

# Preston Park Conservation Area Character Statement

**Designated: 1970, extended 1977, 1980 & 1981, split from Preston Village 1988 and further extended 1995.**

**Area: 86.8 hectares, 214.47 acres**

**Article 4 Direction controlling permitted development made 11 January 2001**

**Character Statement adopted  
20 October 2005**



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## 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. Policies and design guidance are given in other documents, a list of which is included at the end of this statement.

## General Description:

The Preston Park Conservation Area is situated about 1.5 miles north-north-west of Brighton, and includes two areas of predominantly residential property dating mainly from the mid- to the late 19th century. Immediately abutting it is the Preston Village Conservation Area which includes the original village of Preston, Preston Manor, the former parish church of St. Peter's, and the large public park.

## Historical Development of the Area:

The two Preston conservation areas (Preston Park and Preston Village) both lie within land which once formed part of the medieval estate of the Manor of Preston. At the time of the Domesday Survey, the manor was held by the Bishop of Chichester, and a church and windmill are also recorded. The name is Anglo-Saxon, meaning a "priest's farmstead" and the village was often called "Preston Episcopi" to distinguish it from similarly named settlements. From 1531 to 1628 the manor was Crown property, after which it was leased to the Shirley family and in 1705 it passed to the Western family. In 1794 they sold it to William Stanford and the manor remained in the ownership of this family until the death of Sir Charles and then his wife Lady Ellen Thomas-Stanford in 1932, and who bequeathed the building (called Preston Place) and its immediate gardens to Brighton Corporation.

The 1876 Ordnance Survey map of Preston shows a very much smaller settlement than present. The 1841 railway line cuts into the hillside from north to south and running parallel to it along the valley floor, lies the main London-Brighton road. To the east of the road lies Preston Manor and St. Peter's Church, with completely open fields further to the east and to the south. Next to the church is the "International Gun and Polo Club Grounds" but otherwise the land is clearly still in agricultural use with Preston Dairy Farm being shown to the south-west of the main road to Brighton. Between the main road and the railway line, and immediately south of South Road, is Preston Farm. The former farmhouse, now divided into Little Barn, Mulberry Cottage and Old Cottage, in South Road is all that remains of these buildings, and the former farmyard is now a petrol filling station. Between South Road and Middle Road, much of the land is taken up with a large brewery, and there are small cottages along Middle Road and North Road, forming the old village of Preston, with a police station in Middle Road.

The 1876 map also shows that to the north, the Clermont estate is largely complete, served by the Preston Park railway station at the end of Clermont Road, with detached or semi-detached villas along London Road and on the north side of Harrington Road, which otherwise remains undeveloped. To the north of Clermont Road, and on the west side of the railway line, the public pleasure grounds, called the Tivoli Gardens are clearly marked, with open fields beyond. Of note is the former drovers' road which is shown on the map as a wide track leading from east to west along what is now The Drove, Middle Road and Preston Drove.

Between 1875 and the 1900s, the Bennett-Stanfords sold off further manorial land, including in 1883 some 63 acres which lay to the south of house and which became Brighton Corporation's first public park. This was paid for by a bequest in 1879 of £70,000 from a local bookmaker, William Davies. Additionally, a large tract of land to the east of the new park was developed by the Bennett-Stanfords between what is now Preston Drove and Springfield Road with a mixture of semi-detached villas and terraced houses. The controlled way in which the estate was developed ensured a high quality of design with individual details such as carved barge boards or decorative plasterwork, which has resulted in a pleasantly cohesive and attractive townscape which is still evident today.

By the time of the date of the Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1898 much of the Preston Park area had been developed although the land to the north of Preston Drove was still mainly fields and allotments. Harrington Road is shown on the map as containing its three pairs of semi-detached villas on the north-west side and scattered along the road are ten further properties. Surrenden Road is set out but no houses have been built. To the south, paired villas have been built on the west side of Preston Road including on the site of the old dairy farm.

The 1911 map shows how further terraced housing along Surrenden Road between Preston Drove and Loder Road was added in the 1900s although gap sites can still be seen between Surrenden Road and London Road. These were clearly only developed on an incremental basis producing a far less cohesive character than the remaining parts of the conservation area.

### **Definition of the Special Character of the Area:**

The Preston Park Conservation Area is almost totally in residential use with many of the larger houses along such streets as Springfield Road and on the east side of Clermont Terrace having been converted into flats. Notably the very large villas along Preston Road which form part of the Clermont Estate are also mainly in multiple occupation, although some have been converted for commercial uses such as nursing homes, hotels, or nursery schools. However many of the streets in the conservation area contain just two storied houses, and these have generally been maintained as single family dwellings, particularly on the Stanford Estate east of Preston Park.

This predominance of family dwellings gives the area a domestic, reasonably tranquil character although this is offset by the very heavy traffic which passes continuously along the Preston Road, and up and down Preston Drove. The area tends therefore to be one of contrasts, with the quieter residential streets to the north of Preston Village and in the streets to either side of Stanford Avenue, and busier locations along the main London-Brighton road, Harrington Road, Stanford Avenue itself, Ditchling Road and Preston Drove.

The area has five churches, St. John the Evangelist in London Road (1902), St. Augustine's Church in Stanford Avenue (1896) (closed in 2003), the Baptist Church in Southdown Avenue, the Methodist Church on the corner of Stanford Avenue and Southdown Avenue, and Clermont Congregational Church (1877), which were all built to serve the rapidly expanding population during the 19th century. There is one large hotel (the Preston Park Hotel) in Preston Road, and clusters of small shops in Preston Drove, Havelock Road, Grantham Road, along Beaconsfield Parade and at Five Ways, the intersection of Preston Drove and Ditchling Road. Between Edburton Avenue and Ditchling Road to the rear of the terraced housing is a garden centre, on the site of a former nursery which is marked on the 1898 map. Railway communications are good with the Preston Park station off Clermont Road (on the main London-Brighton line) and the London Road station off Springfield Road (on the Brighton to Lewes line).

