

EWELL DOWNS ROAD CONSERVATION AREA

CHARACTER APPRAISAL & MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Description of the Ewell Downs Road Conservation Area

The Ewell Downs Road Conservation Area lies to the north-east of Epsom town centre, to the west of the A240 which connects Reigate to Kingston. Ewell village is less than a mile to the north. The conservation area comprises a quiet residential suburb, almost exclusively developed from the late 1920s onwards by a local builder, Ernest Harwood, who chose a pleasing vernacular style for his new houses. Designed by Epsom architects Pettett and Gardner, these retain elements taken from the historic buildings of Surrey with steeply pitched tiled roofs, tiled and timber-framed decoration, leaded light windows, and a variety of front doors and porches.

The houses were laid along two new roads, Ewell Downs Road and The Green, the latter enclosing an attractive open space now notable for its many mature trees. A common building line, and a cohesion of architectural motives (although each house is different), provide the conservation area with a strong architectural character which has not, as yet, been distilled by modern infilling. The conservation area is managed by a Residents' Association which ensures that the verges, trees and open spaces are all well cared for. Through traffic is prevented by gates which ensure that the peaceful character of the area is maintained. The adjoining street, Higher Green, was developed in a similar way and is also a designated conservation area.

The Ewell Downs Road Conservation Area was designated in 2000.

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 Ewell Downs Road 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.

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 Article 4(2) Direction

An Article 4(2) Direction was served on all residential properties in the conservation area in 1999. This brings under planning control various alterations which would otherwise be allowed under Permitted Development rights, as follows:

- All extensions of whatever size including porches on the front* of the building;
- Changing roof materials and the insertion of rooflights on the front-facing* roofslope;
- Replacing windows or doors on the front* elevation;
- The provision of a hardstanding (i.e. a parking area) within the curtilage of the house;
- The erection of a wall, gate, or other means of enclosure facing the front*;
- The demolition of a wall, fence or gate facing the front*.

(**Front* means facing a public highway, private road or waterway.)

The implications of this Article 4 (2) Direction are discussed in greater detail in the Management Proposals.

1.6 Key Characteristics of the Ewell Downs Road Conservation Area

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

- Residential development of the 1920s and 1930s by local builder Ernest Harwood;
- Two parallel streets laid out over former fields, crossed by historic footpath;
- The Green is divided by a long thin 'village green' with mature trees and grass;
- Detached houses set in regular narrow plots with a common building line;
- The buildings are generally cottage style in The Green and slightly more substantial in Ewell Downs Road, where some houses were built on double plots, since infilled;
- Houses were designed by Epsom architects Pettett and Gardner and based on details associated with the Surrey vernacular;
- Each house is different, with the original owners being given the opportunity of personalised details;
- Steeply pitched tiled roofs, Tudorbethan details and leaded light windows add a picturesque quality;
- Varied porches and gable details add liveliness to the front elevations.

There are two areas of distinct character within the conservation area:

- Area 1: Ewell Downs Road and a small part of Longdown Lane North
- Area 2: The Green

These areas, including their key negative features and issues, are described in detail in Chapter 6 *Character Areas*.

1.7 Summary of Issues (from Chapter 6):

The conservation area is well managed by its [three](#) Residents' Associations and by the care and vigilance of the residents themselves. The houses are generally well cared for and many retain their original details and materials. However there are a few minor problems which have been identified by the Borough Council and by local Residents' Associations:

- Care and protection of the many trees;
- Control of pavements, [front boundaries](#), and grass verges;
- Protection of existing historic street lights;
- Conserving and enhancement of the existing buildings;
- Control of new development;
- Interpreting the history of the area;
- Control of satellite dishes.

2 THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

2.1 Historical development

Ewell derives its name from the Old English for 'river spring', and the history of a settlement at Ewell can be traced to at least the Saxon period. Of interest is the discovery of early burials dating to this time to the west of Epsom Road in the 1930s when the Epsom Downs Road area was being developed. Ewell is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as falling within Copthorne's Hundred, then owned by the King.

Royal ownership of land in the vicinity of Ewell continued into the 16th century when Henry VIII started building the vast residence of Nonsuch Palace, just to the east of Ewell, in 1538. The nearby settlement of Cuddington was destroyed to provide adequate space for the new palace, and Ewell's old route to London absorbed within the royal grounds. The present London Road was subsequently created between the Little and Great Parks.

