



PLANNING POLICY AND CONSERVATION

**Upper Gordon Road to Church Hill,
Camberley Conservation Area**



April 2004

'leading for tomorrow'

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Upper Gordon Road to Church Hill Conservation Area - Character Appraisal

1. Introduction

Reason for review

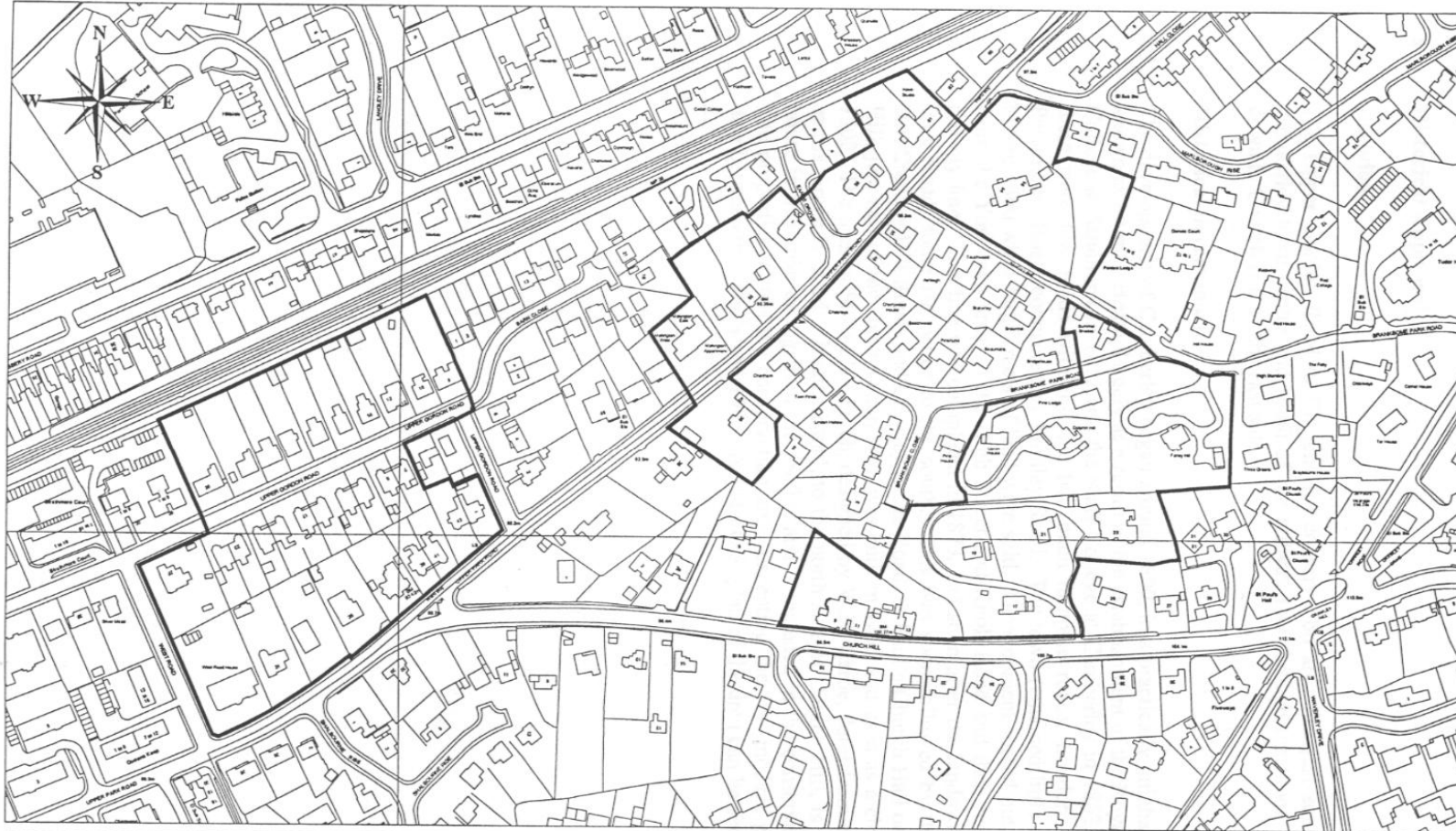
- 1.1 The Upper Gordon Road/Upper Park Road conservation area was first designated in October 1989. This review provides the opportunity to take a fresh look at the conservation area, to re-assess the boundaries and to determine whether the reasons for designation are still relevant. It also provides the opportunity for a detailed character appraisal which will assist both residents, the local planning authority and all those carrying out work in the area to understand what is important and special about the area. This is in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance, PPG 15, 'Planning and the Historic Environment', September 1994. English Heritage guidance has also been produced emphasising the importance of character appraisals and has been used to guide this review.

