPATIAL ISSUES****6.2.1 New development**

New development has already impinged on the special character of the conservation area, most noticeably the petrol-filling station. Since the 1930s, new houses have also been built around the edges of the conservation area and also in the gardens of some of the properties in the conservation area. All of these buildings have diluted the special interest of the area.

### 6.2.2 Traffic management

Busy traffic along Dorking Road and South Street (the A24) is a detrimental feature which adversely affects the general amenity of the area. Pedestrian movement across these roads is correspondingly difficult.

### 6.2.3 Public realm

Some of the pavements are in poor condition, with poorly maintained surfaces which have been disturbed by trenching. The existing street lights are functional but do not reflect the conservation area status of the area. The existing granite kerbs need to be preserved. Undergrounding of overhead wires in Woodcote Road is desirable.

### 6.2.4 Site specific improvements

Enhancements would be welcome to the paved area outside Woodcote Hall in South Street, around the traffic intersection.

### 6.3.5 Trees

Parts of the conservation area, mainly around Woodcote Hall, are notable for the mature trees which help to define the special character of the area. All of the trees in the conservation area are already protected by conservation area designation, but in addition, some of the trees have Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on them, which identifies them as being of particular importance. All trees in the conservation area need to be protected from inappropriate lopping or felling, and where they are diseased, new trees should be planted to replace them, following advice from the Tree Officer.

## BUILDINGS

### 6.3.6 Buildings or structures in poor repair

A number of buildings or structures in the conservation were noted as being in need of repair:

- The Haywain and the listed railings/walls in front of the building
- Nos. 58-62 South Street (Abele Cottages)
- The listed brick walls in Woodcote Road/Woodcote Close

### 6.3.7 Alterations to unlisted buildings

There are 13 unlisted but 'positive' buildings in the conservation which are in use as family dwellings. Because of the impact of traffic noise, many of these have lost their original windows and front doors, and these have been replaced in uPVC or other unsympathetic materials. The loss of front gardens to car parking is also an issue along the north west side of South Street.

### 6.3.8 Satellite dishes

One visible satellite dish was noted on the front wall of one building in the conservation area (No. 2 Woodcote Road). Existing planning controls mean that the permission is needed to place satellite dishes on front elevations within the conservation area.

This dish is detrimental to the overall character of the conservation area and guidance and possible enforcement action should be considered (for this building, only if the satellite dish was erected after 2000).

### CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY REVIEW

#### 6.3.9 CA boundary review

As part of the survey work for the Character Appraisal, the existing boundaries of the conservation area were inspected. It is considered that the designated boundary should be amended to exclude modern development, and should be extended to include attractive open space, 1930s houses, and listed buildings along Dorking Road.

### EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY

#### 6.3.10 Conservation Area leaflet

The existing Woodcote Conservation Area leaflet is a useful document but is now somewhat out of date. The publication of new guidance, in association with the recommendations included in the Management Proposals, would be welcome.

## **Part 2 CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS**

## **7 INTRODUCTION**

### **7.1 Format of the Management Proposals**

Part 1 of this document, the *Character Appraisal*, has identified the special positive qualities of the Woodcote Conservation Area which make the conservation area unique. Part 2 of this document, the *Management Proposals*, builds upon the negative features and issues which have also been identified, to provide a series of Recommendations for improvement and change, most of which are the responsibility of the Borough Council.

The structure and scope of this document is based on the suggested framework published by English Heritage in *Guidance on the management of conservation areas* (2005). Both the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the Management Proposals will be subject to monitoring and reviews on a regular basis, as set out in Chapter 9.

## **8 PROPOSED ACTIONS**

Based on the Negative features/Issues in Chapter 6, the following actions are proposed, most of which will be the responsibility of the Borough Council or Surrey County Council:

## 8.1 Spatial Issues

### 8.1.1 New development

New development has already impinged on the special character of the conservation area, most noticeably the petrol-filling station. Since the 1930s, new houses have also been built around the edges of the conservation area and also in the gardens of some of the properties within the conservation area. All of these buildings have diluted the special interest of the area. Whilst most of this development has occurred before the conservation area was designated, some, like the Premier Inn behind The Haywain, is more recent.

