

Pope's Avenue Conservation Area 40

Designation

Conservation area designated:
07.09.1982

Conservation area extended:
20.02.2019

Location

OS Sheets: 1572

Pope's Avenue conservation area falls within the suburban area of Twickenham, to the South of Twickenham Green and to the North and west of Strawberry Hill Station. The area is bordered by Pope's Grove to the north, the railway line to the east, Wellesley Road to the south and Spencer Road to the west.

History and Development

Pope's Avenue and Pope's Grove bear the name and relationship to Alexander Pope (1688-1744), a famous English poet who owned a house at the end of Pope's Grove where it meets the Thames. Other road names which relate to well-known people include Walpole Gardens, named after Horace Walpole, who lived at nearby Strawberry Hill. OS Maps as well as the buildings themselves illustrate the changes in building type, fashion, and the importance of a railway station in the historic development and regeneration of the area.

The historic core of the village was around the junction of Pope's Avenue and Pope's Grove where the existing conservation area was designated in 1982. In this particular area, large villas were constructed to overlook the Twickenham Common during the early to mid 19th Century. One such early villa which was constructed at the same time as the dwellings along Pope's Grove is the semi-detached villa of 44-46 Pope's Avenue with a striking ornate chimney which once directly overlooked the Common. The conservation areas was extended in 2019 to recognise the important contribution of the railway and subsequent Edwardian and more modern development of the area which is of high quality and makes a positive contribution to the area.

When the Strawberry Hill Train Station was introduced in 1873, Twickenham Common immediately adjacent to the train line was subdivided, with the creation of Wellesley Road, Walpole Gardens and Spencer Road. There was a difference in hierarchy within the area with the introduction of Edwardian semi-detached properties along Spencer Road (designated as Buildings of Townscape Merit), and the infilling of plots along Pope's Avenue and Walpole Gardens (designated as buildings of Townscape Merit), which overlooked the West Twickenham Hard Court Tennis Club situated at the junction of Spencer Road and Walpole Gardens.

During the 1930's, the area around the Strawberry Hill station began to see more modern forms of dwellings in the form of the first two apartment buildings being constructed at Wellesley Court, Pope's Avenue; and Berkley Court, Wellesley Road. Along with this development, a small row of shops at Wellesley Parade was constructed, which added to the retail offer along this road, with a further solitary post office which is still in situ on the opposite side of the railway line which dates from the 19th century.

To the south nearer the train station, large Georgian and Victorian country houses set in large grounds were positioned along Wellesley Road, the only evidence remaining of these grand houses are the historic dwarf walls and piers which still align the boundaries of Rutland Court, Raymount Court and Milton Court. Interestingly, Milton Court and Thurnby Court retain the names of the former dwellings Thurnby House and Milton House; all of the other large dwellings in the area were demolished by the 1950s. Along Wellesley Road, the War effort after the 1950s may have triggered the demolition of

these larger dwellings at a time when there was an emphasis on delivering homes and reinvesting in society after the Second World War.

New forms of architecture were also being introduced and were based upon utilising new materials such as steel, glass and inexpensive materials to facilitate home ownership. Span Developments were one such firm who became renowned, delivering a more affordable form of housing, many of which in London are listed of national architectural and historic interest. Architects Eric Lyons and Geoffrey Townsend ran the company and designed Thurnby Court, (designated as a Building of Townscape Merit) which embraced this new era of development and vernacular at the time. Eric Lyons also designed Lindin House (now called 'Ajanta') on Walpole Gardens as Geoffrey Townsend's private residence; however it has undergone a number of alterations and extensions. Despite this, the building maintains some architectural interest through this association with Townsend and Lyons. Other apartment buildings such as Rutland Court, designed by E.S.W. Atherton, also embraced the form and appearance with a Span inspired development. Other interesting forms of modern architecture are also present at 45 Pope's Avenue, designed by David Dry and Katharina Halasz, who were also well known architects of the mid-20th century. During the 1980s No.67 Wellesley Road was also developed which embraces a more art-deco inspired design which effectively contributes to the experience of the street scene with dense planting. It was not until the late 20th century when the area saw another major phase of development designed by Colin Bottomley & Assoc for Crest Homes as a result of the closure of the West Twickenham Tennis Club. In its place a residential development was constructed, which although highlights a phase in development, it is considered to be of neutral interest.

