

Boundary: See Map 2

Date of designation: 16 April 1970

Date of extension or alteration: None

Additional protection to the area: *SPG (Feb 1997) saved with UDP (Dec 2003).*

All the remaining original buildings of the first phase are Listed buildings: majority listed Grade II,

Article 4(2) Direction made 24th July 2001

The west side of Woodstock Road and westward, including The Avenue, lie within the London Borough of Ealing

The Bedford Park Society has considerable research and information available, including their website "bedfordpark.org"

Special Architectural and/or Historic Interest

Bedford Park, begun 1875, is probably the best-known and best-preserved later Victorian suburb in outer London. Trees and green spaces (both communal and private) are found in many earlier suburbs: the novelty of Bedford Park is their combination with 'artistically designed' houses of moderate size, inspired not by classical or Gothic (e.g Woodlands Estate) but by the red brick and tiled idiom derived chiefly from the home counties vernacular of the 17th & 18th centuries.

Bedford Park was the first example where the relaxed, informal mood of a market town or village was adopted for a complete speculatively built suburb of assymetric but carefully composed architect-designed buildings. The disposition of the buildings and relationship of buildings with boundary treatment remained within the control of the developer. The architectural quality of buildings and their curtilages led to all the buildings surviving from the original suburb being listed (grade II) in 1967.

History

Bedford Park, long considered a prototype for later garden cities and suburbs, owes its origin to the Aesthetic Movement of the 1870s. This followed the ideals of men such as John Ruskin and William Morris, who encouraged the appreciation of beauty in everyday life in revolt against mid-Victorian materialism, ostentation, vulgarity and the increasing effects of industrialisation. Among the London middle classes were many who looked in vain for a suitable environment in which these ideals could be expressed. Their need was recognised by Jonathan Carr, a cloth merchant with a taste for property speculation and family connections in the world of art. In 1875 he bought 24 acres of land near Turnham Green Station. The site was ideal, with many fine trees, and transport connections. Here he planned a new kind of estate in which aesthetically acceptable houses at cheap rents would be set in an informal layout which preserved as many mature trees as possible.

Bedford Park can be seen as the embodiment of the newly-fashionable Queen Anne Revival that had arisen in the 1860s. This was a somewhat inaccurate term describing a combination of 17th and 18th century English and Flemish domestic architecture, which also incorporated eclectic motifs drawn from other sources. It include rubbed-brick arches and dressings over and around openings, terracotta embellishments, open-bed and broken pediments, monumental chimney, shaped and Dutch gables, tile-hung gabled walls, white painted balustrades, balconies and

bay- windows. (As well as their asymmetric Arts and Crafts modelling, the “traditional” face-planted window-cases and other bays would have appeared fresh and new after the years of windows being banished behind brickwork for fire-regulation reasons.) Basements were abolished, while front gardens had wooden fences rather than iron railings. The planning of the smaller houses attracted attention as well as their picturesque exteriors. Around thirty prototypes were used.

Architecturally, and in its community spirit, Bedford Park was an inspiration and model to the more deliberate creators of the later garden suburbs, although it lacked their planned social structure and programme.

The history of Bedford Park can be divided into four construction phases:

Phase 1: 1875-1876

The key to success for Jonathan Carr’s suburb lay in establishing the reputation of Bedford Park in the minds of the artistic community of the time. Edward W Godwin, architect and interior designer, a leader of the Aesthetic Movement, had the required credentials. Carr commissioned designs from him and the firm of Coe and Robinson and bought the designs outright, thus retaining control over where and how they were built. However, when plans for the houses were published they attracted severe criticism from their internal planning. He therefore had his surveyor/architect William Wilson adapt Godwin’s detached design.

Phase 2: 1877-1879

Carr then turned to a leading architect of the time, Richard Norman Shaw. Shaw’s first designs for Bedford Park were produced in 1877, and built next to the Godwin houses at the bottom of The Avenue. The designs were an immediate success, and established the architecture we see today. Shaw presented Carr with drawings of streetscapes showing houses, boundary fences and other peripheral features and Carr bought them outright.

Phase 3: 1880-1886

In 1880 the development entered a final and different phase, prompted by the resignation of Shaw. By this time the heart of the estate was complete but Carr had steadily bought more land and was still building. Norman Shaw had wearied of Carr’s demands. However, in resigning he set up the succession of his pupil Edward J May, who was working in his own office. The essential style did not change at all but the houses were built on bigger plots, mostly for individual purchasers. However, by 1886 the company that had been formed to finance the project for extensions westward folded and brought an end to this phase of development.

