

OAKHILL CONSERVATION AREA: BOUNDARY CHANGES

Report by the Service Director (Planning and Transportation)
Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration

Purpose

To re-designate 15-25 Langley Road as part of Oakhill Conservation Area following the deletion of these properties from Southborough Conservation Area by the Executive on 19th May 2009.

Action proposed by the Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration:

The Executive is requested to:

1. agree that numbers 15-25 Langley Road should be designated as a detached part of Oakhill Conservation area; the new boundary to follow the south-east and north-west curtilage boundaries of 15-25 Langley Road, the centre line of Langley Road on the north-west and the centre line of Kingsdowne Road with the western apex at the centre of their junction with Upper Brighton Road; and
2. the boundary of the Oakhill Conservation area be varied accordingly.

Reason for action proposed:

To preserve the special architectural or historic interest of 15-25 Langley Road.

BACKGROUND

1. On May 19th 2009 the Executive adopted the Southborough Conservation Area Appraisal and agreed a number of boundary changes recommended in the appraisal. After it subsequently came to light that some addresses in the proposed extended area had not been consulted, a further report was presented to Executive on 1st September, and following a site visit the Executive adopted the boundary as recommended on 19th May.
2. The boundary changes included the removal of 15-25 Langley Road from Southborough Conservation Area, but recommend its re-designation. The appraisal stated that:

“15 to 25 Langley Road are Victorian houses of Townscape Merit, located in well defined plots and surrounded by mature trees and landscaping consistent with the characteristics of the existing conservation area. However, notwithstanding their acknowledged character, they are very different from the asymmetrical informality of the houses that make up the rest of the Conservation Area. Upper Brighton Road intersects Langley Road from Langley Avenue, physically and visually separating 15 to 25 Langley Road from the main body of Southborough Conservation Area. These two factors together suggest exclusion from Southborough CA with inclusion with the adjoining Oak Hill Conservation Area, which is easily achievable as the group lies between the Southborough and Oakhill areas, or independent designation.”

H2

3. 15-25 Langley Road do not comprise a large or sufficiently distinctive area to justify designation as a separate new conservation area. Therefore it is proposed that they should be added to the Oakhill Conservation area, the boundary of which is about 50m to the north of No. 15 Langley Road (refer to map at Annex). Officers consider that this is the most appropriate and straightforward means of securing the continued protection of the buildings.

ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC INTEREST OF 15-25 LANGLEY ROAD

4. Nos. 15-25 Langley Road consist of six large houses of three storeys and semi-basement. They date from the mid-late nineteenth century, first appearing on the 2nd edition OS maps (1895-98); stylistic grounds suggest a date of 1880 or earlier. Nos. 15-23 appear to be a single development as the houses are architecturally of a piece, of yellow brick with Italianate stucco dressings including pedimented first floor windows and rusticated quoins. No. 25 is a more elaborate design in polychrome brick with High Victorian Gothic detailing and a central turret. (It was formerly known as Langley Tower).
5. Nos. 15- 19 were formerly the offices of the Police Federation but are now vacant; they have been somewhat altered to serve this non-residential use. An application for their conversion to 31 flats with a number of new town houses to the rear and some minor demolitions, was made but subsequently withdrawn in 2008. Advice from the Council's conservation officer at that time indicated support for the conversion, but not for the extent of new development. A similar planning application was submitted to the council on 15 June 2009. It is being processed at the time of writing, and will considered by the Surbiton Planning Sub-Committee and the Development Control Committee in November.
6. 21-25 Langley Road are residential flats. Planning permission was granted in 2007 for a new house on the site of a block of garages within the historic curtilage of 25 Langley Road. The site was within Southborough Conservation when the permission was granted.

SOUTHBOROUGH CONSERVATION AREA

7. The predominant architectural character of Southborough Conservation Area is described in the appraisal as "asymmetrical informality". It is typified by large detached houses of the period 1880 -1939, essentially suburban, and sometimes almost progressive in taste, influenced by the Arts and Crafts or Domestic Revival styles. In comparison, 15-25 Langley Road are grand, old-fashioned and formal. Whilst they were not originally a terrace, they are markedly urban, and dressed, at least, in the Italianate style popular from the 1850s.