The purpose of designation

- 1.2 Conservation areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'; and are designated under Section 69 (1) (a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The main purpose of designation remains as identified in 1989. This is to help retain the existing character and appearance and prevent demolitions and unsympathetic alterations which would harm the area or its setting. The area is quite unusual, within the context of Camberley, in as much as new development and inappropriate alterations have not affected the area significantly. The originally designated area was described as constituting *'one of the few remaining unspoilt Victorian/Edwardian environments close to the town centre. However, the area can be considered to be under threat due to the building size, plot size and proximity to the town centre'*; and this remains true. The inclusion of the Branksome Park Road to Church Hill area recognises the relationship of these buildings to the existing area, demonstrating the way in which the area developed, both physically and architecturally. Some more obvious changes by way of new development along frontages have taken place within this area. Designation should help to ensure that any future changes to the buildings and the spaces around them is more sympathetic. Throughout the area, conservation area status will help to resist unwanted pressures, through control of demolitions, development and tree felling. Whilst trees may be covered by TPO's, protection is extended to all trees and this especially benefits the substantial tree groups which make a significant contribution to the setting of the buildings. Where new development is proposed, such as alterations or extensions, the Council can with justification require high standards of design and aesthetic control to ensure the character of the conservation area is retained.
- 1.3 The appraisal is not intended to be comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

Delineation of the conservation area

- 1.4 The conservation area as originally designated comprised two separate areas, as shown in Appendix A. It was considered that areas of newer development detracted from and devalued the integrity of these two areas as one entity. For administrative convenience, however, the two areas were designated as one conservation area. This review has resulted in an extension to the boundary, now giving three separate areas, two of which are almost linked, separated only by a road. Given the reasons for designation, it is still considered appropriate to designate them as one area, but to re-name it as 'Upper Gordon Road to Church Hill conservation area'.
- 1.5 The conservation area boundary is shown on Map 1.



Title	UPPER GORDON ROAD TO CHURCH HILL. CONSERVATION AREA		
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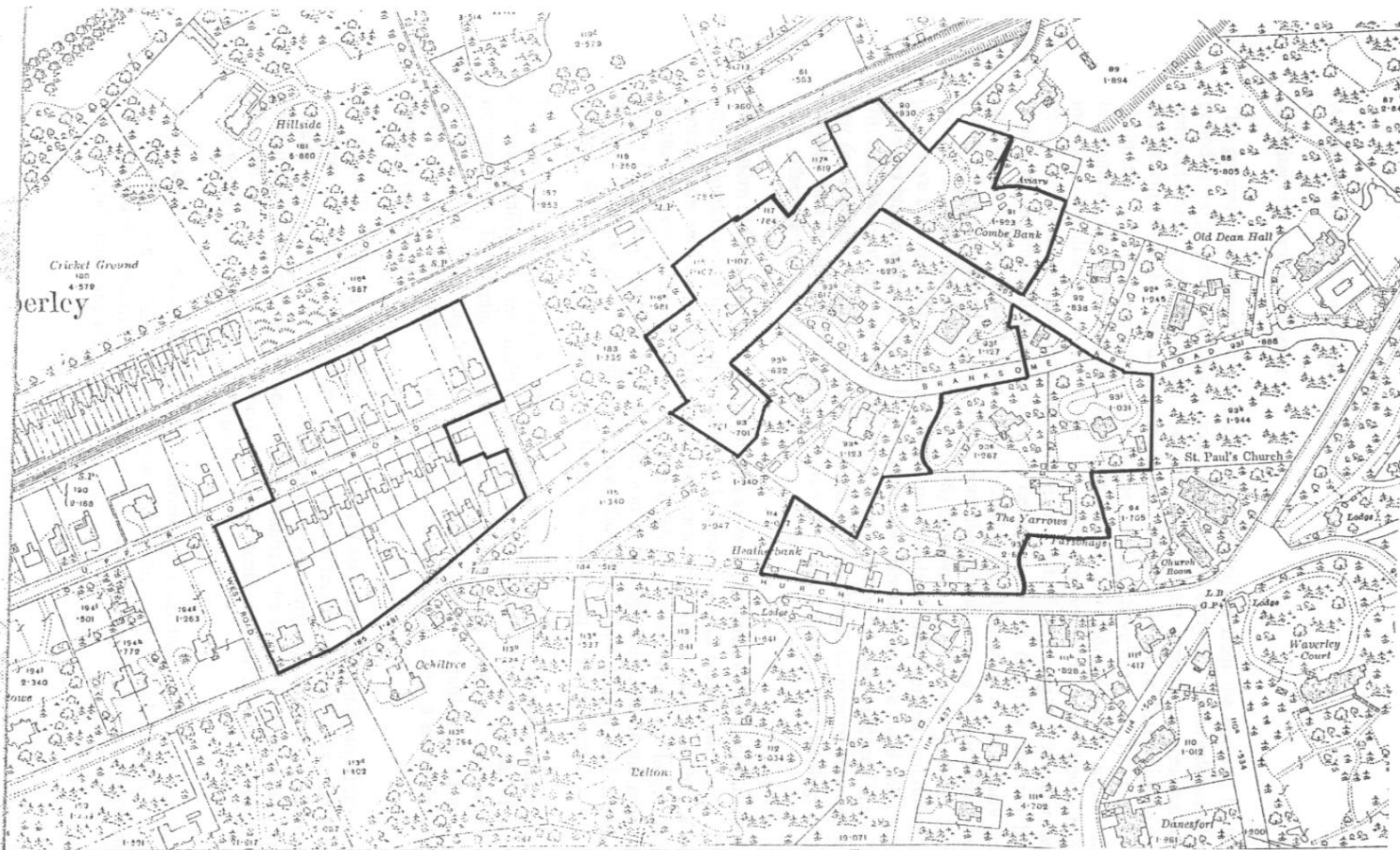
2. Historical Appraisal