By the 18th century Ewell had begun to accommodate the country residences of wealthy families, attracted by the proximity of London and the neighbouring spa town of Epsom. With the improvement of the turnpike road in 1834 and the opening of railway connections from East Ewell Station and West Ewell Station in 1847 and 1859 respectively, the feasibility of regular travel into the capital was to be greatly increased. The rural community consequently witnessed a period of growth; the population is recorded to have risen from a total of 1,780 in 1851 to 2,210 in 1871. In 1848 the new parish church dedicated to St Mary to the north of the village centre was completed.

However, in the opinion of Cloudesley Willis, writing of Ewell in 1931, such changes had been slight when contrasted with those of the current time. He confirmed that the layout of the farms had been little altered since the General Enclosure and the streets had remained those of a Georgian village 'with its roots in the Middle Ages'. On the other hand, with the electrification of the railways in the 1920s and the increase in the ownership of motor cars, Willis declared the last ten years to have 'converted the outskirts of this agricultural parish into Greater London'.¹

For the new inhabitants, this very combination of town and country was to be of the greatest importance, linking the changing modern world of the post-First World War era to England's rural past. Created during late 1920s and the early 1930s on a site previously occupied by wheat fields, the housing in Longdown Lane North and Higher Green forms one such example of Ewell's expansion into the adjoining countryside.

Insert historic maps:

1897 *Second Edition OS*

1934 *Third Edition OS*

The estate, along with adjoining Higher Green and [the north west side of Longdown Lane North](#) (a separate conservation area), was developed by local builder Ernest Harwood to the designs of Epsom architects Williams Pettett and Gardner to a fairly

¹ Cloudesley S. Willis (1931), *A Short History of Ewell and Nonsuch*, p. vii.

standard plot size and size, whilst allowing each new house owner some individual choice over plan form and details. [Ewell Downs Road was built first, followed by the properties along The Green.](#) These houses appealed to a generation which desired rustic escapism but who also wanted to be within easy reach of bus and train services to London. 'Stockbroker Tudor' was the name wryly afforded to such creations by Osbert Lancaster in 1938. 'Nearly all Englishmen are at heart country gentlemen', as J.B. Priestly had written in *The Beauty of Britain*, three years previously. 'The suburban villa enables the salesman or the clerk, out of hours, to be a country gentleman'.²

Insert: copy of original drawings/photos

The houses in the conservation area are therefore notable for their half-timbered façades and details which copied Surrey vernacular buildings, and are linked by low front boundary walls made from brick, stone or flint, often combined together in a pleasing mixture. Some houses were placed on double plots to provide more spacious gardens, but incrementally these have all been infilled.

2.2 Archaeology

Ewell is located at the foot of the gentle slope of the North Downs where the chalk dips beneath the London clay, creating abundant natural springs which would have attracted early settlement in the area. The availability of flints from the chalk for tools and weapons was another feature. There is a small amount of evidence of Palaeolithic people having been in Ewell, but there have been numerous finds from the Mesolithic and the Neolithic periods, as well as a number of Bronze Ages and Iron Age artefacts, providing evidence of three Iron Age settlements in the Ewell area.

Later, Ewell was a Roman settlement, possibly a posting station and located on Stane Street, the Roman road from London to Chichester. Stane Street does not follow the line of any of the village centre streets but does coincide with London Road on its approach to Ewell from the north-east. The road was arranged to take advantage of the springs, the source of the River Hogsmill. Even without the Springs the route would have been a good one, making use of the gap in the North Downs created by the valley of the river Mole. Although Ewell was clearly a sizeable Roman settlement, so far the foundations of only eight buildings have been discovered and there is no clear idea of the layout. However, Roman coins, possibly votive offerings, have been found around the spring, suggesting the area may have been used for religious purposes. Following the retreat of the Romans in the 4th century AD, Stane Street does not appear to have had an effect on the layout of the later Saxon settlement.

There are no Scheduled Monuments in the conservation area.

² Quoted Andrew Saint, ed. (1999), *London Suburbs*, pp. 114 and 117.

3 LOCATION, ACTIVITIES AND SETTING

3.1 Location and boundaries

The Ewell Downs Road Conservation Area lies to the north-east of Epsom, and approximately one kilometre to the south of the village of Ewell. The north-eastern boundary of the conservation area is created by the busy A240, which connects Reigate to Kingston. Beyond the road lies playing fields and open spaces, some connected with North East Surrey College of Technology (NESCOL) which lies on the eastern side of the main road. To the north-west, the railway line between Cheam and Epsom creates a strong boundary. Whilst the immediate setting is therefore largely suburban, there are many green open spaces close by including Nonsuch Park, Epsom Downs and the fields and woodland around North Looe. A railway line runs along the north-western boundary of the conservation area, though its impact is very limited.

