

Cowley Road Conservation Area 79

Designation

Conservation Area designated:
20.02.2019

Location

Cowley Road Conservation Areas Area is largely confined to a group of terraced properties within Cowley Road and North Worple Way, Mortlake

History and Development

Historic plans show that the dwellings along Cowley Road and the Cowley Mansion blocks were designed by Charles H. Flack for a J. Horlick. OS Maps from 1910 show that the majority of Cowley Road and part of the land facing North Worple Way was vacant with part of the street developed alongside First and Second Avenues. The construction of these dwellings along Cowley Road does have merit in that the buildings were designed in conjunction with the Cowley Mansion blocks, and exemplify a time in social history when the development of gentlemen's residences were in demand as a result of greater prosperity during the early 20th Century. It was during this time that more wealth, and better education and living conditions influenced the growth in community as well as architecture and construction methods. On each of the gables which signify the centre of the 8 groups of terraces, a motif can be seen with a lion over a stalk of barley, which is also present on the Cowley Mansion blocks. Although this motif has not been identified, a search of J. Horlick indicates that there could be a potential link to Sir James Horlick, known as the 'Malt Barron,' a pharmacist and creator of the Horlicks Malt Drink Company. Interestingly, James Horlick lived in a manor house in Gloucester called Cowley Manor and was in London at the beginning of the 20th Century. Both Cowley Road and Cowley Mansions along the High Street share this Cowley name and the motif on the gables of the buildings which show Barley in the background may prove this linkage to the malt company which James Horlick created. An earlier phase of a small group of Victorian railway cottages, also along North Worple Way, are of special interest and contribute positively to the historic street scene.

Character

The Cowley Road Conservation Area combines parts of North Worple Way and Cowley Road and is a street of speculative terraced dwellings constructed in 1911 according to date stamps marked on the terrace. The street was developed as an aspirational address, with more elaborate designs than any of the other terraces in the nearby vicinity, such as First and Second Avenues. The detailing of the facades with the use of red brick, large Dutch-style gables, parapets and finials is quite elaborate, and shows a greater sense of grandeur when compared to surrounding streets which are more typical of Edwardian speculative construction and design.

Together with the large number of street trees and front gardens which have remained, the streets have a very high quality townscape which is a positive contribution to the surrounding area. There is also a small section of Victorian railway cottages along North Worple Way that are older than the surrounding Edwardian development and of interest, being already designated Buildings of Townscape Merit.

The use of design, and detailing of the facades and materials, does exhibit a high degree of quality design and craftsmanship from the highly ornamented facades to the elaborate tiled entrances and doors with glazed panes. Given the small front gardens which are unable to be used for parking, many of the original front boundary walls are still intact. The front gardens are well planted, adding to the positive character of the street; with the mature street trees this positive character and appearance continues around the corner to the Victorian dwellings along North Worple Way.

Problems and Pressures

- Loss of traditional architectural features (timber doors, tile surrounds, fenestration timber framing) and materials due to unsympathetic alterations and extensions;
- Loss of original boundary walls and garden space in residential areas for hard standing, front lightwells and hard surfacing.
- 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 details, quality and unity that is preferably based upon historic evidence;
- Seek the reinstallation of front garden planting alongside planning applications for refurbishment, resist the loss of original boundary walls and seek that any lightwells are placed to the side and rear of properties and that hard standing is reduced;
- 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.

Scale: N.T.S.



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