

The Sackville Gardens Conservation Area

Character Statement



Designated: 1997

Area: 13.1135 Hectares 32.4035 Acres

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

The area comprising Walsingham Road, Sackville Gardens, and Westbourne Villas lies to the west of the old village of Hove and was until the end of the 19th century used for allotment gardens. The three straight and parallel residential streets run northwards from the seafront to New Church Road and together with Westbourne Place and the buildings fronting Kingsway, form the western limit of the Victorian development of Hove. By 1898 the streets had been laid out in their present fashion and approximately half of the land was developed, and by 1914 all of the empty sites had been filled apart from land at the northern end of Sackville Gardens and Westbourne Villas. Even at this relatively late date, the land between Westbourne Villas and Hove Street was still undeveloped and although Prince's Crescent had been laid out, there were no buildings.

Definition of the Special Character of the Area

Nearly all of the buildings are in residential use, with a few commercial and institutional properties principally in New Church Road and Kingsway, which form the main routes for traffic movement from east to west. The north-south routes along Walsingham Road, Sackville Gardens, and Westbourne Villas are relatively quiet with little through traffic. The buildings facing the sea along Kingsway tend to be much larger and grander than the smaller domestic buildings in the streets behind, although they too have always been in residential use. New Church Road contains examples of smaller houses as well as buildings in institutional use. Because development took place mainly over a period of about thirty years the styles and materials of the various buildings vary immensely, but this contributes to the area's special architectural character by creating an interesting mix of house types along the three residential streets united by their very wide roads and their views down to the sea. To the south beyond Kingsway the land opens up to the sea and sky with the croquet lawns, bowling green, and pleasure gardens of the Western Esplanade culminating in the idiosyncratic saw-edge outline of the bathing huts.

Because the streets were developed in a fairly piecemeal way, one of the features of the area is its architectural variety, which gives to the buildings a wide range of details and materials which remain relatively unspoilt by modern alterations. There are therefore examples of many architectural styles including Victorian stuccoed terraces, Queen Anne Revival red brick houses, and yellow gault brick terraces and villas. Most of these residential properties have pleasant front gardens of an average depth of about 4 or 5 metres, with their original front boundary walls and many examples of patterned black-and-white paving. Due to relatively easy car parking in the streets, few gardens have been lost for parking spaces, although there are many low plinth walls which must have had cast iron railings originally. There are many street trees although of a relatively modest size.

A particular feature of the area are the visual and physical links through Walsingham Road, Sackville Gardens and Westbourne Villas from New Church Road down to the sea. New Church Road is one of the primary vehicular and pedestrian routes through Hove, is always busy, and has an attractive architectural appearance with a variety of building forms and uses. The contrast between the bustling main road and the quieter residential streets is very marked and the wide boulevard roads leading down to the beach area provide a welcome respite. However, Kingsway is another very busy road and does form a barrier to the enjoyment of the seaside environment.

It is noticeable how many of the architectural details from the original development have survived unaltered, and this includes some of the late 19th century cast-iron lampposts, buff stable-block crossovers, and granite kerbs. For instance, most of the cast iron balconies are still in situ at first floor level, but there have been some unfortunate changes including a large number of roofs which have been recovered in concrete tiles and which have had modern dormers installed in them. A few of the original panelled front doors have been replaced and the attractive terrazzo paving removed and a car parking space provided. The area could benefit from the reinstatement of front boundary walls and railings, additional tree planting, and more rigorous control over alterations which have been carried out under "Permitted Development" rights, perhaps by the serving of an Article 4-2 Direction on the private dwelling houses in the proposed conservation area.

Description Of The Buildings

The area does not contain any listed buildings or scheduled ancient monuments, although Sackville Hotel in Kingsway (no. 189) is included on the Council's list of Buildings of Local Interest. However, there are many notable buildings which contribute particularly to the townscape, including the imposing terraced blocks along Kingsway, Westbourne Terrace (nos. 165-171), San Remo (nos. 173-187), and Walsingham Terrace (nos. 193-201) of which only the eastern section remains. These buildings all date from before 1898. There are also some particularly good examples of semi-detached villas and terraced houses such as nos. 1 and 3 Westbourne Villas (which has some fine ironwork to the front elevation), nos. 53 and 55 Sackville Gardens (pargeted gables and door pediments), and no. 65 Walsingham Road (yellow gault brick and ornate detailing to doors and string courses). No. 58 New Church Road sits on the junction with Walsingham Road and has a fine ogee cupola at first floor level, turning the corner very elegantly.