3.2 Uses and activities

The conservation area is entirely residential, with all of the buildings being used as family houses, rather than flats. This may be because most of the houses are modestly sized (three bedrooms was the normal size when built) and despite some extensions they have remained more suitable for their original use. The two streets – Ewell Downs Road and The Green – form part of a private estate so gates have been installed which prevent through traffic. This contributes to the overall character as a peaceful backwater, which is busier at the weekends when more residents are at home.

3.3 Topography and landscape setting

The conservation area lies on slightly undulating land, which provides little opportunity for views apart from vistas along each street. Large banks of mature trees provide the focal stops in these views, and are particularly noticeable around The Green and around the junction with Longdown Lane North, which leads to the adjoining conservation area, Higher Green.

3.4 Geology

The conservation area [lies over chalk](#), some eight miles north of the ridge of the North Downs, where Upper Chalk and the London Clay are separated by Reading and Thanet Beds. The latter are particularly porous and provide the line of springs and wells that became the centres of primary settlements that developed into numerous Surrey villages, such as Sutton, Cuddington, Ewell and Epsom. The London Clay is impermeable and so the water that collects in aquifers in the chalk comes out between the chalk and clay. Until recent times the water could be seen gushing up in the Dipping Place at the London Road/Spring Street junction in the centre of Ewell. These springs, and the suitability of the local Thanet Beds for agriculture, provided the main reasons for early settlement from 4000 BC onwards.

4 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

4.1 Street pattern and building plots

The conservation area is based around two roads which run parallel to each other and the adjoining Reigate Road. The roads are set at an angle to Longdown Lane North, an historic lane which is shown on historic maps and appears to have connected local farms to the main Reigate road and thence to Ewell. These roads were laid out in the 1920s onwards over irregularly shaped fields crossed by a historic footpath which is also shown on early maps. This footpath still exists and almost bisects the two streets at an angle, creating a pleasant diversion in the regularly laid out roads, verges and plots.

Ewell Downs Road is a long, straight road with one sharp right hand bend leading to the Reigate Road. Grass verges and pavements add to the sense of spaciousness. The road is quite wide but a small roundabout about half way along the street breaks up this sense of space. The Green, by comparison, lies around a long thin grassed area which is also very much part of the planned development of the 1920s. This undulates very slightly in width in places, providing a pleasing variety, although the buildings along each side hardly recognise this. The perimeter roads around this space are narrow and operate a [two-way](#) system. Again, there are grass verges between the road and the front boundaries – not all of the street has a pedestrian pavement.

In both streets the plots are regularly laid out on plots of virtually the same size and each house is set back from the road behind a common building line. The Green appears to have been built almost continuously so there are few modern houses the only exceptions being no. 1 (a 1960s building on a large corner plot) and nos. 19, 36 and 44. [Nos. 32 and 34 The Green lie on what was originally a double plot.](#) Ewell Downs Road is different in that the plots are more irregularly sized, some of the original houses having double plots which have now been developed. However, the common building line has again been maintained by the new development apart from a small development of three new houses (Chestnut Place) which sits back from the road on a corner site next to the railway line. The occasional 1960s bungalow is slightly at odds with the prevailing character of detached two storey houses, although they sit in standard size plots behind the same building line.

These two streets provide slightly different character areas which are described in detail in Chapter 6 *Character Areas*, including their key positive and key negative features.

4.2 Open spaces, landscape and trees

The principal open space is the large grassed area which forms a ‘village green’ in The Green, a long thin space which widens towards its more westerly end into a slight ‘balloon’ shape where the road turns at right angles towards Ewell Downs Road. This area of grass and trees provides an attractive setting for the houses and links with other more informally shaped areas of grass and trees at the opposite, eastern end, where it turns into Higher Green, a similar but separate conservation area. The spacious qualities of these green spaces and the many trees, both street trees and in private gardens, all add together to provide an attractive environment. Because the estate is privately managed, and the roads not adopted by Surrey County Council, the roads are sealed off in places by white painted timber gates which prevent through traffic and

provide a more peaceful environment. [Automatic gates may be added shortly into The Green to control the traffic at school time.](#)