## Spaces and Vistas

The most important factor controlling views into and out of the conservation area is its varied topography within the rolling South Downs.

The Clermont Estate and Harrington Road areas are positioned within a fairly flat valley floor, which runs north-south out of Brighton towards London. The Stanford Estate, to the east, lies on much more hilly land. Here streets largely fall south or west, producing a fairly regimented layout of parallel roads, which run along either a north-south axis, or one from the east to the west.

Along the western edge of the Clermont Estate, is a very steep embankment leading to the railway line, mainly wooded, with the Dyke Road beyond, and to the east, a similar though more gentle slope towards the Ditchling Road ridge along which rise Harrington Road and Preston Drove. This provides the part of the conservation area to the north and north-east of Preston village with a dramatic backdrop on two sides with the flint wall of Preston Park and the old buildings around Preston Manor providing the visual boundary to the south. The old drove road also sweeps across the whole area from east to west and is an important reminder of the days when sheep farming was the primary occupation.

The views along the hill to the top of Harrington Road, and the rise and fall of Surrenden Road, with its sweeping curves, are both important features. The slightly earlier development around the Clermont Estate is more open and the buildings have much larger gardens with many fine trees, particularly along Preston/London Road, which are very important when driving into or out of Brighton as they effectively hide some of the less sympathetic modern development which has replaced the mid-19th century villas. The group of Victorian houses in Preston Road between Harrington Road and Knoyle Road, with their prominent gables, and the small spire on the adjacent Church of St. John the Evangelist, form a noticeable landmark when driving or walking along Preston Road.

Around Harrington Road, Knoyle Road, Bavant Road and Harrington Villas, the more varied architecture and periods of development give a less cohesive streetscape than the more regimented terraces of the Stanford Estate, although the many trees, deep front gardens, and mature planting provide an attractive setting for these different buildings.

The Stanford Estate forms the south-east part of the conservation area between Preston Drove and Springfield Road. The streets are laid out in a regimented pattern at angles to Stanford Avenue, with parallel streets leading northwards up the hill (such as Beaconsfield Villas or Waldegrave Road) and similar (although less regimented), streets to the east. The frontages are tightly spaced with small front gardens which contrast pleasantly with the open spaces of Blakers Park. Stanford Avenue, which links Preston Road to Ditchling Road, is particularly wide and its many mature trees are of note. Indeed, throughout the estate, the many street trees contribute significantly to the pleasant character of the area. The estate was clearly laid out with a sense of social hierarchy, with the grander, detached houses along Stanford Avenue and Preston Park Avenue, and smaller mainly terraced houses in the more secondary streets leading off Preston Drove, Stanford Avenue, and Ditchling Road. Views from the roads to the north of Stanford Avenue are particularly attractive and interesting, with glimpses of the town below and the sea beyond. The grade II\* railway viaduct which crosses Preston Road and Beaconsfield Road and which forms the southern boundary to the Stanford Estate part of the conservation area, is also very prominent.

### Materials:

With practically all of the buildings within the conservation area dating from after the 1860s the chosen building material was brick with or without a render cover, usually but not always painted. Welsh slate was imported via the railway after 1841 and this was always used for roofs until the fashion for neo-Tudor, and the availability of cheap, machine-made clay tiles from 1900 onwards, made tiling a more popular choice. Bricks tend to be used for the Edwardian buildings purely as a matter of taste, along with false timbering to liven-up dull facades, as can be found along Preston Drove or in Lauriston Road.

Buildings within the Stanford Estate are mainly rendered but where they date from post-1900 red brick, with attractive details such as decorative panels or cast iron railings to the front facade, are common. Faience panels are often used in these red brick buildings, with decorative pargetting depicting rural or classically-inspired themes to the front gables, adding variety and liveliness to the otherwise repetitious terraced houses.

Windows on the mid- to late-19th century buildings were almost always vertical sliding sashes but after 1900 casements became popular and some of the houses of this later period also had strange idiosyncratic touches like the circular windows above the front doors in Lauriston Road.

Front paths can also be decorative and many of the houses still have their original finishes including Gothic-inspired brown, red and white tiles, or smaller black-and-white tiles which are usually referred to as tessellated.

### **Description of the Buildings:**

The Preston Park Conservation Area divides neatly into three separate areas according to age and pattern of development. Firstly, the Clermont estate which developed from 1866 onwards; secondly, the area between Preston Road and Surrenden Road, with houses of between 1860 and the early 1900s, interspersed with more modern development; and finally, the Stanford Estate, started in the 1880s and largely completed by 1900.

#### **(1) The Clermont Estate**

This lies to the immediate north of the old village of Preston and was developed with middle-class housing by Daniel Friend from 1866 onwards. It includes Clermont Road, Clermont Terrace, Lorne Villas, Station Road, and substantial villas along London Road, all of which were built to take advantage of the new railway station which was completed in 1869. **Cumberland Road** is slightly later, with houses of c.1910 being built to replace Clermont House, a very large house whose garden stretched from Preston Road to Home Road. Many of these streets still contain their original Victorian gas street lights, made from cast iron, which have been converted to electricity.

Along **Preston Road** the villas are mainly semi-detached and date from c.1870. They are two storeys plus a half basement tall, with canted bays and large sash windows beneath overhanging eaves supported on elegant brackets. These houses once stood in large gardens set well back from the busy road, but regrettably many of these have become car parking areas although the substantial front boundary walls and many mature trees and shrubs do conceal most of the buildings from public gaze. All of these houses have been converted into flats and many have been altered or extended unsympathetically as a result. Just within the conservation area boundary is a very large Edwardian house built of red brick with a lead-covered cupola which is a local landmark. This grade II listed building is called Tower House and was built in 1902 for John James Savage, a London jeweller. Modern blocks of flats have been built in the gardens around the house but the most regrettable aspect of the new development is the access road which has been designed to modern-day engineering standards and which therefore creates a very wide break in the front boundary walls facing London Road.