Character

The historic core which is focused along Pope's Avenue and Pope's Grove still retain the thin dimensions of the historic laneways along with street trees on either side of the laneway. Along these streets are small distinctive and cohesive developments of largely unspoilt detached and semi-detached villas. These houses are set in substantial mature garden plots with important gaps between buildings. They are set behind well planted front gardens and consistent boundary walls to the street. They are of generally two storeys with some larger scale three storey villas along Pope's Grove. These houses have either stucco or stock brick facades with slate roofs. The grander villas are more ornate, classically detailed with moulded window surrounds, pilasters or quoins, and cornices. There is a greater variety in the character of those houses along Pope's Avenue. This group includes both earlier and later Victorian villas, demonstrating the evolution of architectural taste in the 19th century.

This open and well landscaped environment has influenced the further phases of development in the area which occurred during the late 19th century, early 20th century and late 20th century periods. Street trees and well vegetated front and rear gardens, views of which can be gained through the gaps between dwellings, are important to the setting and character of the dwellings within the area. Although the Common is no longer present, around the fringes of this area lies the golf course and playing fields which continue to contribute to the openness and well vegetated setting of the area. The construction of the Strawberry Hill railway station in 1873 was the precursor to extensive development in the vicinity, firstly occurring in a phase of the late 19th Century with larger villas and country houses being constructed. This was followed by 20th century development which saw a great deal of experimentation with new materials that have changed the density and mix of dwellings, but retained the well vegetated and landscaped setting.

Such examples of good modern development can be found at Wellesley Court, Pope's Avenue; and Berkley Court, Wellesley Road. Both schemes are similar in their form of modern design and materials and have U-shaped footprints with large setbacks and landscaped front gardens. They have more Arts and Crafts inspired detailing with Crittall windows and large steep hipped roofs with large chimneys. Many other examples of high quality modernist design are also present, some of which were detailed in the 'History and Development' section above. The combination of high quality design and materials that represents many of the architectural styles of the 18th 19th and 20th Centuries, the association with prominent architects and the high quality landscaped setting are key components of the conservation area.

Problems and Pressures

- Loss of traditional architectural features and materials due to unsympathetic alterations and extensions;
- Loss of rear laneway character along Pope's Avenue with pressure to develop rear gardens of Walpole Gardens.
- Loss of boundary walls and garden space in residential areas for hard standing, vehicular parking, front lightwells and hard surfacing.
- Loss of visual gap between properties;
- Lack of coordination and poor quality of street furniture and paving.
- Poor quality and disproportionate roof additions
- Use of poor quality products in building works such as UPVC, roofing felt and GRP products

Opportunity for Enhancement

- Preservation, enhancement and reinstatement of architectural quality and unity that is preferably based upon historic evidence;
- Resist the development of rear gardens of Walpole Gardens which front Pope's Avenue
- Seek the reinstallation of front garden walls, railings and planting alongside planning applications for refurbishment and seek that any lightwells are placed to the side and rear of properties and that hard standing is reduced;
- Preservation of visual gaps between properties;
- Coordination of colour and design and improvement in quality of street furniture and paving
- Improvement of highways conditions and pedestrian crossings, and rationalisation of existing signage and street furniture;
- Seek to encourage good quality and proportionate design and better quality materials that are sympathetic to the period and style of the building.