In both streets the many mature trees are extremely important, although their impact is greater in The Green, because of the grassed area which creates an extremely attractive environment. This area of grass is simply mown and includes some shrubbery, but the principal decoration is provided by the tall trees of different species including copper beech, beech, horse chestnut, and sycamore. [Mature beech trees are also a feature of the property boundaries, along with mixed hedging. An audit of the trees has been carried out recently and a programme for their replacement \(as necessary\) agreed with the Council's Tree Officer. The principal trees and tree groups in the conservation area have been marked on the Townscape Appraisal Map, but their location is indicative only and the omission of any particular tree does not mean that it is of no significance.](#)

4.3 Focal points, focal buildings, views and vistas

The consistent building form (plots and buildings) in the conservation area means that no one building stands out, and the character of the conservation area is enhanced by this cohesiveness. The area of grass in The Green does however act as a focal point, although because it is long and relatively thin, and broken up by groups of mature trees, this is not immediately apparent.

Views in the conservation area are informal and terminate in trees or the actual buildings. Of note is the way the many gables which face the street define oblique views along each street. The most appealing views are across and along the grassed area in The Green, taking in the picturesque houses on the opposite side of the road. In Ewell Downs Road, there are long vistas along each half in the street, centred on the small roundabout which divides the street at the junction with the footpath. This is marked by mature shrubbery which conceals (fortunately almost completely) a small electricity sub-station. Other views of mature trees can be seen between some of the houses, which add to the sylvan character of the conservation area and should be preserved.

4.4 Boundaries

Because the two streets were laid out as part of a planned development on open fields, the front boundaries have been carefully considered and many remain relatively unaltered to this day. The overall aim was clearly to add to the character of the area by a range of designs and the use of a variety of materials, namely a silvery coloured limestone, a honey-coloured Reigate sandstone, flint, and red or orange bricks used to build the front boundary walls. Many use an attractive mix of some or all of these materials. Generally these are no higher than about 750 mm and they are often backed up by planting such as shrubbery of flowers, all adding to the character of the area. Neatly clipped or natural hedging, usually in beech, is another popular boundary, particularly in Ewell Downs Road. Some houses have expanded their private garden out beyond the front boundary and have paved and landscaped the area of land, usually about three metres wide, between the boundary and the road.

Sometimes the original matching boundaries remain between buildings although more often these have been replaced with something which is more substantial and higher. Gate piers are another distinctive feature which the builders clearly considered to be

very important and therefore these materials have been used in somewhat quirky ways, to add to the special interest of the conservation area.

Examples of boundaries in The Green:

- Low (about 400 to 650 mm) wall made from stone and flint, with panels created by brick piers, the wall curving between each pier to create a curve, and topped by a brick on edge coping;
- Simple stone wall about 750 mm high made from six courses of grey stone – no coping (the most common form);
- Stone and flint wall about 450 mm high with thin stone coping, curving towards each end towards the house and ending in a simple brick pier;
- 'Soft' boundaries made from hedging or plants, sometimes with a residual wall below.

Gate piers:

Square brick piers 300 mm wide with flint (string course) and coping made from a roof of clay tiles.

Examples of Ewell Downs Road boundaries:

- Grey stone wall around the electricity sub-station;
- One metre high knapped flint wall with tile creasing and brick piers, flat coping of small rounded flints;
- Coursed grey stone about 600 mm high with simple brick gate piers (modern);
- Flint walling about 750 mm high with brick coping (probably rebuilt);
- Beech or other clipped hedges;
- Low undulating flint wall with brick piers, copings and circular sandstone piers;

Gate Piers:

- Circular columns of brick or flint about 1.2 metres high, the flint alternating with layers of tiles.

Also of note are the traditional five bar timber gates, which are painted white and which are used to prevent through traffic, and small white concrete or wooden posts which mark areas of communal green, again referring to the 'old Surrey village' character the builder was trying to achieve.

4.5 Public realm

The "public realm" covers street lighting, street furniture, paving, road surfaces, and other features of interest within the public areas which surround private property. The conservation area is notable for its wide grass verges and the many mature trees, located in the verges, greens and private gardens. Simply tarmac pavements or rather more rustic gravel for the public footpath where it crosses The Green reinforce the informal, rural character. [The possible upgrading of this pathway as part of the East Surrey Cycle Way is opposed by some residents as it may increase the amount of cycle](#)

traffic through the conservation area. This pathway is the responsibility of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, although signage is the responsibility of Surrey County Council.