Location

- 2.1 The Upper Gordon Road to Church Hill conservation area lies just south east of Camberley town centre and south of the railway line through the town, stretching down to Church Hill on the east side.

Historical development

- 2.2 The development of Camberley began around 1800, in a practically uninhabited area known as Frimley Heath, largely as a result of the establishment of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst in 1812 and the Staff College at Camberley in 1862. In 1816 there were few roads with just the two main turnpike roads, London Road and Portsmouth Road, connected by Frimley Road. The town remained little developed before 1860 when large tracts of land were sold. Development spread out gradually from the Yorktown area, to the High Street and Knoll Road and then south of the railway line. This line was completed in 1873, and soon after the landowners' built Park Road, some 100 yards to the south. This was soon followed by the Church Hill/Crawley Hill Roads and Crawley Ridge Road. St Paul's Church Hall on Crawley Hill, just east of the conservation area, was built in 1895 and used as a church until 1902. The present St Paul's Church, designed by W.D. Caroe, dates from circa 1902 and is Grade II listed. 'Heatherbank', to the north side of Church Hill, is the oldest house in this area, dating from the 1860's, and is included in the conservation area. The properties within the conservation area, excepting the few modern properties, date between the 1860's and 1906. A 1915 O.S. plan of the area can be seen at Map 2.