OAKHILL CONSERVATION AREA

8. Oakhill conservation area was designated in April 1988. There have been no boundary alterations since then, and no appraisal has been carried out since the original designation report. It comprises mid-late nineteenth century linear development and a number of early twentieth century public buildings along Ewell Road, and mid-late nineteenth century residential streets and The Wood open space to the west of the main road.

H3

9. Oakhill Conservation area was developed before Southborough, principally during the period after the arrival of the railway (1838-1865). The architectural language of stock brick with stucco dressings; small terraces and large villas, may be seen in Ewell Road, South Bank Terrace and elsewhere. In architectural and historical terms, 15-25 Langley Road have a clear affinity with the Oak Hill estate, west of Ewell Road, rather than the Southborough estate, developed on the grounds of Southborough House, after 1880.

BOUNDARY

10. 15-25 Langley Road are separated from the present boundary of Oakhill CA by St Matthews School. Consideration has been given to including St Matthew's School within the conservation area, in order to rationalize the boundary and to avoid creating an awkward detached "island" conservation area, with the associated risk that its setting would be unprotected.
11. There are no buildings of architectural or historic interest on the school site. Trees on the school site are already protected by a Tree Preservation Order. Under current national guidance and local policy any planning application for development on the site must be determined having regard to its impact on the character and appearance of the adjoining conservation areas whether or not it is designated. However, the school was not considered within the Southborough CA Appraisal and it was not subject to consultation. The justification set out above for designating 15-25 Langley Road does not therefore apply to it. In this context, designation would not provide any additional planning benefit, but it could be challenged on the grounds that good practice had not been followed. It is therefore recommended that the school remain outside the conservation area.
12. 15-25 Langley Road form part of the setting of the site of the proposed Sunrise Senior Living development on the opposite side of the junction of Langley Avenue and Upper Brighton Road. Because the proposal to re-designate the houses was set out in the Southborough CA Appraisal, and will re-instate their conservation area status as existed previously, it is not considered that the current proposal will have a significant impact on the ongoing Sunrise planning inquiry.

DESIGNATION PROCEDURE AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION

13. The designation of conservation areas is wholly at the discretion of local Councils, under the provisions of section 69 of Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 under which Councils "shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and... shall designate those areas as conservation areas". It is not necessary to consult those affected prior to designation, although it is good practice to do so.
14. It is also good practice to undertake a character appraisal of a conservation area prior to designation or a boundary change, but again, it is not obligatory. Section 71 of the 1990 Act requires that local authorities consult on such appraisals, at least to the extent of holding a local public meeting.

H4

15. 15-25 Langley Road were included in the public consultation that preceded the May 19th 2009 variation to Southborough Conservation Area boundary, which included the proposal to remove 15-25 Langley Road from the area and re-designate. At least two residents of these properties responded asking respectively if the houses could be re-designated and how the Council proposed to protect them if not. As noted at paragraph 2 above, the houses were assessed as part of the Southborough CA Appraisal. In this context, and after discussion with English Heritage, officers consider that good practice has been followed in relation to appraisal and consultation, and bearing in mind that the current proposal will, in effect, simply maintain the *status quo*.

TIMESCALE

16. A conservation area boundary is effective from the time of its adoption by the Council. Following adoption of the appraisal and boundary changes by the Council, the details must be advertised in the London Gazette and local newspaper, and statutory bodies, internal Council departments and the owners of the properties affected must be notified, within twelve weeks of the adoption.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

17. The costs of producing a new information leaflet, advertisements and notification letters could be met from existing budgets.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

18. There are no environmental implications arising specifically from this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