In the Ewell Downs Road Conservation Area it would appear that in Ewell Downs Road and The Green, the roads, verges, trees and other features, apart from the [public footpaths](#) and street lighting, are owned by the residents, and collectively managed on their behalf by either the Ewell Downs Road (Estate) Association Limited ([which covers Ewell Downs Road](#)) or by [The Green \(Ewell\) Limited](#) which covers The Green. [The Association of Ewell Downs Residents also takes an overall interest in their proper management and control.](#) [Despite restrictive covenants](#), some householders have landscaped the verge area with hard paving to match their private driveways, or have extended their garden planting towards the edge of the kerb. This is helped in some locations by the fact that there is no pavement in certain parts of the conservation area, such as the eastern end of Ewell Downs Road. In Longdown Lane North, the verges are owned by Surrey County Council (as the road is adopted) and are maintained by them. Changes to the front verges and boundaries are controlled by the existing Article 4 Direction (see Para 1.5).

One of the most notable features of the conservation area is the survival of historic street lights, still in use, in various locations. These add to the interest of the area and relate to the original building of the houses in the late 1920s/early 1930s. Street lighting is the responsibility of Surrey County Council, although the Borough Council can contribute to their costs where improvements are required.

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.

Traffic management

[Residents have commented on the fast moving traffic along Longdown Lane North, which should be controlled by the 30 mph speed limit.](#) [Concern was also raised at the Public Consultation for this document over the amount of traffic generated by the nearby school in Wallace Fields at certain times of the day.](#)

5 THE BUILDINGS OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

5.1 Building types

All of the houses in the conservation area are in residential use as single family dwellings rather than flats, so the Article 4(2) Direction applies to every property. Overall the two streets retain a recognisable character due to the use of Surrey vernacular buildings forms and a common pallet of traditional materials and details. Because the area was developed in a comprehensive way on what was once open fields, the plots are regularly sized and the buildings still follow a common building line which has been retained due to local covenants. The pleasing variations between individual properties reflect the tastes of their original owners: 'elevation varied slightly to choice', reads the drawing by architects Williams Pettett and Gardner for No. 87 The Green.

In Ewell Downs Road, where the buildings were sometimes slightly larger and were occasionally built on double plots, which have all since been developed, the total number of houses is 73, of which 18 are modern or have been rebuilt. The buildings in The Green are almost entirely part of the original build – of the total number of 79, nine appear to be later or have been heavily altered. This means that The Green retains a slightly more cohesive architectural quality, assisted by the common building line and regularity of the plots.

There are no Listed or Locally Listed buildings in the conservation area.

5.2 Positive buildings

The Townscape Analysis Map identifies those historic buildings which appear to have been built as part of the original building period in the late 1920s and 1930s. Later buildings, or those which have been heavily altered or indeed rebuilt, have been omitted. The identified buildings are considered to make a *positive* contribution to the special interest of the conservation area due to their use of vernacular forms and the consistently high quality of their materials and details.

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 conform to existing Council policies, particularly in terms of site density, scale, materials and details.](#)

5.3 Architectural styles, materials and detailing

The buildings in the conservation area are notable for their use of traditional building forms, materials and details, all of which provide references to the Surrey vernacular tradition. With their low eaves heights, pitched roofs, and relatively modest size, they evoke the timber framed cottages of the 17th and 18th century which can still be seen in Ewell village and in the surrounding area.

Most of the houses are of a similar size, the original drawings confirming that the basic plan consisted of a three bay house, usually with a dining room one side of a central hallway and a living room the other. The kitchen was at the back, accessed from the hall, giving a flat L-shaped plan. A WC, larder, and, or, a coal store, completed the plan at ground floor level. On the first floor were three bedrooms and a bathroom, with a separate WC. Heating was by coal fires in each room apart from the third bedroom which was unheated. All of the decoration was on the front elevation, wrapped around a short return on the flank wall. Each building is slightly different, the result of the builder providing 'customised' front elevations for each original purchaser, although the use of similar details and materials does provide cohesiveness. By contrast, the back and side elevations were relatively plain, though some were enlivened by the use of a lean-to loggia.