In future, in order that the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area is protected, the Borough Council will need to be especially vigilant when considering applications for new development.

*Recommendation:*

- *The Borough Council will continue to monitor applications for change within the Woodcote Conservation Area in relation to advice about new development within conservation areas, as set out in Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment” (PPG15) and in saved policies contained within the Epsom and Ewell District-Wide Local Plan (particularly Chapter 6 Management of the Historic Environment, Policies BE2,3,4 and 5) dated May 2000; the South East Plan adopted in 2009; and the emerging Local Development Framework and Adopted Core Strategy 2007-2022 (Policy CS5)*
- *A long-term aspiration might be to replace the petrol-filling station with a new complex of buildings which would be more appropriate for this very visible site.*

### 8.1.2 Traffic management

Busy traffic along Dorking Road and South Street (the A24) is a detrimental feature which adversely affects the general amenity of the area. Pedestrian movement across these roads is correspondingly difficult, despite traffic lights at the junction of South Street, Dorking Road and Woodcote Road.

*Recommendation:*

- *The Borough Council and Surrey County Council should work together to reduce traffic speed in the conservation area and provide safer pedestrian areas, whilst having regard to the sensitive historic environment.*

### 8.1.3 Public realm

Some of the pavements are in poor condition, with poorly maintained surfaces which have been disturbed by trenching. The existing street lights are functional but do not reflect the conservation area status of the area. The existing granite kerbs need to be preserved. Undergrounding of overhead wires in Woodcote Road is desirable.

*Recommendation:*

- *The Borough Council and the County Council should work together to improve the street surfaces in the conservation area, including the retention of the existing historic granite kerbs.*
- *Funds permitting, the Borough Council and the County Council could instigate discussions with BT to see if the telephone lines in Woodcote Road could be undergrounded, possibly in conjunction with similar schemes elsewhere in the Borough.*

The existing street lights in the conservation area have no special merit and are entirely functional. The County Council has recently entered into a partnership with a private company to replace all of the street lights in the Borough with modern lights of a consistent design, not necessarily appropriate in conservation areas. It has been agreed that where historic street lights exist, they can be retained but only if the Borough Council pays for the cost of repairing them. Alternatively they can be replaced with a 'heritage' reproduction Victorian street light at a minimum cost of £800 per lamp, which the Borough Council may have to pay for.

*Recommendation:*

- *The Borough Council and the County Council need to discuss the future of the street lights in the conservation area to see if a viable scheme can be agreed to replace them with a more suitable lamp.*

8.1.4 Site specific improvements

The main area which needs improvement, and centrally located within the conservation area, is the pavement outside Woodcote Hall, which has been widened as part of the installation of the traffic light system. This is currently paved with different coloured tarmac and pink concrete paviors. A variety of signs adds to the visual confusion of the junction.

*Recommendation:*

- Subject to funding, a comprehensive scheme for repaving the area outside Woodcote Hall, possibly using traditional brick paviors and cast iron bollards, would be welcome – this would have to be carried out by the County Council.

8.1.5 Trees

Trees are important within parts of the conservation area (principally around Woodcote Hall) and some may have individual Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on them. The trees need to be protected from felling, unsuitable lopping, or from disease. Whilst the Council can provide free professional advice, the cost of looking after these trees falls on local residents.