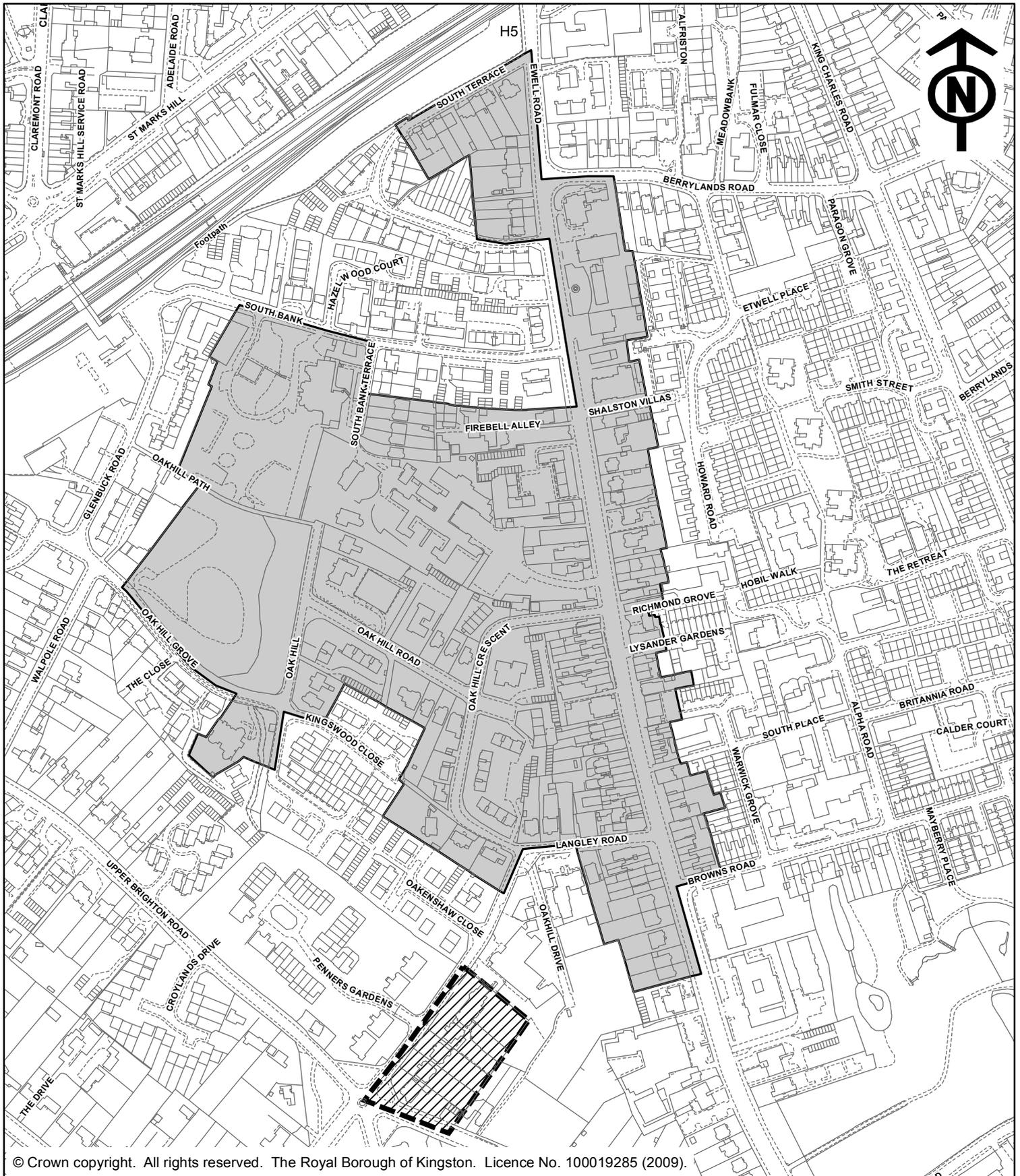
19. Conservation area designation is a local land charge. It has the effect of extending planning controls to the total or substantial demolition of buildings and to tree works and subjects all development in the area to additional controls (set out in UDP policy BE3), in order to protect the special architectural and historic character of the designated area.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

20. There are no equality impact assessment implications arising specifically from this report. The proposal is fully compatible with the Council's equality policies

Background Papers: held by Andrew Lynch

- Southborough Conservation Area Appraisal May 2009



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OAKHILL CONSERVATION AREA



Existing Oakhill Conservation Area



Proposed extension to Oakhill Conservation Area

Directorate of Environmental Services,
Guildhall 2, Kingston Upon Thames,
KT1 1EU.

Date: 27/08/2009

Ref: NOTICE

Scale: 1:4,000

Dwg No: 0809_137