

**A Review of the Boundary as part of the Torfield Conservation Area Appraisal:
An assessment of the wider surrounding landscape including the potential Extension A and Extension B.**

Extension A

Mill Gap Road and the associated areas of Torfield Road (south side), Selwyn Road (east side), Arundel Road (north side), St Anne's Road (west side) and Ivy Lane

Extension B

West side of Selwyn Road and the associated north side of Arundel Road (No. 1a, 3 and 3a).

A review of the wider surrounding area, adjoining the boundary of Torfield Conservation Area, was considered against the "Criteria for Measuring the Special Interest and Drawing the Boundaries of Conservation Areas" in Appendix A of the Guidance Manual for Designation and Review of Conservation Areas.

This is undertaken against three tests, the results are summarised below. For the full assessment please contact Rhiannon Rhys, Conservation Officer (Rhiannon.rhys@eastbourne.gov.uk / 01323 415251).

Test 1 Architectural Quality and Historic Relevance

The majority of buildings must have some strong intrinsic architectural or historic merit by virtue of age, design, materials and/or whether they were designed by a known architect or by the same developer etc.

Torfield Conservation Area is characterised by a distinct group of interwar housing designed and built by P. D. Stonham on the site of the Torfield Court Estate, a large Victorian villa. The site has a consistent and homogeneous character due to their design, use of materials and finesse in detailing. The inclusion of the Cottage helps to establish the historic context of the site, and the relationship of the original Torfield Court to the subsequent re-development of the site by P.D. Stonham. The construction of interwar housing is a key phase in Eastbourne historic development. The area has a fairly unique character, which does not extend to the wider environment.

Extension A includes no properties which resemble or date from the interwar period, as designated within the Conservation Area. It consists mainly of large Victorian villas, whose plots have been subdivided to provide sites for modern infill developments. This is similar to the interwar housing that developed on Torfield Court, however the infill development in extension A were built in the 1960's – 70's, and do not hold the architectural quality of Torfields. They are also not examples of work by a well known architect or part of a notable piece of town planning or a key phase in Eastbourne's architectural development. Two identified key features within this area include St Wilfrids Hospice and the wall surrounding the Mount, which are both buildings of local interest.

In Extension B, the majority of the properties are a later build, dating to the 1950's to 1970's. There is only one large Victorian villa (No. 15 & 13) that has been retained but this has been divided into flats and its land has been used for modern

infill development. The modern buildings are again not by a well known architect and do not demonstrate an important phase in the architectural and historical development of Eastbourne.

The Victorian architecture within both sites does hold architectural merit; although this not the identified special character of Torfield Conservation Area. Furthermore, the modern infill development amongst which the majority of the Victorian sites sit, while of its time, does not warrant inclusion. Therefore to include these neutral and negative contributors (modern development) into the conservation area, so that the few remaining Victorian buildings could be included, would risk watering down the high quality and the special character of the conservation area

Test 2 Townscape/Public Realm Quality

Consideration is also given to the townscape quality of the area and whether there is sufficient justification for the introduction of additional controls. In particular; the proportion of the buildings within the area which would be defined as positive contributors if located within the Conservation Area.

The buildings within the Torfield Conservation Area have retained the majority of their original features (windows, doors, external finishes etc). There is also very little evidence of inappropriate extensions and infill development occurring within the boundaries. The public realm is also fairly clearly defined with a large front gardens and a uniform greensand stone wall with brick piers which surround the entire interwar development. However, none of the original brick pavers have been retained although a number of "Staffordshire blue" brick crossovers do remain in situ.

In Extension A, the Victorian buildings have retained a relatively high proportion of their original features; however they have suffered some intrusion, with particular reference to the large extension to the original buildings and unsympathetic modern infill development within the original plots. The public realm within this area has retained the original walls of the Victorian properties and this is an important and positive contributor to the streetscape.

In Extension B, the small proportion of historic properties that remain, have retained their original features. However, they also have suffered through inappropriate and unsympathetic extensions and the impact of modern infill development within their original plot boundaries. One interesting feature of Extension B is that along with high proportion of surviving Victorian boundary walls, and there are also two examples of the original entrance ways to the Victorian villas remaining in situ. These also have some of the original brick pavers still in place.

The surrounding areas have been subject to some unfortunate additions, extensions and high level of modern infill development, which has all contributed to watering down the special character of the area.

Test 3 Boundaries:

In establishing the boundaries of Conservation Areas a number of factors must be considered including original boundary lines and the landscape of the area.

In Torfield Conservation Area, the interwar housing is located within the boundaries of the Torfield Court Plot. The 1920-30's Estate has not suffered any unattractive infill and had retained its boundary lines, using the original thoroughfares already built within the location during the Victorian Era.

In Extension A, Mill Gap Road and Ivy Lane have two very distinct qualities, which differ from the rest of the surrounding environment. Mill Gap Road is the original road which led into Eastbourne from the Windmills, which were situated at the top of the hill. This is where the name "Mill Gap" came from. It has retained the feel of a country road, being very enclosed and detached, with the defined boundary wall and the over hanging trees, which encapsulates it. Ivy Lane is part of the Victorian villas phase of development. It is a unique space, which removes the visitor from the surrounding residential environment.

In Extension B, the area has lost the majority of the original boundary lines, particularly at the top end of Selwyn Road, while the original plots have been greatly subdivides.

Conclusion

Torfield Conservation Area, has a clear and defined special architectural and historic character, as a distinct group of homogeneous interwar housing built by P. D. Stonham on the site of the Victorian Villa, Torfield Court. The potential extensions to include A and/or B, it has been shown does not meet the criteria set out in the Appendix A of the Guidance Manual for Designation and Review of Conservation Areas. Therefore no further extensions, except for the inclusion of the Cottage, St Anne's Road are recommended in light of this assessment.