New Church Road

New Church Road forms the northern edge of the proposed conservation area and contains along its whole length many fine listed buildings with imposing facades, such as St. Andrew's Church. However, along the stretch of New Church Road included in the proposed conservation area, most of the buildings relate to the roads running southwards, so they are generally domestic in scale such as nos. 60-64, which are red brick 2 storey houses matching the style of similar properties in Walsingham Road. No. 58 has the important cupola detail mentioned previously, and the adjoining property, no. 56, is a taller Edwardian building with a timbered gable to the street. Next to this is a detached red brick house (no. 54) now used by the Health Authority, with a modern building in its garden currently in use as a Day Centre. "Falconhurst" is a large detached red brick building with simple classical detailing at the end of Sackville Gardens with a modern extension. An important feature of both no. 54 and "Falconhurst" is the well detailed yellow stock brick boundary wall enclosing both sites.

Westbourne Villas and Westbourne Place

These two streets were already fully developed by 1898 apart from the sites adjoining New Church Road, now occupied by modern houses and flats. Westbourne Villas is predominantly 2 and 3-storey terraced and stuccoed housing, but includes some semi-detached and detached villas. The buildings tend to have decorative string courses, imitation stone quoins, lined-out stucco, heavy dentil cornicing to the front bay windows, and bracketed eaves at high level. Many of the original terrazzo paving remains and there are some attractive cast iron railings to the first floor balconies, such as found on nos. 1 and 3. Heavily moulded front doors complete the design.

Westbourne Place, originally called Westbourne Mews, contains an attractive terrace of artisan Victorian cottages (nos. 16-34) which have integral garage entrances on each front elevation. They face onto the remains of a very old flint wall which formed the boundary between the allotment gardens and the new development of the 1890's and which appears on the OS map of 1861. The street also contains some turn-of-the-century shops (nos. 2-8) which each have a simple, original shopfront still in place.

Sackville Gardens

Sackville Gardens was built principally between 1895 and 1898 and the buildings were constructed from either red or yellow brick, with some stucco buildings in between. Many of the buildings have prominent gables to the street with some of them still retaining their original red tiled roofs. The red brick buildings, like no. 55, have recessed front doors under a plaster pediment, elaborately decorated plaster gables at first floor level, and tile hanging with black-and-white terrazzo paving. Nearby, no. 45 is built in yellow gault brick, with terracotta string courses, contrasting red brick gauged arches over the windows, and boldly panelled front doors. The stucco buildings have splayed front bays with decorated voussoirs over the windows and simple front boundary walls with heavily moulded copings.

Walsingham Road

Walsingham Road contains a good collection of 2 and 3-storey stucco houses along the eastern side, constructed in the 1890's and built with strong architectural features such as canted bays, 3-light decorated dormers, balustraded front boundary walls and patterned black-and-white paving. At the northern end are later, red brick houses with timbered front gables on projecting bays with first floor timber balconies. These buildings retain their original red tiled roofs and crested terracotta ridges. At the southern end, some of the original terraced houses have been lost and replaced with a 1950's block of flats which although architecturally very different from the Victorian buildings adjacent, does at least maintain the original building line and roof height. The original buff stable-block paviers still exist at some of the pavement crossovers and like the other two residential streets, there are more examples of the original patterned black-and-white paving in the front gardens.

The west side of Walsingham Road contains two groups of semi-detached houses - one earlier and built from stucco, and one built from the yellow gault brick (nos. 18 - 48) which does not appear on the 1898 map so dates from the early part of the 1900's. The stucco houses contain some interesting features including canted bays and heavy first floor string courses, with bracketed eaves and tiled roofs. A few of the yellow brick houses have their original green slate roofs with ornate terracotta ridges, matching the terracotta string courses and red brick gauged arches over the windows. Some of the houses have heavily moulded front doors with huge consoles holding up a flat door hood, and again, the terrazzo paving to the front garden.

Kingsway

Kingsway faces the sea and the buildings reflect its more important position. There are 5 groups of buildings of note, which are generally 5 or 6 storeys high and are much more ornate and prominent than the smaller more domestic buildings in the quieter streets to the north. Nos. 191-203 are the remaining section of Walsingham Terrace, constructed c.1880. They are stuccoed with Doric columns to the ground floor, balconies with ornate ironwork and canopies above, and a heavily detailed string course and cornice above. Girton House (no. 193) was called Walsingham Mansions and was largely rebuilt in the 1980's although it still retains its historic form of 3 strong gables above a 3 storey building.

The ground and first floors have been glassed-in on the front elevation, presumably around what was originally a first floor balcony. The Sackville Hotel dates from the turn of the century and is a four bay building on 5 floors with decorative corner turrets and 4 recessed bays, enclosed by Ionic columns. Unfortunately the ground floor has been reclad in stone, but the overall character of the building has not been adversely affected. It is definitely an "odd" building in relation to its neighbours but it has a degree of jollity about it which justifies its inclusion on the Council's List of Buildings of Local Interest. The "San Remo" (nos. 173-187) is a very good terrace of 6 floors with canted bays at ground floor level, decorative ironwork and hoods to the balconies above, heavy eaves cornice and very prominent chimney stacks. Finally, Westbourne Terrace (nos. 165-171) is 4 storeys high and is built in brown brick with round headed windows and canted bays.