These buildings typically provide the following details:

- Cottage-style detached properties separated from the road by gardens, a low boundary made from brick, flint or stone (or sometimes a combination of all three), and grass verges;
- Three bays wide and two storeys high;
- Use of gables and porches to add interest and modelling to the front elevations;
- Symmetrical frontages with principal rooms arranged to either side of a slightly narrower central hallway with staircase to the first floor;
- Use of curved bay windows, leaded casement windows, and oriel windows;
- Jettied first floors, exposed 'false' timber framing, curved or straight studwork;
- Porches are of special note, including timber framed first floor bays supported on timber posts; brick bays set forward with arched stone lintols;
- Handmade clay tiling to first floors, with matching tiles to the roof often now replaced with flatter, machine made clay tiles;
- Use of 'crazy stone' and flint walling to add variety and interest to porches and first floor bays above;
- White painted render combined with half timbering and brick also used for the walls.

Each house was also usually provided with a single garage, located next to the house but set slightly back. These had pitched tiled roofs and double timber boarded doors with glazed upper lights set below a false timber framed gable. Their original height was designed for smaller cars, which has proved impractical resulting in many garages being rebuilt to gain greater height and depth.

Today, many of the houses have been extended to the back and side and the original garages either subsumed within side extensions or rebuilt. However the additional control exercised by the Article 4 (2) Direction has helped to prevent the widespread loss of original materials and other features.

6 CHARACTER AREAS AND ISSUES

There are two areas of distinct character within the conservation area:

- Area 1: Ewell Downs Road and Longdown Lane North;
- Area 2: The Green

6.1 Area 1: Ewell Downs Road and Longdown Lane North;

Ewell Downs Road is an attractive residential street with large, detached houses set back from the road behind a common building line. There has been some modern infill, because originally some of the houses were sold with double plots. This street is therefore less consistent in its architectural form than The Green, which has very few more modern buildings. The long straight road is softened by the many street trees and other planting in private gardens. The small roundabout, which marks the crossing of the public footpath, breaks up the road and provides (almost accidentally) a measure of traffic calming. Longdown Lane North is a busier road with a variety of modern detached modern houses and several very large mature trees. Only four houses are within the conservation area of which only one, no. 2, dates from the original Inter-War build.

6.2 Area 2: The Green

The Green is also an attractive residential street with a very consistent built form, due to the comprehensive development of the street by the builder in the late 1920s/ early 1930s. Nearly all of the buildings are original, and many front boundaries remain with their somewhat quirky details using stone, flint and brick. The overall character of the landscape is enhanced by the grass verges, swathes of grass green, and the mature trees which close vistas along the street.

6.3 Negative features/Issues

The conservation area is well managed by the [Association of Ewell Downs Residents \(formed in 1926\)](#), by the [two Road Associations for Ewell Downs Road and The Green](#), and by the care and vigilance of the residents themselves. The houses are generally well cared for and many retain their original details and materials. However there are a few minor problems which have been identified by the Borough Council and by the [local Residents' Associations](#):

1 Trees

Trees are extremely important within the conservation area and some have individual Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on them. [Careful management of these trees is important](#), and the trees need to be protected from felling, unsuitable lopping, or from disease.

2 Pavements, [front boundaries and grass verges](#)

The pavements are privately owned and cared for by the Management Companies for each street. They are generally tarmac or little more than gravel, and in places have been grassed over. Occasionally, despite the Article 4 (2) Direction, they have been resurfaced by the adjoining owner using modern materials, often done in

association with a new driveway in the front garden. This affects the overall rustic appearance of the conservation area.

3 Street lights

The existing historic street lights need to be protected and maintained, because they relate to the original development of the area and make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. [Lighting on buildings, gardens and boundaries can sometimes be obtrusive.](#)

4 Buildings

The houses in the conservation area are protected by the existing Article 4 (2) Direction which means that planning permission is required for a variety of changes, such as the installation of new windows or front doors, or a change in the roof materials. Many of the houses have over the years lost their original handmade clay tiles and replaced by machine made tiles which lack the pleasing variety of the original material. Some of the original leaded light windows also remain and these need to be identified and retained. The use of uPVC or similar modern materials for windows has been an issue in the past but since the Article 4 (2) Direction, will not be happen without planning permission being required from the Council.

5 New development

There are few opportunities for new development in the conservation area and the [three Residents' Associations](#) take an active interest in any applications for new houses or for extensions. Any new houses have to maintain the existing building line and existing density. Because of the comparatively narrow plots, extensions tend to be located at the back of the buildings, and can sometimes be considered by neighbours to be too dominating.