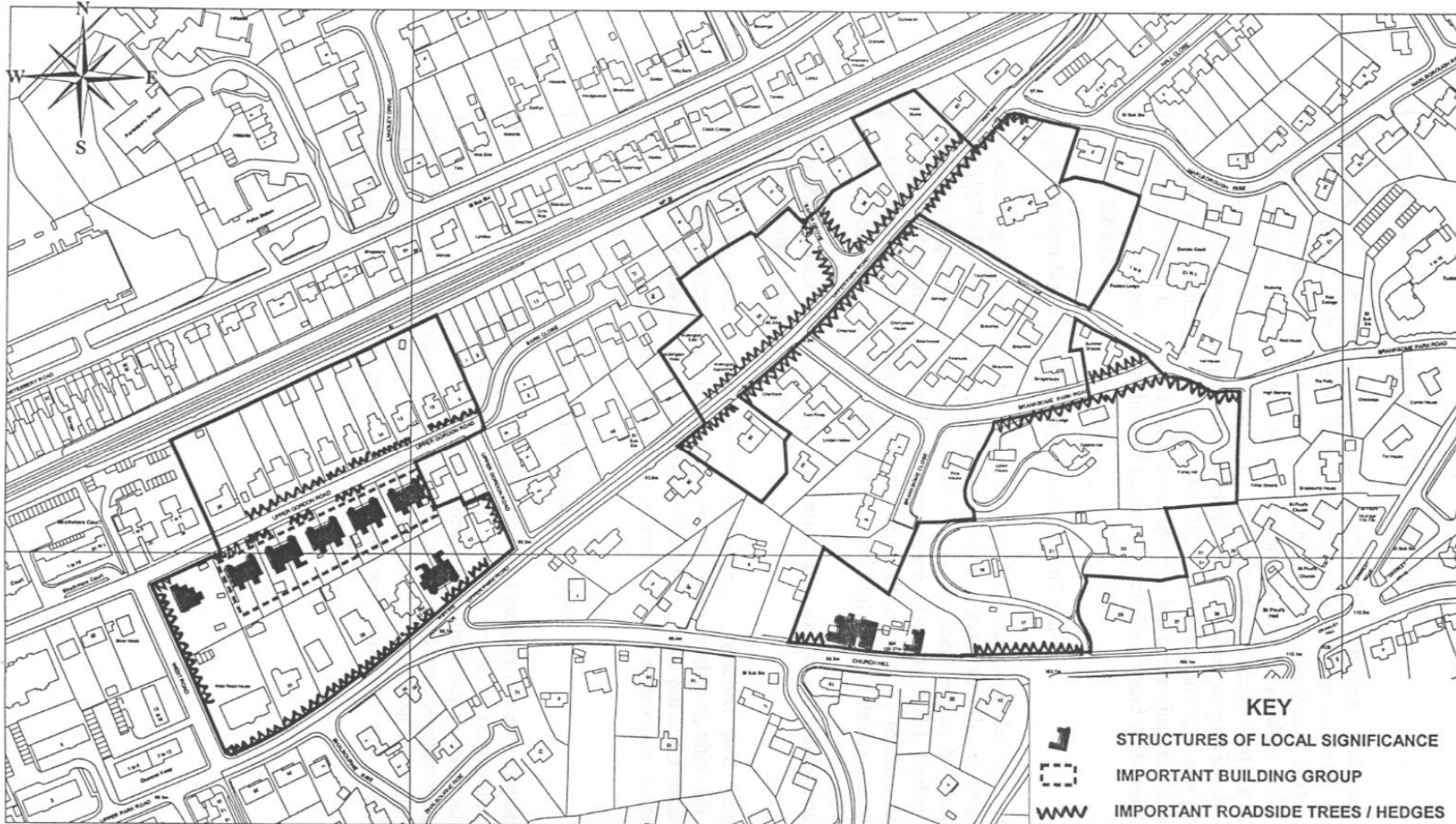


Map 2
O.S. extract 1915
Showing Conservation Area

3. Architecture and Townscape Appraisal

Architecture and Townscape

- 3.1 The general character of the conservation area derives from the specific building period of the properties which are largely late 19th and early 20th century detached and semi-detached houses and villas. As such the area is an important representation of the growth of Camberley during this period. Whilst there are no listed buildings, or landmarks providing important views, some buildings have been locally listed. The importance of this area lies in the group value of the buildings, rather than in their individual architectural merit. There is a high proportion of good Victorian and Edwardian villas and houses which still retain most of their original character, with important architectural features such as decorative wood detailing and red brick pointing to the red brick houses. Upper Gordon Road contains a particularly good group of semi-detached villas. The Upper Park Road area is characterised by a number of large Victorian houses (pre 1898) in substantial well-treed gardens. Some plots have been reduced to make way for new backland development, but others are large and have 'potential' for redevelopment. The Branksome Park Road and Church Hill area also contains large Victorian houses in well-treed gardens, reduced in size by new development. In Branksome Park Road the visual sub-division of plots is more obvious than in Upper Park Road, with new development along the frontage of the road, rather than to the rear.
- 3.2 The pattern of development as given by plot sizes, boundaries and densities is another very important factor in the appearance and character of this conservation area. The conservation area comprises houses of four standards. Those closest to the railway are the smallest; those on the up hill side of Upper Gordon Road are larger; those facing Upper Park Road are larger still; and on the opposite side of the road and Branksome Park Road/Church Hill area, the houses had lodges and stood in substantial grounds. This form of development can be seen in Maps 1 and 2.
- 3.3 This hierarchy is important in establishing the character of the conservation area. It derives equally from the quality and scale of the houses and the amount of space around them. The change in scale is relatively subtle and it would be easy for this to be lost through infill and loss of the open space around the buildings. The open spaces of the gardens therefore are as important as the buildings in establishing the character of the area.
- 3.4 The area still retains its original residential character, although some properties have now been converted to other uses, such as care homes, and densities have increased through conversion to flats. It is important that the original character be retained, through the careful control of uses for the buildings, the impact of new uses on the surrounding gardens, such as car parking requirements, and features such as signage, which where necessary, should be discreet.
- 3.5 Any development in this area should be carried out in accordance with conservation area policies, respecting the historic plan form, the architectural features of the buildings and the attractive streetscapes as enhanced by trees and hedges. Important buildings and streetscape are shown in Map 3.