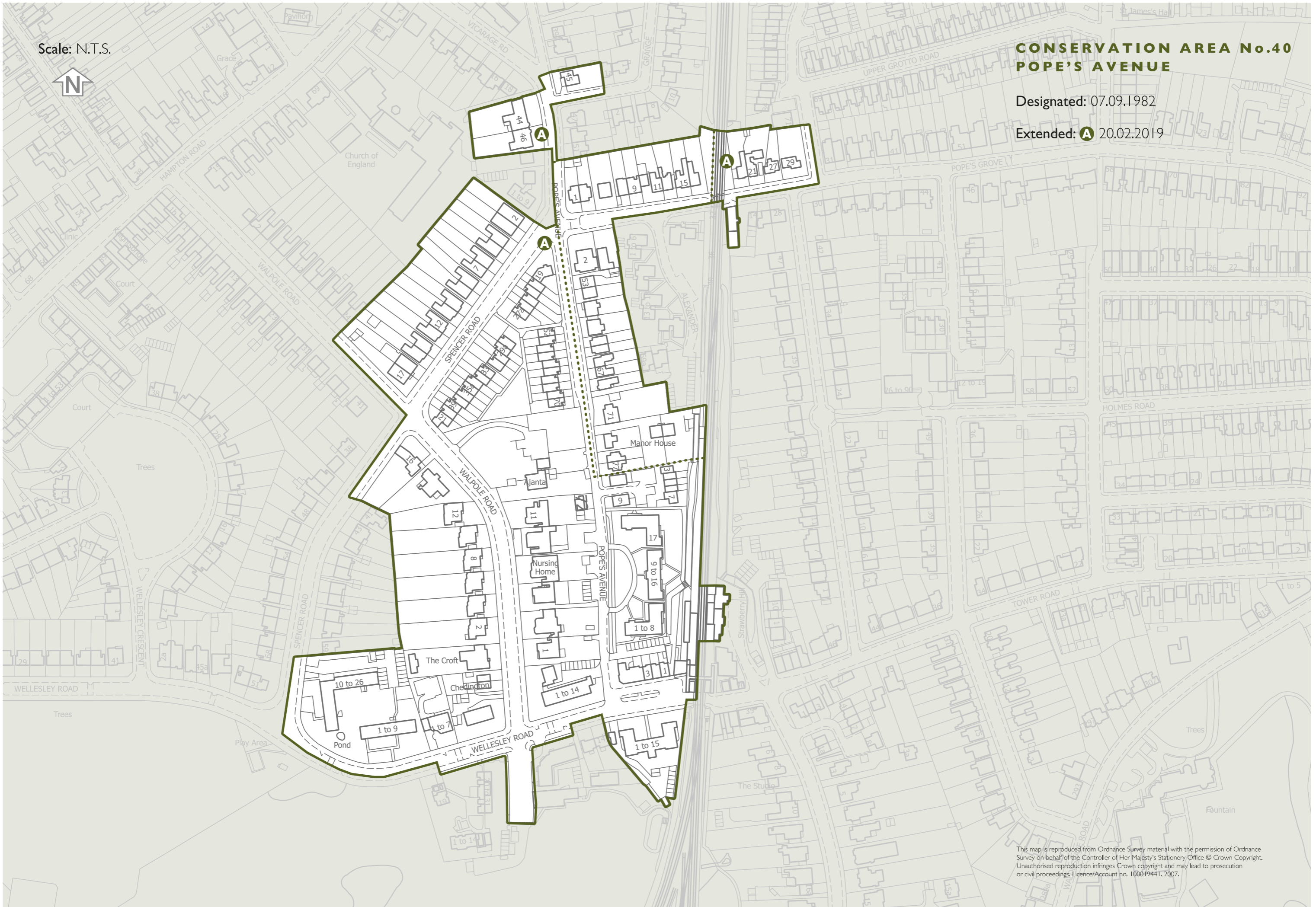
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CONSERVATION AREA No.40 POPE'S AVENUE

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