



**Rockshaw Road
Conservation Area
Appraisal**

Draft March 2014

Rockshaw Road Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Proposals

March 2014

Introduction:

What is a Conservation Area?

Purpose of Appraisal

- 1) Main Character & Basic structure, Topography, Geology
- 2) History and evolution
- 3) Spatial Structure & Pattern: Identity Areas, Views in & Out,
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Introduction

What is a Conservation Area?

Conservation areas were first designated as a result of the Civic Amenities Act 1967. They are defined in the legislation as "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance" (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990: Section 69(1)(a)). The Borough contains some 21 Conservation Areas at present.

Designation gives the local planning authority greater control over extensions and demolition, the display of advertisements and works to trees. Special consideration has to be given to proposals for development or redevelopment within them, to ensure that the character or appearance of the conservation area is preserved or enhanced. In most cases, however, conservation areas are living and working communities with both residential and commercial uses. The purpose of designation is not to stifle or prevent change and evolution, but to control it in such a way as to maintain and enhance character and local distinctiveness.

Purpose of Appraisal

Local authorities are advised by English Heritage to carry out appraisals that should identify the key features of the area and how they combine to give a place its particular character. By establishing what makes a place special and distinct, the local planning authority can more effectively ensure that change through development, or through other changes resulting from its own actions or those of other statutory authorities, do not undermine this character and can in fact enhance it.

As well as identifying the positive features of a place, an appraisal can also highlight areas where there is scope for improvement. This could be in terms of new development or redevelopment, or more small-scale improvements to, for example, the appearance of street furniture or signage. The results of appraisals can also be used to help prioritise available resources for environmental enhancement. This appraisal also sets out the Enhancement Scheme for the area, which makes reference to potential areas for enhancement, as well as providing guidance for use in the development control process.

The Planning (Listed Buildings And Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets in sections 71 a duty to formulate policies for preservation and enhancement. The 2005 Borough Local Plan Policy Pc 14 reinforces this objective. English Heritage guidance states that policies are needed that clearly identify what it is about the character or appearance of an area it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and the means to achieve this. A clear assessment and definition of an area's special interest is needed.

The structure of this Conservation Area Appraisal is based on the English Heritage documents "Conservation Area Practice" and "Conservation Area Character Appraisals" and the RTPi's 'The Character of Conservation Areas' document. It follows the urban morphology approach of cascade from large to small elements.

Main Character and Basic structure Topography and Geology

Main Character & Basic structure

Rockshaw Road is located on the North Downs chalk plain, to the east of Merstham village. The special interest of a conservation area is derived from the interrelationship between the particular townscape and landscape features and it is this character, which the local planning authority will seek to preserve or enhance through statutory and discretionary controls. The special interest of the Rockshaw Road conservation area is derived from the interrelationship of the group of arts and crafts houses, mostly by the architect Paxton Watson. The predominant character of the buildings is arts and crafts and the objective would be to ensure the cohesiveness of the buildings is not eroded by insensitive alteration or development.

Topography

Rockshaw Road is situated on a ridge about 120 metres above sea level, on the North Down ridge.

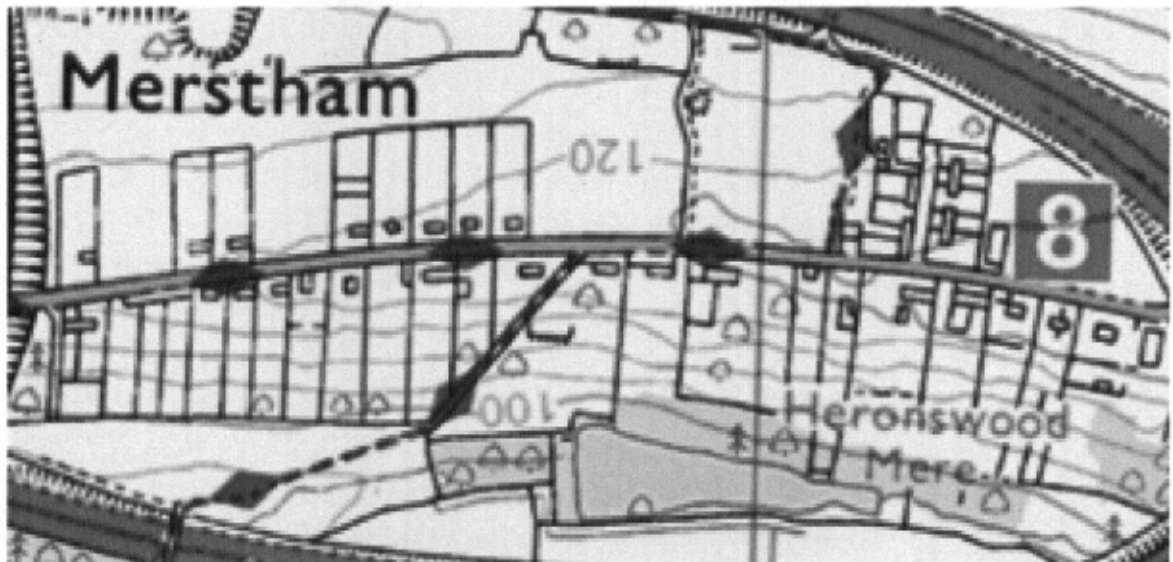
Geology

Rockshaw Road is located on the Upper Greensand ridge with the rising land of the North Downs to the north and below to the south the Weald.