Title	UPPER GORDON ROAD TO CHURCH HILL. CONSERVATION AREA		
	BUILT CHARACTER AND STREETSCAPE		
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Upper Gordon Road (north side) (Photographs 1 and 2)

- 3.6 This side of the road comprises a row of detached and semi-detached Victorian/Edwardian houses of varied design and in varying stages of preservation. When first designated this group was described as *‘Not significant in themselves but included so as to help preserve the streetscape for the Edwardian villas opposite’*. Whilst this still holds good,¹ their importance is now also recognised for the part they play in demonstrating the pattern of development referred to previously (paragraph 3.2). One new addition is made here, No 26. Since designation, a new property, No 12, has been built, in 1998, as infill development, but preserving the traditional plot sizes, and making use of traditional materials including wood sash windows and a grey real slate roof.

Upper Gordon Road (south side) (Photographs 3 and 4)

- 3.7 This side largely comprises five pairs of good Victorian semi-detached villas, dated circa 1897/98. Collectively, they represent a good example of this period of Camberley’s growth and are relatively rare in the local scene, by virtue of their uniform design and largely unaltered appearance. Locally listed, further details are given in Appendix B. Their setting has been a little spoilt by modern development outside the conservation area at the east end, and built prior to its designation.

Upper Park Road (west end of conservation area and north side of road) and No 1 Upper Gordon Road (Photograph 5)

- 3.8 Here can be seen a number of very large, detached and semi-detached Victorian/Edwardian villas of varied design. Largely unaltered, although some have been adversely affected by modernisation/alterations. The buildings form a pleasant group in largely well landscaped front gardens and form a backdrop to the houses in Upper Gordon Road.

Upper Park Road (eastern end) (Photographs 6,7,8)

- 3.9 This area of Upper Park Road is characterised by a number of very large detached and semi-detached Victorian houses (pre1899) of varied design in substantial, well-treed gardens. They are largely unaltered and form a pleasant group in an arcadian setting. Some plots have been reduced to make way for new backland development, but others are large and have ‘potential’ for redevelopment. ‘Chartley’, on the south side of the road is a little later in date, being 1906, and is a very attractive ‘Arts and Crafts’ style house, a style of great importance within Surrey.

¹ Although it should be noted that later research shows the villas to be late Victorian.



1. **View of properties to north side of Upper Gordon Road. Jan. 04**



2. **10 Upper Gordon Road. One of few properties to retain old garden wall with rounded coping. Note discordant parking sign. Modern house to left. Jan. 04**



3. View of properties to south side of Upper Gordon Road. Jan. 04



4. A pair of villas to South Side of Upper Gordon Road. Jan. 04



5. 37, 39, 41 Upper Park Road (west). Jan. 04



6. View along Upper Park Road (east). (Conifer to right marks conservation area boundary). April 03



7. **'Penthryn', 59 Upper Park Road (east). Built 1893. Jan.04**



8. **Chartley, 38, 40 Upper Park Road (east). Built 1906. Jan.04**

Branksome Park Road (south side) and Church Hill (Photographs 9-14)

- 3.10 The properties known as Dolphin Hill, Farley Hill and The Yarrows, together with modern houses set within their original plot boundaries, are additions to the conservation area, 'linked' to the area designated in 1989 by a property known as Summer Shades, dated 1882, the former stables and coach house to a property called Thornhurst,² (Photograph 10). Dolphin Hill and Farley Hill, built in 1899, together with The Yarrows built 1896-1901, are large attractive properties built in 1899, set in large plots, although reduced in size by modern development. The Branksome Park Road area was developed by a Mr Lucas. Records³ demonstrate that he also built properties in Upper Gordon Road (south), and Upper Park Road. This would explain the distinct similarities in style and the homogeneous character and is a major justification for the changes to the conservation area boundary. The modern properties are Lower Orchard, Pine Lodge and Upton House on Branksome Park Road, and 19 and 21 Church Hill. Whilst not important in themselves, they are included within the conservation area by virtue of their position within the former curtilages of the Victorian buildings and their drives. Conservation area status will ensure that future development and works to trees at these properties will not detract from the streetscene or cause further adverse impact to the pattern of development, or the architectural and historic character of the area. No 23 Church Hill, The Yarrows, is now subdivided into flats. It is shown on the 1915 OS plan (Map 2). No 17 Church Hill, the former stables to the Yarrows and dated 1903, fronts on to the road set within a garden behind a double row of tall hedges of laurel and conifer.
- 3.11 Heatherbank, Heatherbank Cottage and 13, Church Hill Cottage, sit just west of 17 Church Hill and form an attractive, though dissimilar group of properties. (Photograph 14). Thought to date from the 1860's, Heatherbank is the oldest house in the immediate area and for this reason and its Victorian affinities with other properties in the conservation area, has been included in the area as part of this review, together with its neighbours. All three properties are locally listed and further details are given in Appendix B.