**Clermont Road** links Preston Road to Preston Park station and rises slightly to the west with a terrace along the north side of white-painted three storey houses of the 1860s. Built originally as five semi-detached pairs, the first group of houses have now unfortunately been extended into the dividing gaps and most of these have now been converted into flats. The canted bay windows, raised ground floors, and small front gardens are important. Less attractive are the details on some of the infill sections including completely inappropriate casement windows. Dormer windows have also been added to some of the houses which are over-dominant. On the south side of the road, mature pavement trees are a feature which help to conceal the 1960s block of flats and the adjoining flat-roofed garages which have been built in the former gardens of the older houses fronting Preston Road and Clermont Terrace. Close to the station is the only group of shops in this part of the conservation area, dating also to the 1860s. These four buildings step up the hill, are one window wide and two storeys high, with pitched roofs and some well-detailed ground floor shop fronts.

At the west end of Clermont Road is Preston Park Station, with a high brick wall and tunnel entrance facing down the road and to one side, the station building itself, which has been converted into offices. This is a simple rectangular building of one storey, and is built from yellow brick with red brick plinth line and eaves cornice. The red brick arched window heads are of note and are similar in detailing to Brighton Station which suggests that the same architect, H E Wallis, may have been responsible for both. The recent rather heavy-handed repointing is regrettable. Beyond the station is a simple terrace of two storey houses of c.1870, many of which have lost their original windows and doors, and beyond this the road becomes a rough track with many trees and a flint wall along the east side. This backwater is quiet and peaceful despite the occasional noise generated by the railway line which runs alongside it.

**Clermont Terrace** orientates itself north-south, parallel to the railway line, with a long terrace of two storey houses of c.1870 on the west side which becomes three storeys at the south end because of a gradual drop in the road level. These houses have canted bays to the front, with bracketed eaves above and steps. They are all rendered and some of them remain unpainted thereby retaining their original appearance. Nearly all of the slated roofs have detrimentally been replaced with concrete tiles. These houses have deep front gardens some of which have been lost to car parking (e.g. nos. 3 and 5). On the east side of the road, there are trees in the pavement facing semi-detached pairs of houses of c. 1870, many of which have been extended on either side to provide additional flats. However, nos. 32 and 33 are relatively unaltered and have attractive ground floor bay windows, rendered quoins, bracketed eaves with medallions, and round-headed first floor windows. Beyond these original houses are three blocks of flats which replaced a single large villa shown on the 1875 map. These do at least continue the historic building line but in all other respects (including materials, roof pitch, and windows details) they are completely alien to the 19th century character of the street.

On the corner of **Cumberland Road** is the Clermont United Reformed Church of 1877 which was built by J G Gibbins as a Congregational Church. This is a simple rectangular building, constructed from flint with brick dressings and the steeply pitched roof is covered in slate with a small circular tower on the south-east corner. Behind the church is a hall of no special merit, built in 1880 and enlarged in 1926.

The terraced housing along the south side of Cumberland Road was not built until about 1910 but it is of an interesting design with pairs of gables alternating with parapeted castellated bays which create a diverse elevation to the street. These houses have small front gardens and rendered front boundary walls and the brick coving creates a soft curve. On the north side are modern flats, continuing around the corner from Clermont Terrace and down towards Preston Road, where a large extension has been added to one of the original villas (Shawcross and Carlton House). This is at least rendered and had canted bay windows but its four floors equate to only three in the earlier building. On the corner with Home Road, the house at the end of the terrace has been clad with false stone, which has no historic precedent in the area.

On the north side of **Lauriston Road** there is a group of houses designed by Charles Stanley Peach, which form a symmetrical composition currently unaffected by alterations.

## **(2) The area between Preston Road and Surrenden Road**

This was developed initially in the 1860s when three pairs of semi-detached villas were built on the north side of Harrington Road but otherwise the houses are mainly of the 1890s or later. The wide streets, many street trees, and ample gardens with mature planting provide a pleasant setting for a variety of houses displaying many styles and materials.

**Preston Drove** forms the southern boundary to this part of the conservation area, between the residential streets and the public park. Its hilly location and wide roadway, with Preston Vicarage Lawns and the church of St. John the Evangelist, are important features within the conservation area. The buildings along the western end are detached houses which date from the 1930s or later, in a neo-Tudor style which lead up to the junction with Bavant Road. Beyond this are terraces of red brick Edwardian houses, three storeys high, with carved barge boards, second floor balconies, and square bays.

Along **Preston Road** and next to the church is a terrace of Edwardian houses with prominent half-timbered gables to the street. These red brick houses are two storeys high with canted bay windows and rendered lintels over the sashed windows. The front gardens have regrettably been partially converted into car parking. St. John the Evangelist Church dates to 1902 and was designed by Sir Arthur Blomfield. It became the parish church in 1926 and behind it are two church halls of the 20th century. These buildings form an important group when viewed along London Road and Preston Road.

**Bavant Road, Cornwall Gardens and Harrington Villas** contain a mixture of Edwardian houses of c.1900 in generously-sized gardens, interspersed with individual houses of the 1930s and even later. The well planted gardens and Victorian street lights are a special feature of the area. Harrington Road is also very mixed but does contain some fine examples of Edwardian property, both detached and semi-detached, built of red brick and typically with rendered string courses, square bays and tiled roofs, although practically every building is slightly different. Good examples include nos. 27 and 29, both detached, with their original slate roofs and slightly different detailing. No. 27 is flat fronted, with casement windows and a glass-roofed porch. No. 29 has a large two storey canted bay beneath a half-timbered gable supported on decorative eaves brackets, and tile-roofed porch. On the north-west side of Harrington Road are three pairs of early villas dating to c.1850. Part of the pair closest to Preston Road has been largely subsumed within the Preston Park Hotel although it still retains an elegant curved verandah to part of the front. Its neighbour, Rissom Court, has been converted into flats, with new buildings added to the rear, and modern windows inserted and the front elevation spoilt by the insertion of external drainage pipes. Fortunately, the other half of the pair still appears to be in use as a family house, and is more original, displaying some of the details found on similarly-aged buildings in the Clifton or West Hill areas of Brighton including sash windows, bracketed eaves cornice, and most notably, circular medallions between the brackets. The many street trees, the early cast-iron post box on the corner with Cornwall Gardens, and the views down the hill towards Preston Road are features of note.