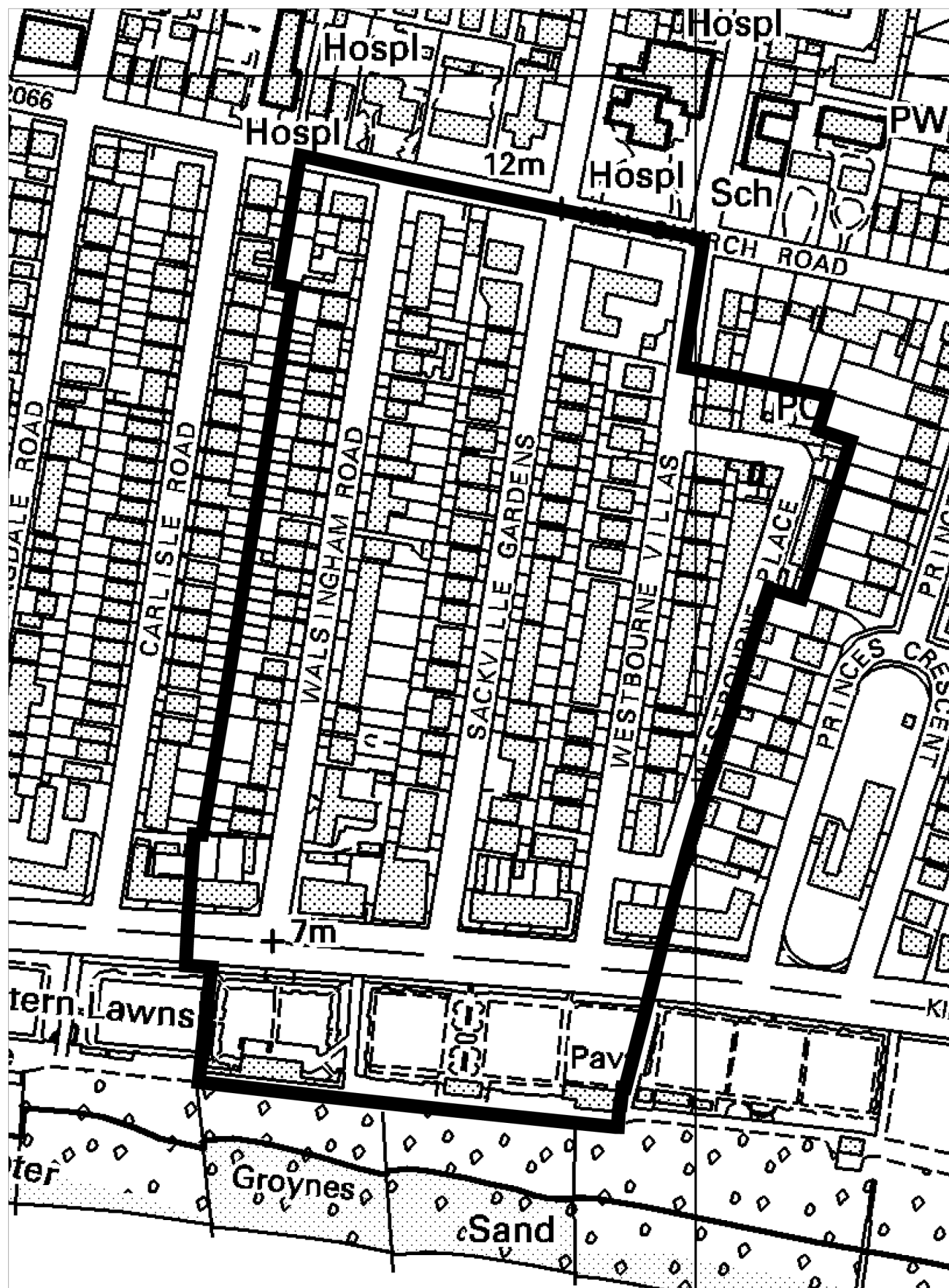
Western Esplanade

Between Kingsway and the beach lies the Western Esplanade, devoted to the public enjoyment of fresh air and the seaside atmosphere. The grounds of the croquet lawn, bowling greens, and pleasure gardens have a traditional appeal and are well used by the public. There are several communal buildings dating mostly from the 1930's which have been built deliberately low to allow views to the beach and beach huts beyond.

The Following Properties are Included in the Sackville Gardens Conservation Area

Kingsway : 165-203 (odd) including Sackville Hotel & Girton House
Croquet Lawns, Bowling Greens, Western Lawns & Pavilions
New Church Road: 50-68 (even)
Sackville Gardens
Walsingham Road
Westbourne Place: west side, 2-36 (even), 1-35 (odd) & garages
Westbourne Villas: 1-28 (consecutive) 30-54 (consecutive)

Conservation Area Fact File : Sackville Gardens



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

Scaled to view.

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