Trees and Landscaping

- 3.12 Trees, hedges and shrubs are important to the street scene of major parts of this conservation area, but especially the east end of Upper Park Road. (Photograph 6). Within Upper Gordon Road, Branksome Park Road and Church Hill they soften the urban landscape and contribute to the pleasant character. The often generous spacing between buildings also provides many attractive views through. Tree and hedge groups which make an important contribution to the streetscape are identified on Map 3.

² Thornhurst, now demolished and replaced by a property called Bridgehouse, was similar in style to Dolphin Hill, Farley Hill and The Yarrows. Its demolition is one demonstration of the changes which take place in an area over time, but which can be more carefully considered through conservation area designation. On 1915 OS extract, map 2, Thornhurst is property immediately south of Combe Bank.

³ Records held by Surrey Heath Museum includes Schedule of Deeds deposited at Frimley and Camberley Urban District Council, showing that 25 Upper Gordon Road was built by a Mr Lucas in 1897/98. It is believed that Mr Lucas and the building firm came up from Bournemouth and hence gave rise to the name Branksome Park Road.

- 3.13 There are several Tree Preservation Orders throughout the area. All other trees are protected by virtue of being within the conservation area.



9. **Branksome Park Road, looking west (Summer Shades to far right).** Jan. 04



10. **Thornhurst (demolished) to north side of Branksome Park Road.** (Circa 1900. Source: Surrey Heath Museum)



11. **Branksome Park Road looking east from Branksome Close (Dolphin Hill can just be seen through trees to centre right). Jan. 04**



12. **An earlier view of Dolphin Hill, when known as 'The Belvedere'. The conservatory has now gone, but otherwise the attractive red brick and white wood front elevations remain today. (Circa 1900. Source: Surrey Heath Museum.)**



13. The Yarrows, viewed from Church Hill. Jan.04



14. Church Hill showing Church Hill Cottage, Heatherbank Cottage and glimpse of Heatherbank. Jan.04

4. Factors which detract from the area's special character

Features

- 4.1 One often important feature of any conservation area is the treatment of road side garden boundaries, and this is true here. There are, unfortunately, few original garden walls remaining, but the design of walls, especially in Upper Gordon Road is important and requires careful consideration on the part of residents, if the area is to retain its character. Throughout the conservation area, wood fencing panels can also be obtrusive, and should be avoided, in favour of hedges, with more discreet fencing to act as a barrier, where possible and appropriate. Further study will be undertaken to try to establish the original types of boundary, and the Council will consider the appropriateness of adopting policies to seek to have the correct details reinstated through Development Control procedures.

Roads and Traffic

- 4.2 Highway safety measures and controls are obviously important but need to be carefully designed and positioned in conservation areas. One visual problem, especially in Upper Gordon Road, is the parked cars, which it is accepted will always be a problem in Victorian areas where there is little or no provision for garages; a problem exacerbated by the closeness to the town centre and the provision of controlled parking. The visual intrusion could be helped however by more discreet signage, as mentioned in paragraph 5.5.

5. Preservation and enhancement

Preservation of character

- 5.1 There are five aspects which are particularly important to the preservation of this conservation area. The first is the need to conserve the original pattern of development, together with clear plot boundaries. The second is the need to retain the pleasant residential nature of the environment. Thirdly, the protection and maintenance of the architectural details of the buildings is vital if the special character of the area is to be retained. Fourthly, there is a need to consider the boundary walls and hedges and ensure they are appropriate to the particular area, together with retaining front gardens, (as distinct from parking areas), and fifthly, to retain the arcadian feel of the east end of the conservation area.
- 5.2 The Council's conservation area policies should thus seek to preserve:
- The historic built form and plot boundaries;
 - The residential environment;
 - The surviving original architectural details, especially fenestration, doors and other woodwork, red pointing of the red brick houses, roof materials and chimneys;
 - Boundary walls, railings and hedges to gardens;
 - Preservation of trees and the arcadian setting of the properties and streetscene.
- 5.3 Further study should be undertaken on the above and proposals put forward, including, if appropriate, the use of Article 4 Directions, in consultation with residents. These make it necessary to apply for planning permission for minor changes to property which would otherwise be 'permitted development' and thus exempt from planning control. They can cover changes to features such as roofs, doors, windows, gates fences and walls, where such features make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area. Such Directions should be seen as a positive measure, maintaining the quality of the environment to the benefit of residents both within and outside the conservation area.