**Surrenden Road** is a dramatic piece of townscape with its bends and changes in level. The dual carriageway seems slightly out-of-character with the more condensed nature of the adjacent terraced development but it does provide the area with many trees, laid out in an avenue along the central reservation and also planted in the generously-sized grassed verges. St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church is a key building on the corner with Preston Drove. Designed by Percy Lamb in 1910-12 it was finally completed in 1975 when a large extension in the shape of a cross was added to the rear. On the other side of the road, the Park View Public House is a popular venue with its large beer garden facing Preston Drove.

This building dates to the 1900s when it was built as a hotel. Adjacent to the church, but at a low level, are two blocks of 1960s flats, but otherwise the road contains a number of attractive Edwardian terraces and group of semi-detached villas, all with front gardens and mostly retaining their original red brick front boundary walls. Of note are nos. 54-60, on the corner of Poplar Close. These two semi-detached pairs were built from red brick between 1898 and 1911 and have attractive first floor balconies, prominent second floor balconies beneath a gable, slightly canted bays, and red tiled roofs. No. 22 dates to the same period and has other features typical of the period including its original door (although unfortunately glazed with modern glass), ground floor string course with dentil cornice, and a plaster panel above the front door with elaborate swags and plant motives. The adjoining building, no. 28, has other features of interest including its original recessed timber porch, covered in fishscale clay tiles. The many carved bargeboards to the gables of the Edwardian houses on the north side of the road add to the attractive views along the curving road.

### **(3) The Stanford Estate (bounded by Preston Drove/Springfield Road/Preston Park Avenue/Ditchling Road).**

The parallel streets which form this residential area were largely developed in the last twenty years of the 19th century. At the time of the 1876 map, the area was still fields but by 1898 most of the properties within this part of the conservation area had been built, with gaps in the street frontages along the northern sections of Beaconsfield Villas, Havelock Road, Chester Terrace, Edburton Road and Ditchling Road. These were subsequently built-over in the 1900-1914 period.

The earlier buildings are therefore mainly rendered (such as Waldegrave Road of the 1890s) with red brick being the favoured material after about 1900 when the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement resulted in a "Tudorbethan" revival with home owners expecting more decorated houses, breaking away from the simplicity of the classically-inspired buildings of the 18th, early and mid-19th centuries.

Stanford Avenue, which connects Preston Road to Ditchling Road at Five Ways, forms the backbone of the development with roads branching out to the north and at an angle to the south-east.

**Preston Park Avenue**, with its prestigious location overlooking the trees and lawns of Preston Park itself, was developed from the 1890s onwards with paired or detached houses facing the west. These are built from red brick, two storeys high, with tiled roofs. Some have square bays with first floor balconies and Dutch-gabled dormers to the attic in the Queen Anne Revival style. To the north, a slightly later group of (just) detached houses have gables with ornately carved barge boards containing balconies, similar to the houses in Surrenden Road. Many of the houses retain their original crossovers of red brick and stone, and they all have front gardens concealed behind low red brick walls which relate visually to the open green space of the public park, with its long avenue of trees, on the other side of the road.

Regrettably, three of the houses were demolished in the 1960s to create two large blocks of flats, their bulk and inappropriate detailing accentuated by the choice of a brown brick with exposed concrete framing for the external walls. Three further buildings have been extensively altered and one further house replaced, although the new buildings are relatively unobtrusive. Most of the houses have now been converted into flats with the inevitable addition of unsuitable dormers, fire escape staircases, modern windows and external plumbing. Fortunately, the mature trees help to conceal these changes when viewed from the park.

**Preston Drove** is part of a major cross-town route connecting Dyke Road to London Road, Preston Village, and Ditchling Road, and is the only historic road within the Stanford Estate, being in existence as a drovers' road long before the development of the area, a fact which is reflected in the name. The main feature of Preston Drove is the hilly location which rises from the flat valley floor along Preston Road, with Preston Manor and St. Peter's Church close by. Between the junction with Preston Park Avenue and Beaconsfield Villas, a mixture of shops and houses, with these shops (some of which retain their original detailing) continuing to provide an important local service. Further shops are located at Five Ways on the junction of Preston Drove and Ditchling Road. All of the houses along this stretch of Preston Drove were built between 1898 and 1911.

Along the south side of Preston Drove, the streetscape is interrupted by the ends of terraced houses in the neighbouring streets producing a rather fragmented, incomplete frontage of back gardens, side elevations and garages (one dated 1930). There are two groups of shops on either side of the Beaconsfield Villas junction. These are three storeys high, with gables facing the street, tiled roofs, first floor bay windows, and mainly modern shopfronts below. The Suzuki garage, dating to c.1930, is slightly set back from the road, and creates a break in the older properties. Blakers Park, with its many large trees, creates an important break with views across the park to Brighton town centre and the sea. Close to Ditchling Road, another group of shops, conveniently dated 1903, are two storeys high, with five gables decorated with "drips" of painted timber - an unusual effect.

