

Woodland Drive Conservation Area Character Statement



Designated: 1996
Area : 11.1796 Hectares
27.6248 Acres

Article 4 Direction:
None as at Feb 2005

Introduction:

The purpose of this document is to describe the history and character of this conservation area in order to provide a context for policies contained in the Development Plan, which will guide future development and enhancements in the area. This statement was approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance on 18th February 1997.

Historic Development of the Area

Maps of the 19th century show this part of Hove as open downland, although the Three Cornered Copse is shown as a wooded strip of land joining Red Hill in the north to Lower Tongdean in the south, along which ran the original Borough boundary between Brighton and Hove. Even in the 1920's the character of the area was still predominantly rural although some of the roads had been laid out to connect West Blatchington with Dyke Road and some piecemeal development had begun. Most of the western side of Woodland Drive was developed in the 1930s as individual houses and the 1937 OS map shows buildings along the Three Cornered Copse side with a few gaps which were shortly to be filled. The road was developed by William T. Bostock using various architects, usually for individual clients, but some of the houses were built speculatively. On the other side of Three Cornered Copse (called a "Public Park" on the map) Woodland Avenue has started being developed at its southerly end but further north, behind the proposed conservation area buildings, it was still a field track. Further development was delayed by the Second World War but did start again in the 1950s.

Definition of the Special Character of the Area

The character of the area is primarily of a leafy suburban "Mock Tudor" estate laid out along a wide curving road with generously sized front and rear gardens. The architectural integrity of the buildings, with their pitched roofs, timbered gables, and Mock Tudor detailing, gives the area a cohesion of architectural form which has remained relatively unaltered since originally built. The road rises up to the South Downs with the buildings and their gables on the western side providing an attractive group, with their gently sloping front gardens remaining largely undefined by anything other than low stone walls or planting. All of the buildings share a common building line to Woodland Drive and although the plots are not wide the deep front gardens with their attractive planting give the narrow road a sense of space and width. Some of the original buff stable-block crossovers to the street remain, similar to others within the Borough, and many of the houses still have what would appear to be their original brick paved front drives.

The inclusion of the Three Cornered Copse within the conservation area is important as it provides an important green space to the buildings although the existence of the woodland walk is not evident from the road. There are some half a dozen houses within the group which have flat fronts and slightly simplified detailing, and they may well date from the later part of the 1930s. However they are included as they sit well in the overall composition.

Description of the Buildings

Although William T. Bostock apparently used different architects for the buildings there was clearly an attempt to unify the development by the common use of various features, including the use of natural materials which have mellowed in with the gardens to produce a fine architectural composition. All of the buildings have deep pitched roofs covered in clay tiles and most have one or two gables to the street at first floor level, covered in the typical half-timbering favoured at the time of building. These timbers are arranged in a variety of ways, with square, diamond-shape, or triangular panels infilled with white painted render or red brick laid in a decorative herringbone pattern. Most of the ground floor walls are built in dark plum brick, with metal casement windows with leaded lights. Each building usually has at least one prominent chimney stack on the side elevation and many of them have well proportioned original dormers with deep over-hanging eaves and tiled cheeks. Some of the houses have heavily carved bargeboards to the front gables with a finial at the apex of the ridge. Porches are usually provided as integral to the main building, tucked under the first floor, and many of the buildings also have garages built into the front elevations with "Elizabethan" double doors. These are boarded, with beading down each join, and heavy studs and door hinges. Of particular note is the limited use of colour. The buildings are all black and white, with plum brickwork and roofs, and black-painted metal casement windows with leaded lights. This gives them an unusual degree of cohesion which has been relatively unaltered, although one or two of the buildings have inserted modern windows or painted their timber-framing white. I suggest therefore that following designation, urgent consideration be given to the serving of an Article 4.2 Direction which would control the following: Roof materials and openings; painting of the timber, rendered panels, and brickwork; replacement of the windows and joinery; addition of porches and other extensions; and controls over the front gardens including paving.

The Following Properties are Included in the Woodland Drive Conservation Area :

Woodland Drive : 56 - 152 (even)

Three Corner Copse