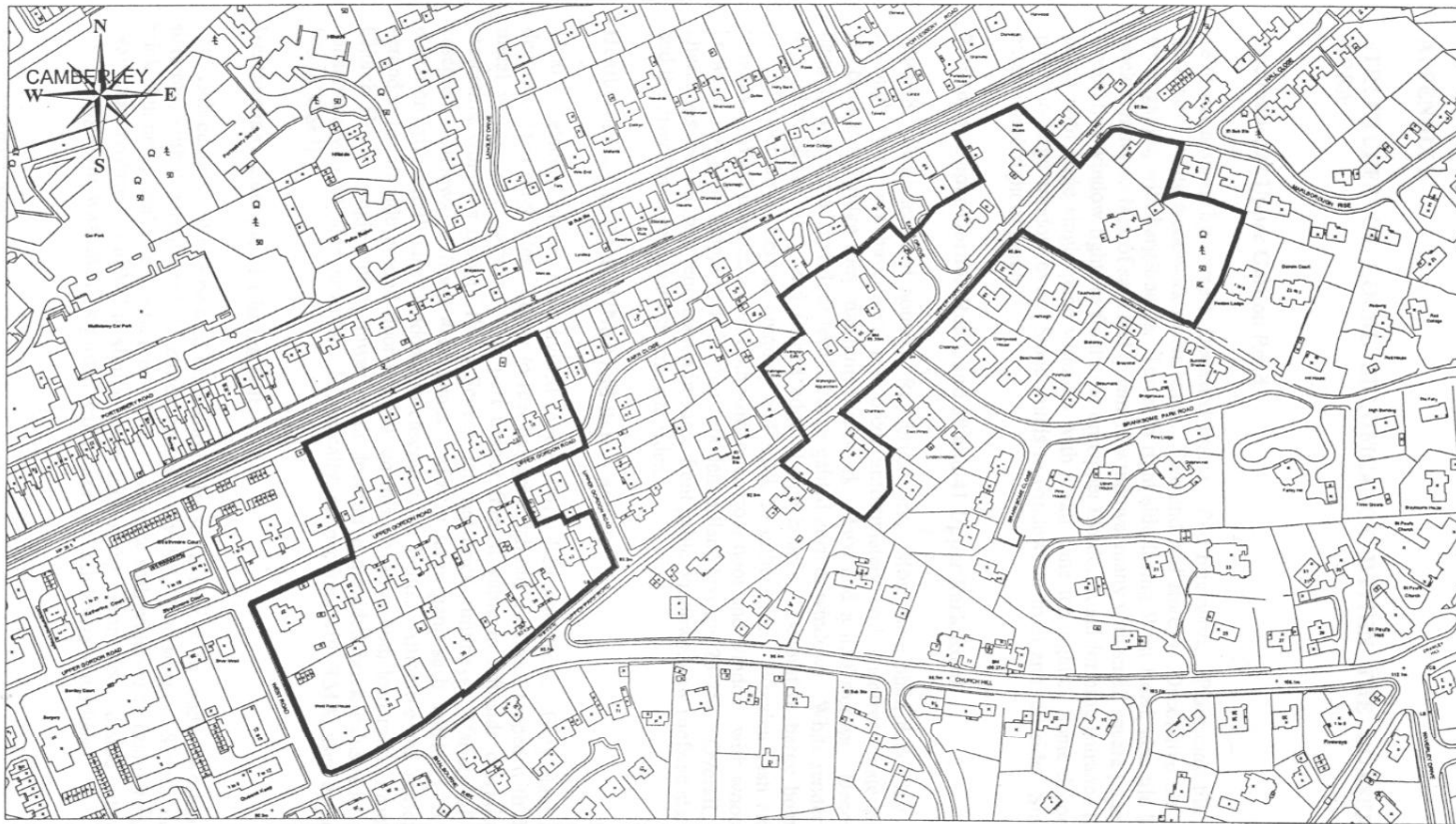
Enhancement opportunities

- 5.4 If and when resources become available, opportunities for enhancement works should be investigated. The main area where improvements can be made is in the treatment of highways and provision of street furniture. It is important to ensure that any maintenance of roads and paths is carried out sensitively.
- 5.5 Signage is required by the highway authority for safety and information purposes. However, in places the visual intrusion caused can be very unfortunate. This is particularly true in Upper Gordon Road where the controlled parking has resulted in the proliferation of signs, an example of which can be seen in Photograph 2.
- 5.6 Attention could also be given to street lighting to make it more sympathetic to the conservation area. This could be achieved perhaps through the use of a different design, or more simply by painting the columns black. The latter would of course require on-going maintenance, an important consideration.