The north side of Preston Drove is far more satisfactory as it contains groups of good quality continuous development, unbroken apart from the entrances to adjoining roads. Close to Balfour Road is a group of 13 shops which stretch down towards the Park View public house. These are two storeys high, with gables decorated with carving, and modern shopfronts below square first floor bays. Between Balfour Road and Osborne Road are attractively detailed red brick Edwardian houses with half timbered gables, square bays and tiled roofs. They sit back from the road with small front gardens. Some of the details of note include the recessed porches (e.g. nos. 107 and 109) and stained glass panels (e.g. 105), which also has its original black and white tiled front paths. There are two single storey infill buildings, now used as shops, to the west side of this terrace which although on a corner site, are reasonably unobtrusive.

Further along Preston Drove, between Osborne Road and Lowther Road is another good terrace of three storey houses, rendered, but with gables and carved barge boards over the square bays. These sit behind important flint and brick front walling, which then continues right along the next terrace to the end of the road without a break. These houses are similar in character to the previously described group in that they are transitional in design with a variety of details, including rendered fronts with classically-inspired dentil cornices, although some have faience panels and tiled porches, such as no.147 which also has a black and white tiled front path. All of the houses are two storeys high and they sit up above street level, creating a pleasant character to the street, and overlooking Blakers Park to the south. Close to Ditchling Road, the houses are later and built from red brick with tiled roofs and ornately-carved bargeboards to the gables, beneath which are distinctive balconies to attic bedrooms. The gables, and the pattern they create in oblique views along Preston Drove, are particularly notable. Regrettably, some of the gardens have been excavated and flat-roofed garages inserted, adversely affecting the setting of this pleasant terrace and resulting in the loss of sections of the original flint or brick walling (e.g. 213 and 219).

**Beaconsfield Villas** is a wide and busy residential road with a number of mature street trees which connects Stanford Avenue up a long hill to Preston Drove. Many of the two storey houses are detached or semi-detached, but they are so closely packed together that they create a continuous line. Those to the south date to between 1875 and 1898, are stuccoed, with two storey canted bays to the front which have deep eaves, supported on brackets. The roofs are slated, with a shallow pitch, although many have been recovered with concrete tiles. To the north end of the street are later red brick houses, some forming terraces, which have carved barge boards, gables, first or second floor verandahs, and square bays. All of these houses have small front gardens, with shrubbery but no trees, and whilst many of the larger properties are now in multiple occupation, the gardens are mainly too small to have encouraged conversion into parking spaces. The loss of the original sash windows, and their replacement with inappropriately detailed modern windows, is evident in the road, particularly along the north-westerly section of the road where many of the houses have been converted into flats.

**Havelock Road** runs parallel to Beaconsfield Villas and also has continuous two storey houses along both sides, stepping up the hillside from south to the north, some houses at the southern end have lower ground floors below street level. The streetscape is interrupted by the Preston Park Tavern and a few shops at the junction with Lucerne Road. The pub is two storeys high, with a tiled roof hidden by a prominent parapet, and white-painted architraves to the first floor sash windows. The ground floor is painted, with an angled entrance facing the street and a large bay window on the Havelock Road side. Slightly to the north is an early industrial building, formerly Camelia Jones Limited, now converted to flats, also on two floors with a pitched slated roof. It is built from brown brick, four bays wide, with red brick string courses and arches over the windows, which are all modern replacements. It is shown on the 1898 map, when it marked the edge of northern development along the street, and may have been built as a dairy or as stables. The earlier houses between Lucerne Road and Stanford Avenue are mainly semi-detached and rendered, with two or three storey front bays and shallow pitched slated roofs, very similar to Beaconsfield Villas. To the north are red brick terraces with gables facing the street, some of which have half-timbering decoration, tiled roofs, canted or square bays, and all of the houses have small front gardens. The street trees are mainly crab apples (*malus*), which contribute so much to the character of the area especially during spring blossom time.

**Waldegrave Road** was fully built by 1898. The street drops dramatically down the hill towards the south and like the other streets to the north of Stanford Avenue, it has pleasant views across the town to the sea. The many street trees, most of which are silver birches, and the original late 19th century street lights, provide visual interest. South of Lucerne Road, the rendered houses are mainly semi-detached, two storied, with canted bays and small front gardens. North of the road, they are similar but terraced. Some have bracketed eaves with similar brackets supporting the cills to the bay windows. One group, including nos. 45 and 47, are built from red brick with flint panels below the first floor windows and to the gables, above which were originally small ball finials. Some of the front boundary walls retain their original balustraded design, although many have been altered with a wide variety of designs and materials.



About two thirds of Chester Terrace was built by 1898 with the remaining more northerly section being added over the next ten years. Good views of Kemp Town and the sea, framed by elms and late 19th century street lights, can be obtained from the top of the slope down which the road stretches. The buildings are all terraced, and two storeys high. Most have canted double height bays with sash windows, above which are rusticated keystones (ground floors) and simple bracketed eaves (first floor). Some of the houses are rendered, some faced in red brick with tiled canted bays to the front. There are small front gardens and low, rendered front boundary walls. Moulded string courses at first floor level, and small corbels supporting the window cills, complete the decoration. Most of the houses have concrete roofs, replacing the original slate.

**Cleveland Road** was mostly completed by 1898 and overlooks Blakers Park, so the continuous terraces are only found along the western side of the road. It is notable for the ornately decorated barge boards which decorate the gables of the two storey houses which make up the more northerly section of the road. These have a variety of incised patterns and mouldings and terminate in roundels, almost comical in appearance. The canted bay windows below have cast iron friezes to each window cill, with ornate corbels to the cills and swagged plaster decoration between the ground and first floors. Further down Cleveland Road the design of the properties is more classical in derivation with basements and a raised ground floor. Between Preston Drove and Lucerne Road the houses have slightly deeper front gardens, raised above street level, providing a pleasant setting. The low front boundary walls are rendered and painted, and several of the larger gardens have been lost to car parking or garaging. Of note is the Cleveland public house, on the corner with Lucerne Road. This is a pleasantly asymmetrical two storey building with casement windows with round-headed "Georgian" fanlights to the ground floor windows and similar detailing above on the Cleveland Road elevation. The corner of the building at first floor level is supported on a giant, curved corbel with a slanted corner window below on the ground floor. The building retains its original slate roof and ornate cast iron front boundary railings.