6 Preserving the history

The conservation area has a short but interesting history allied to a Post-World War One enthusiasm for traditional building forms and materials. The builder provided each house with a pallet of materials, details, and boundaries, each one slightly different but united by some common themes. The preservation and enhancement of this cohesiveness is important.

7 Satellite dishes

Despite being in the conservation area, some residents have erected satellite dishes which are visible from the street. These are detrimental to the overall character of the conservation area and householder guidance and possible enforcement action should be considered, if they were erected after 2000.

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 Ewell Downs Road 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

8.1 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 the [three](#) local Associations:

1 Trees

Trees are extremely important within the conservation area and some have individual Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on them. The trees need to be protected from felling, unsuitable lopping, or from disease. [Occasionally, trees have caused damage to pavements or front boundaries, so, subject to Council approval, their removal might be justified.](#)

8.1.1 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 Residents' Associations 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 Management Plan for maintenance and appropriate replacement;*
- [Shrubs on The Green need to be regularly trimmed to prevent them growing too large;](#)
- [Where trees are removed due to disease, they should be replaced promptly.](#)

2 Pavements and front areas

[The roads, grass verges and grassed areas in Ewell Downs Road and The Green are the responsibility of the Residents' Associations and are protected by covenants. The pavements are generally tarmac or little more than gravel, and in places have been grassed over. Occasionally, despite the Article 4 Direction and the local covenants, the front boundary walls have been demolished or altered, and/or the grass verges have been resurfaced by the adjoining owner using modern materials, often done in association with a new driveway in the front garden. This affects the overall rustic appearance of the conservation area which residents are keen to see preserved.](#)

8.1.2 Recommendation:

- *The Borough Council will enforce the existing Article 4, which controls the loss of front gardens, front boundaries, and the creation of hard standings, by ensuring that all such changes are the subject of a planning application and that owners adhere to any conditions relating to the use of materials, and soft landscaping;*
- [Residents will be encouraged to adhere to local covenants protecting the grass verges in the conservation area.](#)

3 Street lights

The existing historic street lights need to be protected and maintained, because they relate to the original development of the area and make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. However, the County Council is considering entering 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 cost of £800 per lamp, which the Borough Council may have to pay.

8.1.3 Recommendation:

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

Some local residents have also expressed concern over the plethora of private lighting schemes to the front elevations of the houses, as well as to their front gardens and front boundaries. Unfortunately this is not a matter over which the Council has any control. However, residents could reduce the impact of their lighting by angling any lights downwards and by choosing appropriately designed fittings.

4 Buildings

The houses in the conservation area are protected by the existing Article 4 (2) Direction which means that planning permission is required for a variety of changes, such as the installation of new windows or front doors, or a change in the roof materials. Many of the houses have over the years lost their original handmade clay tiles and have been replaced by machine made tiles which lack the pleasing variety of the original material. Some of the original leaded light windows also remain and these need to be identified and retained. 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).

8.1.4 Recommendation:

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

5 New development

There are few opportunities for new development in the conservation area and the **three local** Associations take an active interest in any applications for new houses or for extensions. Any new houses have to maintain the existing building line and existing density. Because of the fairly narrow plots, extensions tend to be located at the back of the buildings, and can sometimes be considered too dominant. **Residents have commented that in future, side extensions should be limited to single storey only, and rear extensions should be similarly limited so as not to impinge too much on existing garden space. Generally, excessive infilling of sites should be avoided.**

8.1.5 Recommendation: See above

6 Preserving the history

The conservation area has a short but interesting history allied to Post-War enthusiasm for traditional building forms and materials. The builder provided each house with a pallet of materials, details, and boundaries, each one slightly different but united by some common themes. The preservation and enhancement of this cohesiveness is important.

8.1.6 Recommendation:

- *The Borough Council in partnership with the Residents' Associations could consider the preparation of a short booklet about the history of the area, including historic maps and copies of the original drawings included in this document. This could be given to new residents and would, with the Design Guidance above, help to 'preserve and enhance' the conservation area.*

7 Satellite dishes

Despite being in the conservation area, some residents have erected satellite dishes which are visible from the street. These are detrimental to the overall character of the conservation area and householder guidance and possible enforcement action should be considered if these were erected after 2000.

8.1.7 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.*

8.2 Conservation area boundary review

The existing boundary of the conservation area was reviewed as part of the survey work for this document and no changes are proposed as the boundary encompasses the two streets, with their cohesive late **1920's/early 1930s** development, satisfactorily.