- 5.7 Most enhancement opportunities are likely to concern highway infrastructure, and thus would need to be implemented in liaison with Surrey County Council as the Highway Authority.
- 5.8 As well as works in the public realm, there is potential for enhancement of the private realm which is also very important to the conservation of the area. This can be assisted through policies to retain or restore original features such as garden walls, fencing, gardens, etc.

APPENDIX A

20



Title	UPPER GORDON ROAD / UPPER PARK ROAD, CONSERVATION AREA.		
	DESIGNATED OCTOBER 1989.		
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APPENDIX B

STRUCTURES OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA

Lochnabo, 27 Upper Gordon Road

1898 (as advised by owner). Detached house. Red brickwork. Plain clay tile roof, with decorative white woodwork under eaves. Two and half storeys. Decorative tile hanging to some gables, with bargeboards. Turret to right side facing West Road, also tile hung. Red brick chimneys. Mix of sash and casement windows, many with small square pane top lights. Decorative window lights to front door on Upper Gordon Road forming entrance to enclosed porch with large single pane windows with small pane top lights. Some decorative lead panes to large window over. Stone lintels to windows to front and left side. Single storey extension to right of porch.

7-25 (odd) Upper Gordon Road, and 39 and 41 Upper Park Road

1897/98. Semi-detached houses. Red brickwork. Most have plain dark clay tile roofs, although two pairs have been re-roofed, unfortunately with incorrect material (19-25). Decorative red ridge tiles matching brickwork. Two and a half storeys. Decorative tile hanging to gable at first floor level. Large gabled dormer windows. White rendering to top of gables, above tiling and shaped edge barge boards. Decorative barge boards above ground floor bays. Central chimney and stack to either side. Wooden sash single pane windows. Wide porches across both pairs over front door and window, with wood partition between the pairs, supported on thin wooden pillars (except 23-25). Overall, the main alterations are different fenestration in some front gable windows, new roofs as stated above, and the insertion of some new dormers to sides.

Heatherbank, Church Hill (No 9 and flats A and B)

1860's. detached house, now divided (circa 1961). Red brickwork. Grey slate roof with decorative red ridge tiles. Tower to rear has grey fish tail tiled roof topped with decorative metal work. Two storeys. One part timber framed gable to left side elevation, above projecting windows to both floors. Several tall red brick chimneys. Variety of sash and casement windows to front, 4-12 panes. Mostly large pane sash windows to left side elevation with small pane windows to casement top lights. Attractive and intricate metal verandah to left side ground floor window on this elevation with lead roof. Front door to Church Hill in single storey 'tower' with decorative moulded brick balustrade. Modern conservatory to left side elevation. Historically, connections with RMA; used as hospital in World War II.

Heatherbank Cottage, 11 Church Hill

Late 19th century. White painted brickwork. House set side on to road. Two-hipped grey slate roof with decorative red ridge tiles, centrally divided. Two storeys. Several decorative brick chimneys, road side one painted white. Two pane sash windows. Front door to side with flat roof over. Long white washed brick garden wall to front. Wash house in gardens.

Church Hill Cottage and Garden Wall, 13 Church Hill

Late 19th century. Probably former stables to 'Heatherbank'. Rendered brickwork, now pink/light terracotta colour. House set side on to road. Grey slate roof with plain red ridge. Cat slide roof to one side of rear. Two storey. Decorative white painted chimneys. 16 pane sash windows to road side when listed in 1989, now replaced with 4 panes. 6 pane casement windows to front with square bay with grey slate roof over. Hay loft style door/window to first floor front, with two other very small windows. Small wood open porch with grey slate roof and decorative red ridge tiles. Wood entrance door. Important high brick wall to Church Hill with row of decorative 'tile' inserts and decorative brickwork beneath coping. Wall now rendered and painted similar to house, colour, but importantly keeping detail exposed. Piers to either side of entrance and each end.

APPENDIX C

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

English Heritage. *Conservation Area Practice*. October 1995

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