*Recommendation:*

- *The Borough Council, particularly its Tree Officer and Planning Staff, will continue to monitor the condition of trees within the conservation area and offer free advice to residents about the care of their trees;*
- *Planning applications which propose the removal of mature or semi-mature trees which make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area should not be approved;*
- *The Borough Council, possibly in partnership with local residents, could consider undertaking an audit of the trees in the conservation area, identifying those trees where action might be needed in the future and providing a long term Tree Management Plan for maintenance and appropriate replacement;*
- *Where trees are removed due to disease, they should be replaced promptly, following the advice of the Tree Officer.*

## **8.2 Buildings**

### **8.2.1 Buildings or structures in poor repair**

During the survey work for this Character Appraisal, it was noticed that a number of historic buildings or structures are in need of repair, as follows:

- The Haywain and the listed railings/walls in front of the building
- Nos. 58-62 South Street (Abele Cottages)
- The listed brick walls in Woodcote Road/Woodcote Close

#### *Recommendation:*

- Working with their owners, the Borough Council will seek to ensure that these listed buildings or structures are repaired
- If negotiations fail to achieve a satisfactory result, the Borough Council will consider using its statutory powers to achieve the satisfactory repair of these important features within the conservation area

Small grants may be available from Surrey County Council to householders within all of the Borough's conservation areas to help with the additional cost of using traditional materials and details. More details can be obtained from the Surrey Historic Buildings Trust (contact: Martin Higgins 01483 518758).

### **8.2.2 Alterations to unlisted buildings**

There are 13 unlisted 'positive' historic buildings in the Woodcote Conservation Area in use as family dwellings and most of them have already been adversely affected by the use of modern details and materials such as uPVC windows.

This is because, even in conservation areas, unlisted family houses usually retain a number of permitted development rights which allow their owners to change the appearance of their property quite drastically without the need for planning permission from the Borough Council. For other uses, such as buildings in use as apartments, commercial properties or institutions, stricter controls already exist.

However, in conservation areas the Borough Council can remove the permitted development rights to unlisted family dwellings through the use of an Article 4(2) Direction, which aims to preserve traditional materials and details, and encourage sensitive extensions and alterations. However, for the Woodcote Conservation Area, given the high proportion of these buildings which have already been altered, it is not considered that bringing in the additional controls available through an Article 4 Direction (as has been done in several of the Borough Council's other conservation areas) would have any positive effect.

*Recommendations:*

- *The Borough Council will continue to monitor change in the Woodcote Conservation Area and may consider serving an Article 4 Direction in the future.*
- *The Borough Council will take enforcement action against individuals or commercial companies where existing breaches of planning consent in the conservation area occur.*

### 8.2.3 Satellite dishes

One satellite dish was noted on the front wall of No. 2 Woodcote Road which has presumably been erected without planning permission. This is detrimental to the overall character of the conservation area and householder guidance and possible enforcement action should be considered. The provision of a building-by-building photographic survey will help the Borough Council decide whether enforcement action is appropriate or not.

*Recommendation:*

- *The Borough Council will consider taking enforcement action against owners of buildings where satellite dishes have been erected without planning permission and where negotiation has failed to achieve a satisfactory result.*

## **8.3 Conservation area boundary review**

### 8.3.1 Conservation area boundary review

As part of the survey work for the Character Appraisal, the existing boundaries of the conservation area were inspected. It is considered that the designated boundary should be amended to exclude modern development, and should be extended to include attractive open space, 1930s houses, and listed buildings along Dorking Road.

The precise proposals are as follows:

*Deletions:*

- Exclude the Premier Inn building behind The Haywain, Dorking Road, a modern building of no special interest
- Exclude Park Heights, South Street, a modern block of apartments
- Exclude No. 1 Sweet Briar Lane, a 20<sup>th</sup> century building