Phase 4: 1887-1914

Construction proceeded on the remainder of the land which had been sold to various developers and was thus outside Jonathan Carr’s control. Some of the houses and mansion blocks built later do more than nod towards the style created by Norman Shaw. The efforts to retain the physical integrity of the buildings and their character as a collection of small country houses should be recognised as a further phase of the history of this conservation area. Recording and research by Thomas Affleck Greeves (1917-1997) and other enthusiasts, plus the lobbying to preserve the buildings by way of Listing, has retained the integrity of the buildings and quality of this estate of privately owned houses to an admirable degree.

Character Appraisal

The layout is not especially inspired: three main roads (Bath and Woodstock Roads and The Avenue) are straight but converge in traditional manner on the (contemporary) church and inn, sited a little to the north of Turnham Green Station. The chief focus is the group of St Michael's Church (Grade II*) and the Tabard Inn (Grade II*) designed by Norman Shaw in 1897-80. What is more of interest is the treatment of the minor roads, with their odd bends taking account of existing groups of trees, and the siting of individual houses, often placed quite close to the pavements; detached houses are rare, so that the buildings make a direct impact on the street scene. Special picturesque effects are achieved at the angular road junctions by the irregular groupings of roofs, tall chimneys, and white-painted bay-windows. The back and sides of the properties were designed to be seen and are carefully proportioned displaying decorative features. Carefully designed front garden walls and fences also play a crucial part in the composition: the intention appears to have been for a variety of boundaries rather than a consistent approach per street, providing interest rather than uniformity.

Pressures on the area (particularly as found during development control)

The designated Bedford Park Conservation Area forms part only of the original planned Bedford Park Estate, and not all the properties within the CA are listed. The other part falls within the London Borough of Ealing, also a conservation area but as yet without Article 4 protection, so liaison is required for consistency.

Due to the good location, and success of the Society in recording and helping to maintain the character of the buildings, the properties are much sought-after with owners often able to fund considerable extensions. All these can lead to loss of original fabric and silhouette, and loss of gaps between buildings, potential for trees and shrub plantings, and spaciousness.

- Re-conversion of flats to single dwellings reduces numbers of dwellings; also can lead to mending and reconstitution of fabric but also potential for inappropriate pastiche
- Effect of higher expectations on the fabric can damage its integrity: the effects of buildings being Listed are often not fully understood. Eg opening up / removal of interior walls to provide larger rooms, alien opening up of exterior walls to provide extensions, loss of chimneys, alien roof lights, upgrading of insulation standards leading to incorrect window component proportions are all detrimental to the character of the buildings and the area.
- Again to extend accommodation and recreational facilities, basements are being sought. These can be detrimental to the character of country-style buildings of gaps and wide footprint rather than the high-density town-houses the style sought to leave behind.
- Crossovers, and on-plot parking reduces opportunities for planting
- Particular styles of over-elaborate fencing where not originally included leading to joining up instead of variety; or using alien styles not the original palette

Potential

To be evaluated at a later stage of the appraisal and through comment; however the close knit fabric leaves little scope for any alteration other than repair and minor upgrading if the character of the whole is to be retained.

The history above is taken directly from The Bedford Park log books which are part of the Bedford Park Society's *From Knowledge comes care* programme, to assist owners in the philosophy and recording of change. All applicants should be encouraged to create / maintain a log-book for future records.

- Consideration might be given to extending coverage of Article 4(2) directions
- Update on condition and age of street trees for future planting plans.
- Further guidance on the relationship of windows and thermal insulation

Guiding principles

In addition to statutory requirements, UDP principles and existing supplementary guidance, the following guidelines special to the area will be included in those evaluated:

- The Log-book with its background notes includes photographs, records of design and details where known, and survey / guidance on appropriate styles, design, construction and fabric, for Bedford Park as a whole. Variation from this will need special justification.
- Bedford Park was specifically designed as a composition of varying parts and
- silhouette: spacing, siting, gaps, porches and gabled features were designed to be
- dramatic yet bring the eye back to street level. Reductions in the already minimal
- surrounding space can be most unfortunate.
- Many buildings are Statutorily listed, requiring attention to internal character and fabric as well as attention to the smallest of architectural detail.
- Article 4 (2) Direction on unlisted buildings also requires attention to specific details of design and fabric, including the curtilage and forecourts fronting the street.
- "Improvements" to fences does not mean using walls or the "Bedford Park" palisade style where this is not original, or is inappropriate.
- Excavation for cellars is not in accordance with the original philosophy and is alien to the character of the buildings and their front gardens.



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London Borough of Hounslow LA086444 2001



 Hounslow

BEDFORD PARK CONSERVATION AREA.

Drawn by S.C.

Date NOVEMBER 2002.

Scale N.T.S.

Drg No. A3 - 2

London Borough of Hounslow

Mike Jordan,
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AREA = 17.37ha

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