9 MONITORING AND REVIEW

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 [three local Residents' Associations](#) 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 SUMMARY OF THE EWELL DOWNS ROAD CONSERVATION AREA ARTICLE 4(2) DIRECTION

The Article 4(2) Direction for the Ewell Downs Road Conservation Area came into force in 2000. It removes permitted development rights for family dwellings, requiring applications for planning permission for a range of alterations and minor extensions which would normally be uncontrolled. Different legislation exists for flats, commercial properties, institutions, listed buildings and scheduled monuments, where stricter controls already apply.

Article 4(2) Directions are made under the General Permitted Development Order 1995. Each Direction is accompanied by a Schedule that specifies the various changes to family dwellings, which will now require planning permission. For the Ewell Downs Road Conservation Area, the Borough Council have now brought under planning control the following:

- (i) All extensions of whatever size including porches on the front* of the building;
- (ii) Changing roof materials and the insertion of rooflights on the front-facing* roofslope;
- (iii) Replacing windows or doors on the front* elevation;
- (iv) The provision of a hardstanding (i.e. a parking area) within the curtilage of the house;
- (v) The erection of a wall, gate, or other means of enclosure facing the front*;
- (vi) The demolition of a wall, fence or gate facing the front*.

(**Front* means facing a public highway, private road or waterway.)

A copy of the detailed "Schedule", the legal document which accompanies the Article 4(2) Direction, can be obtained from the Environmental Design Team (contact: Anthony Evans 01372 732394).

A transcript of the accompanying guidance leaflet, "*Advisory notes to residents*" is included below.

ARTICLE 4 (2) DIRECTIONS Advisory Notes to Residents

The Borough Council has a statutory duty to preserve and enhance the special character of its designated Conservation Areas. Planning legislation allows owners of unlisted houses the right to carry out various types of development, including alterations, without the need to apply for planning permission. This is known as "permitted development". In the case of Conservation Areas, the cumulative effect of such "permitted development" may have a damaging effect upon the character and historical interest of the area. The effect of an Article 4(2) Direction means that certain alterations, which previously have been undertaken under "permitted development" now require planning permission.

GENERAL – The restrictions as to what can and cannot be built are complex and should always be referred to the Local Planning Authority. Alterations, improvements and extensions to buildings and to the setting of buildings within the Conservation Area should respect the character and historical context of the property and surroundings through the use of traditional materials and historically correct design. In addition to the constraints placed upon householder development by Conservation Area status, the following constraints outlined below apply to areas covered by an Article 4(2) Direction.

HOUSE EXTENSIONS – The enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling house including entrance porches, any part of which fronts a highway, private road or open space, shall require planning permission. Permission is not required for the painting of a dwelling house.

ROOFS – A planning application is required for alterations to a roof slope which fronts a highway, private road or open space, including a change in the roof materials and the insertion of roof lights. Dormer windows require planning permission under separate legislation. Traditional materials such as clay tiles or slate, sympathetic with existing roof coverings should be used in preference to concrete tiles or reconstituted alternatives. Rooflights of traditional appearance, designed specifically for Conservation Areas, are preferred.

REPLACEMENT WINDOWS AND DOORS – Replacement of existing windows and doors which front a highway, private road or open space require planning consent. Original windows and doors should be renovated and retained where at all possible. New windows and doors should be of traditional construction, design and materials, similar to that originally used and sympathetic to the building as a whole. The use of uPVC and aluminium is generally out of character and therefore inappropriate.

HARDSTANDING – The provision within a dwelling house of a hard surface for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of a dwelling house such as parking hardstanding shall require planning permission.

GATES AND FENCES – The erection, construction, improvement or alteration of a gate, wall or other means of enclosure, fronting a highway, private road or open space, shall require planning permission. Demolition of the whole or any part of a gate, wall or other means of enclosure shall also require consent.

APPENDIX 2 TOWNSCAPE APPRAISAL MAP**APPENDIX 3 FURTHER READING AND CONTACTS****Further reading:**

Charles Abdy (2000), *Ewell Past*

Epsom and Ewell History and Archaeological Society (2004) *Ewell: A Surrey Village that became a town*

Andrew Saint, ed. (1999), *London Suburbs*

Cloudesley S. Willis (1931), *A Short History of Ewell and Nonsuch*

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

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

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

For technical guidance:

The Victorian Society,
1 Priory Gardens,
Bedford Park, London W4 1TT.
Tel: 020 8994 1019

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