**Lucerne Road** joins Beaconsfield Villas to Cleveland Road, crossing the other three roads at right angles, revealing the side elevations and back gardens of the terraced houses along each road and thereby accommodating unsightly garaging. There are, however, two small terraces on either side of the junction with Chester Terrace. These are two storey with canted bay windows and gables facing the street. A single house, formerly a shop, lies next to the Cleveland public house is also two storeys, rendered, with a tiled roof and canted bay window. Lucerne Road contains some street trees and some examples of late 19th century street lights.

**Blakers Park** was given by Sir John Blaker to the people of Brighton in 1893. It slopes from north to south and is an important public open space, with trees around the perimeters and other soft informal planting which has recently been supplemented with new trees following the very destructive storm of October 1987. To the south is a children's' playground and tennis courts. A pale green clocktower forms the centrepiece in views from the northern edge.

On the east side of the park, **Southdown Road** was built by 1898 with four unobtrusive modern houses being added to the group more recently. Street trees are important, and link with the tree planting at the south end of the park. The late 19th century houses are two storey, rendered, with canted bays, corbelled eaves and cill details, and are now mainly covered with concrete tiles. On the west side of the road, close to the junction with Stanford Avenue, is a 1960s detached house, built from brown brick and with a concrete tiled roof which seems totally alien in character to the surrounding area.

**Stanford Avenue** forms the spine of the Stanford Estate, joining Preston Road to Ditchling Road. It is therefore always busy with traffic but the openness of the street, the many mature street trees, the good views to the south-west, and the attractive late 19th century houses which line both sides of the road, compensate for this vehicular activity. The road contains two churches. Firstly, St. Augustine's Church on the corner with Florence Road, listed grade II. This was built in 1896 by G E Streatfield in the Perpendicular style and has an adjoining church hall of 1901-2. Secondly, the Methodist Church on the corner of Southdown Avenue, which was built to the designs of E J Hamilton in 1897.

The two storey houses along Stanford Avenue are mainly detached or semi-detached, although there are such small spaces between them that they create a terraced effect along the street. Dating from between 1875 and 1898, they are mainly two storey with mainly rendered houses to the south-west and red brick to the north-east. Some houses are built from a mixture of the two with red brick to the main part of the building and rendered canted bays. Overall these houses are slightly grander than those in the streets to the north and south, as befits their elevated status when first built, and many are double-fronted with small balconies above the front doors. On the rendered houses, typical details include bracketed eaves, sashed windows set in canted bays, ornate cast iron friezes to the window cills, and attractive quoins to the corners.

On the red brick houses, typical details include gables to the street (some with ornate barge boards), rendered string courses, canted bays, and sash windows. All of the houses have modestly-sized front gardens with some mature hedging and shrubbery. Many original tessellated tiled front paths remain, contained within low brick front boundary walls with stone copings. A few of the gardens have been converted into parking spaces (e.g. no. 87).

**Ditchling Road** forms the eastern boundary to the conservation area and is a very busy traffic route. Close to the junction with Stanford Avenue are three small single storey shops which sit rather awkwardly on the corner. They are next to the Garden Centre, on a backlands site which has been a plant nursery since at least 1898. From here, the houses along the western side as far as Grantham Road were mainly built between 1898 and 1911 and are typically Edwardian with red brickwork and a variety of attractive details which add richness and ornamentation. They are two storeys high, with gables which are finished with tile hanging and carved bargeboards ending in roundels similar to those in Cleveland Road. Each gable sits over small square bay which breaks forward slightly from the main part of the building and which contains two sashes to each floor, with a third window above the porch. No.177 is double-fronted with paired gables on either side, over square bays, between which at first floor level is an original cast iron balcony. Of note is the former carriage entrance to the rear garden. Nos. 185-191 have elaborately decorated panels to each gable, depicting flowers and plants, and small decorated panels, also with plaster inserts, between the ground and first floors. Each house has a small front garden and several (e.g. no. 199) retain an original brown, cream and red tiled path, with a cast iron porch defining the entrance. Fortunately these gardens are too small for parking, but other unsympathetic changes have occurred including some attic conversions which have resulted in the loss of the original roof shape. Beyond Grantham Road, the streetscape is largely formed by the ends of terraced houses in the side streets apart from a small group of red brick and painted houses between Florence Road and Springfield Road, and a small group of two shops and two modern houses, of no merit, on the opposite side of the junction with Springfield Road. Of note however is the Downs Junior School, dated 1890, which fronts onto Rugby Road. This grade II listed building has a significant brick and flint wall along its boundary to Ditchling Road, included in the listing. The small late 19th century house on the corner of Grantham Road is not listed and has been adversely affected by the installation of uPVC windows with fake leaded lights.

**Semley Road** contains terraced houses of the 1890s, built from red brick on two storeys. The buildings have gables to the street, canted bays, and white-painted string courses. At the top of Semley Road, where it turns into Ditchling Road, is a pair of houses on either side of the road of which one is in commercial use as the Preston Park Clinic. St. Andrews Road has two similarly detailed, short terraces, but otherwise the streetscape is formed by the flank walls of the terraced houses in neighbouring streets.

**Edburton Avenue** links this area across Stanford Avenue to Preston Drove. The houses along the east side date from between 1875 and 1898, are rendered, two storeys high, with canted bays and small front gardens. Some of the houses have applied plaster decoration in the form of swags and classical figurines over the ground floor windows and front doors. On the western side, the buildings are constructed from red brick and date to the 1900's. They have gables, decorated with carved barge boards and tile hanging, with faience panels between the first floor and ground floor windows, which are sashed. These sit in square bays with deep rendered lintels over, picked out with a dentil cornice, which is reflected in the curved arches over the front doors.