- Exclude No. 1 Woodcote Close, a 1930s house

*Additions:*

- Add land and properties along Dorking Road which form a 'gateway' into the conservation area from the south – this would encompass part of an attractive open area of land, trees and pond; the high red brick historic wall between the pond and Dorking Road; three listed buildings which make up the Clock House Medical Centre and associated buildings; and 1930s houses along the south side of the road.
- The Clock House was built by Sir James Alexander in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, possibly on the site of an earlier house. Set back from the road behind a high rendered wall, it is three storeys high, stuccoed, and six windows wide with a central pediment over the central bay. The front portico is supported on four Tuscan columns – all of the six over six sash windows appear original or at least replaced in replica. Adjoining the main house is a single storey lodge, closer to the road and of the same date as the house, and set back beyond the lodge, a two storey stable building, similarly detailed but more modestly sized than the main house and decorated by a wooden belfry. New residential development is currently being constructed to the rear of the site but is not included in the proposed extension to the conservation area.
- On the south side of Dorking Road are a number of well detailed paired 1930s houses, many of them retaining striking Neo-Tudor details such as half timbered front gables. Overall, these are relatively unaltered and form a cohesive and attractive group of houses which complement the listed buildings, rendered and brick walls, and open spaces and trees on the opposite side of the road.

## **8.4 Education and publicity**

### 8.4.1 Conservation Area leaflet

The existing Woodcote Conservation Area leaflet is a useful document but is now somewhat out of date. The publication of new guidance would be welcome.

*Recommendation:*

- *Subject to funding, the Borough Council could consider the preparation of a new Conservation Area leaflet for residents of the conservation area to provide guidance on the following:*
  - *New development, including infill and replacement dwellings*
  - *Extensions*
  - *The use of traditional materials and details*
  - *The use of colour*
  - *Control of front gardens, front boundaries, and grass verges*
  - *Satellite dishes.*

### 8.4.2 Preserving the history

The conservation area has an interesting history allied to the growth of nearby Epsom. Information about its development, and the architectural worth of the conservation area, would be of interest of many of its residents and local businesses.

*Recommendation:*

- *The Borough Council in partnership with the Epsom Protection Society and local residents could consider the preparation of a short booklet about the history of the area, including historic maps and details of the more important buildings. This could be given to new residents and would, with the Conservation Area leaflet above, help to 'preserve and enhance' the conservation area.*

As recommended by English Heritage, this document should be reviewed every five years from the date of its formal adoption. It will need to be assessed in the light of the emerging Local Development Framework and government policy generally. A review should include the following:

- A survey of the conservation area including a full photographic survey to aid possible enforcement action;
- An assessment of whether the various recommendations detailed in this document have been acted upon, and how successful this has been;
- The identification of any new issues which need to be addressed, requiring further actions or enhancements;
- The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and any necessary action;
- Publicity and advertising.

It is possible that this review could be carried out by volunteers from the local community under the guidance of a heritage consultant or the Borough Council. This would enable the local community to become more involved with the process and would raise public consciousness of the issues, including the problems associated with enforcement.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 Maps

Map 1 Townscape Appraisal Map

### Appendix 2 Further reading and information

## APPENDIX 1 MAPS

Map 1 Townscape Appraisal Map

## APPENDIX 2 FURTHER READING AND CONTACTS

### Further reading:

*Epsom: a history and celebration*, Jeremy Harte, Francis Frith Collection, 2005

*Epsom Past*, Charles Abdy, Philimore, 2001

*Epsom*, Martin Andrew, Black Horse Books, 2001

### For further information regarding all planning and conservation related matters:

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council,  
Town Hall,  
The Parade,  
Epsom KT18 5BY.  
Tel: 01372 732000  
[www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk](http://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk)

### For further information regarding local history:

Jeremy Harte,  
Bourne Hall Local History Museum,  
Spring Street,  
Ewell,  
Surrey KT17 1UF.  
Tel: 020 8394 1734  
Email: [JHarte@epsom-ewell.gov.uk](mailto:JHarte@epsom-ewell.gov.uk)

### For further information relating to listed buildings and conservation areas:

English Heritage South-East Region,  
Eastgate Court,  
195-205 High Street,  
Guildford,  
Surrey GU1 3EH.

General enquiries: 01483 252000  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

**For technical guidance:**

The Victorian Society,  
1 Priory Gardens,  
Bedford Park, London W4 1TT.  
Tel: 020 8994 1019  
[www.victorian-society.org.uk](http://www.victorian-society.org.uk)

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB),  
37 Spital Square,  
London E1 6DY.  
Tel: 020 7377 1644  
[www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)