Most of these houses have been decorated using white paint, but the architectural details to no. 74 have been picked out in blue and green and are somewhat discordant within the overall streetscape. The many street trees, and the views over the high brick and flint wall to the Downs Junior School, which sits at the southern end of the road, are important.

**Southdown Avenue** is a particularly attractive street with continuous terraces of well-detailed houses dating to between 1875 and 1898 and many street trees. Views down the road towards the spire of the Florence Road Baptist Church, are important. Like Edburton Avenue, the houses are either rendered or built from red brick, with some semi-detached properties along the south side of the road. Some of these (e.g. nos. 27 and 29) have square bays topped by very ornate barge boards to a gable which faces the street. The three-window wide bays are square, and contain a pair of entrance porches decorated by a cast iron bracket which supports the tiled roof. Between the ground and the first floors are white-painted string courses, with dentils and mouldings. Some of the houses, such as no. 21, have bays containing two large sash window, decorated with margin lights and even smaller panes to the top light. This house also retains its original front door, with moulded panels. Nos. 40-46 are unusual in that they have flint panels to their front walls, with square timber bays clad in clay tiles and surmounted by small half-timber gables. Front boundary walls are usually rendered and painted with a variety of finishes, some of which are modern and out-of-character, such as nos. 27 and 29 which have patterned concrete blockwork. Many of the houses have lost their original roofing material and are now covered with concrete tiles.

**Grantham Road** was also developed between 1875 and 1898. The road dips down a hill from east to west with terraced houses on either side, apart from the Downs Junior School site, enclosed by a tall brick and flint wall. Of note is the old entrance to the playground, with the pedimented gateway marked "Junior Mixed" and its original wrought iron gate. The houses are two storey, mainly rendered, with canted front bays. The eaves are supported on brackets, with moulded string courses and some concrete roofs replacing the original slate. The small front gardens are enclosed by low, rendered walls, and outside no. 55 (one of an unusual red brick pair) there is the original stone and brick crossover to a large range of garages at the back of the houses, not visible from the road. At the western end of Grantham Road are four shops, intermixed with residential property, and at the eastern end, the vista is stopped by the two modern blocks of high-rise flats in the distance beyond Ditchling Road.

**Rugby Road** was built during the last twenty years of the 19th century, including most notably the school. This grade II listed building dominates the eastern end of the street with its eight gables facing the street, the first group on a single storey building, the second, on a two storey building. It was built in 1890 as the Ditchling Road Board School to the designs of Thomas Simpson for the School Board of Brighton, with some additions of 1900. The materials used were brown brick with red brick, stone and terracotta dressings. The building retains its original slate roof, with an attractive roof lantern important in views over the site.

**Florence Road** is a wide, tree-lined road which dips down a slope to the west and Stanford Avenue. It is notable for its impressive detached and semi-detached late 19th century houses and for its two churches, the listed St. Augustine's Church at the junction with Stanford Avenue, and the unlisted Baptist Church on the junction with Southdown Avenue. This building was erected in 1894-5 to the designs of George Baines in an Early English style with flint and brick walls and a prominent spire and tower. The houses are mainly built from red brick, on two or three storeys, with gables to the street, some of which have carved barge boards or other timber decoration including circular medallions. Rendered string courses and window and door lintels are generally painted white and doors are often original, with heavily-moulded panels. Windows are varied, but mainly sashed, some with margin lights (e.g. nos. 13 and 15) and some with the upper sash sub-divided into nine panes (nos. 3, 5 and 7). No. 32 is a detached house with square ground floor bays supporting an impressive cast-iron balcony which runs across the whole width of the house. The house retains its original red and brown tiled path and entrance porch, supported by simple Doric columns built from stone. Nos. 35 and 37 have the same original pathway, original six-panelled front doors, and leaded coloured glass to the windows on either side. The faience panels and string course above each door are particularly attractive and typical of this period.

At the Stanford Avenue end of the road are two pairs of taller, rendered houses now sub-divided into flats, and a similar building, now the Preston Park Surgery, which turns the corner into Beaconsfield Road. The gardens are just large enough to provide off-street car parking, fortunately often concealed by low brick walls decorated by brick piers surmounted with ball finials on a moulded base.

Springfield Road, the railway land and London Road station (fronting Shaftesbury Place) forms the southern edge to the conservation area which runs parallel to the Brighton-Lewes railway line, with London Road Station being accessed from the road by a recent replacement pedestrian bridge. In Springfield Road, like Florence Road, the buildings are late 19th century with terraced houses along most of the south and north-east side, and semi-detached pairs along the remainder. Of note is the way in which the road drops in level towards the west, curving slightly, with mature street trees. The much busier traffic along Beaconsfield Road is quite obtrusive. Along the south side, there are just a few detached houses but practically all of the buildings have been converted into flats. These detached houses are sited close together, along the same building line, with small front gardens and are rendered and painted. They generally have central entrances with canted bays to either side, bracketed eaves, string courses, sash windows and their original panelled doors. The roofs are either slated (as original) or covered with concrete tiles. Further to the west, the terraced houses are also rendered with bays, and many have altered roofs with modern dormers. Of note is the Springfield Public House which sits on the corner of the cul-de-sac which leads down to London Road station. This is two storeys, painted white, with an unfortunate concrete tiled roof although it does retain its simple two-over-two sashes. Further along Springfield Road, the houses are three storeys (including a basement), rendered, with single bays facing the street and largely replacement concrete roofs. Along the north side of Springfield Road, two of the semi-detached pairs have been replaced with 1960s blocks of flats. Otherwise the paired houses are two or three storeys high, rendered, with cast iron friezes to the window cills, and rustication to the corners and ground floor porches. Many have had modern dormers added to the roof. Four pairs of houses, nos. 41-53, have been built from brown brick with coloured brick banding, prominent front bays, and some original cast iron railings. Each house is slightly different and together the four create an interesting group. Because these buildings have much deeper front gardens than on the south side of the road, some have been converted into parking bays, and some of the properties have rather neglected front gardens.

Along **Beaconsfield Road** are a number of local shops, providing interest and vitality although the very heavy traffic (this street forms part of the one-way system around Preston Circus) is detrimental to its character. The buildings are in three groups. Firstly, the Preston Park Clinic at the northern end, which is situated in a pair of three storey houses, painted cream with details such as quoins, window cills, copings, and pediments, picked out in beige. Secondly, a terrace of eight three storey houses with ground floor shopfronts, many of which have been altered over the years but which fortunately retain a common fascia height. Above the shopfronts are first floor canted bay windows, with the top floor being flat fronted. Most of these have their original sash windows and six out of the eight are painted. The concrete roofs are regrettable although their prominent stacks and pots remain. Finally, close to Springfield Road are some small, single storey shops, possibly 1930s, with an assortment of fascias and shopfront designs.

#### **Article 4 Direction**

In order to halt the erosion of features such as sliding sash windows and traditional materials that was threatening to harm the special character of this conservation area, an additional planning control known as an Article 4 Direction was brought in. This requires owners to apply for planning permission to carry out works that were previously 'permitted development'. This means that the alteration or replacement of all windows, doors, or roofs fronting a highway or open space, the addition of a front porch, changes to front boundaries and the demolition or alteration of chimneys all need planning permission.

## Supplementary Planning Guidance

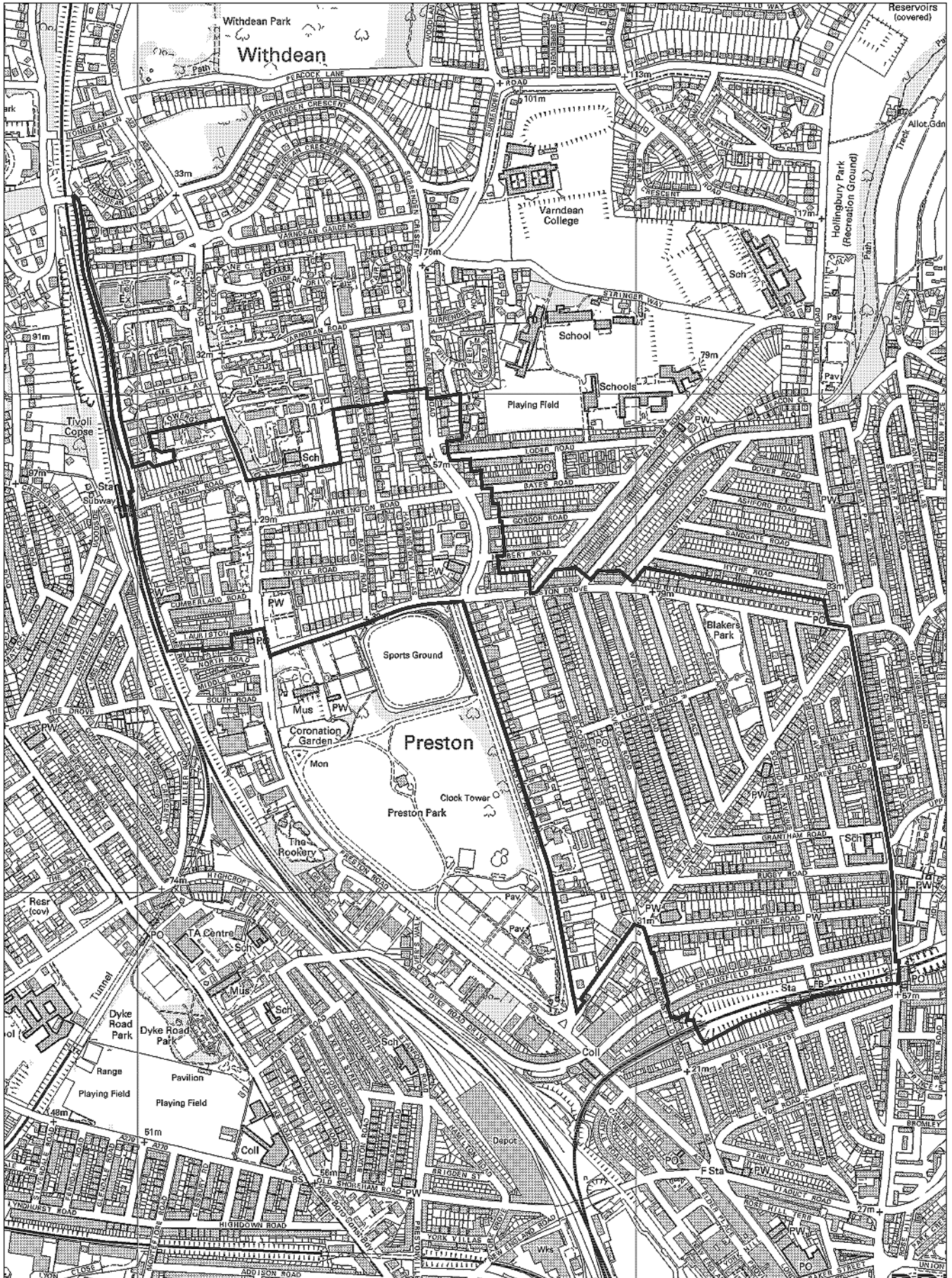
The following conservation related documents may be relevant and should be consulted during the preparation of plans for development in this area:

SPGBH1 Roof alterations and extensions  
SPGBH2 External paint finishes and colours  
SPGBH7 Satellite dishes  
SPGBH11 Listed building interiors  
SPGBH13 Listed buildings - general advice

SPGBH19 Fire precaution works to historic building

Conservation Areas in Brighton & Hove - A Resident's Guide

# Preston Park



**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**

## Scaled to view.

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