Geological Map

Rockshaw Road is on the Upper Greensand ridge of the North Downs with the rising land to the north and the low Gault Clay to the south.



Contours

The contours show the Upper Greensand ridge and the steep drop to the south

Land Use & Activity

The Conservation Area is a residential road.

2) History and evolution

The prevailing character of Rockshaw Road is as an Edwardian group of arts and crafts houses. There are two earlier cottages, Noddyshall and Noddyshall Cottage, of 17th century date, set back from the road. Rockshaw Road was laid out in 1903 but seems to have been conceived as an idea as early as 1883 and was a track by the 1890's. Paxton Watson built most of the houses in the Conservation Area part of the road, from 1903 to 1913. He lived in a house further along the road, that was demolished for the construction of the motorway.

KEY DATES

17th century Noddyshall Cottages built

1903 Rockshaw Road laid out as a road for building.

1903 to 1913 Arts and Crafts houses built, mostly designed by Paxton Watson

Rockshaw Road History in Maps



Rocque 1768

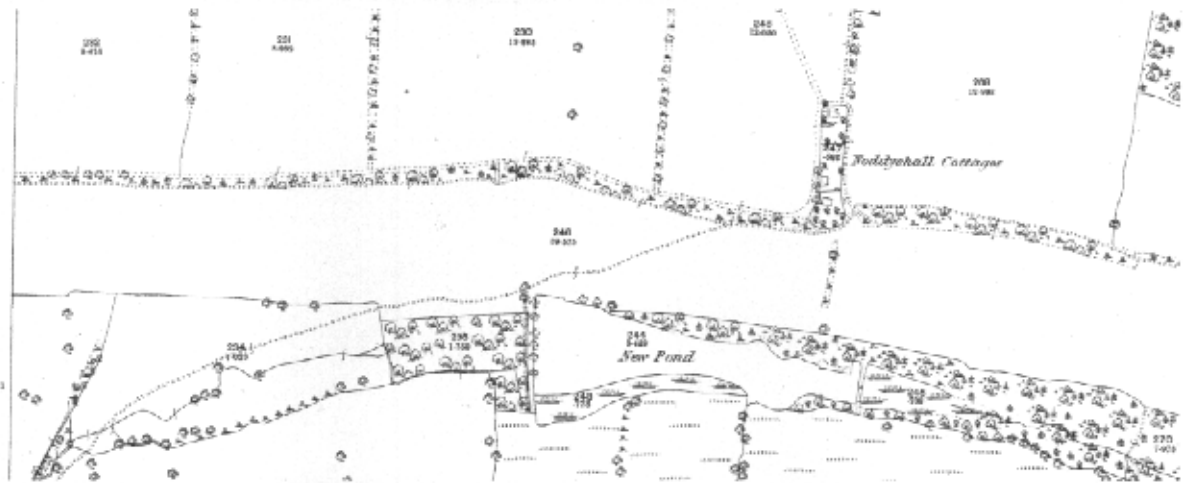


Ordnance Survey Manuscript 1808- 1810

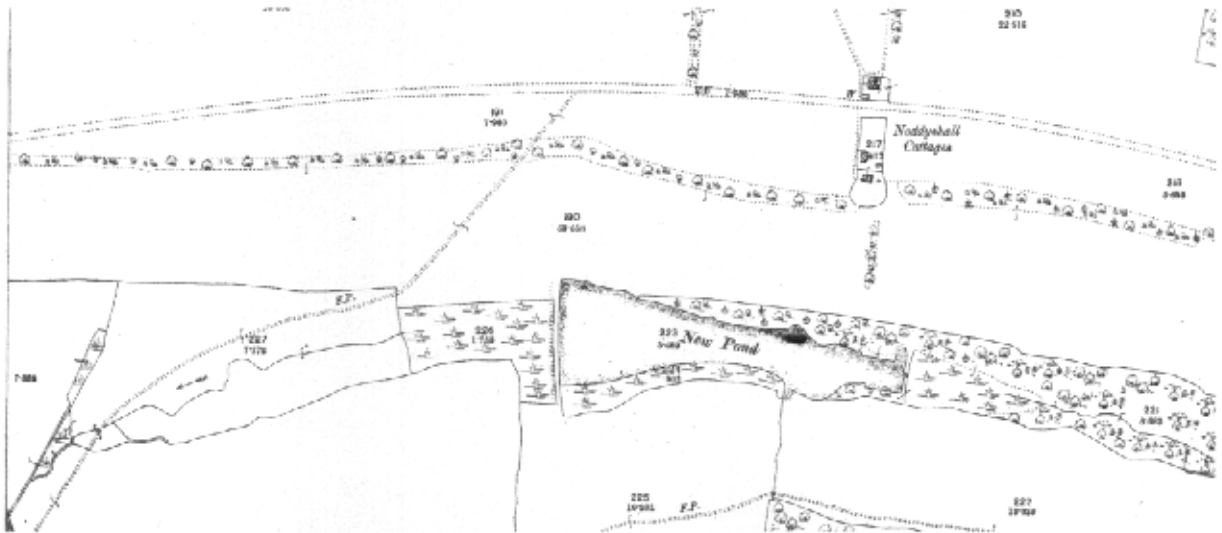


Greenwood 1823

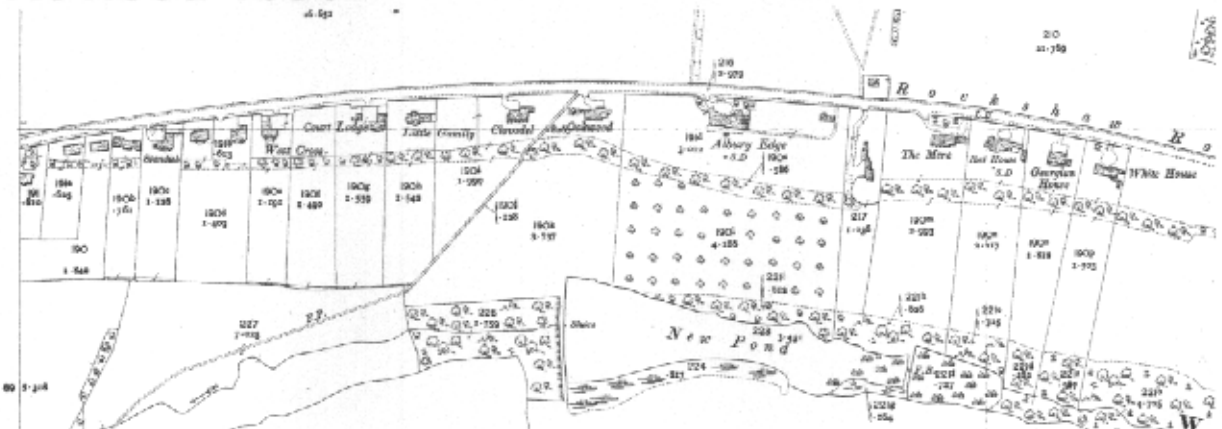
ROCKSHAW ROAD Old Series OS Maps



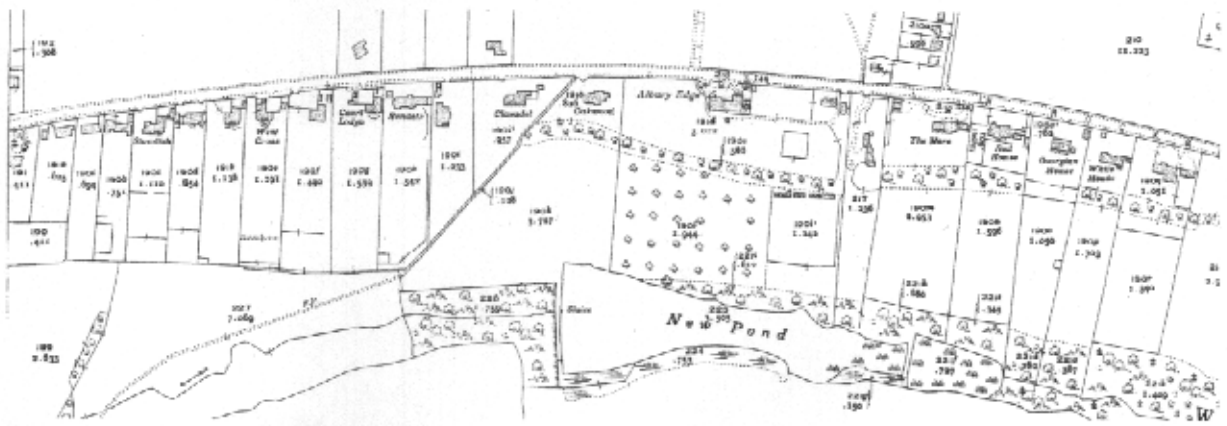
Surveyed 1869



Revised 1895



Revised 1910



Revised 1934



1869



Revised 1895



1913



Revised 1932

3) Spatial Structure & Pattern: Identity Areas, Rhythm: plot size, unit size

An identity area is an area which has an identifiable character. Conservation Areas can have composite characters as well as cohesive character. In both cases it is usually possible to split such areas into smaller identity or character areas. In the case of Rockshaw Road there is one cohesive character area.

Rockshaw Road is a cohesive group of arts and crafts houses, mostly by the architect Paxton Watson.

Prominent buildings

A number of key focal points and landmarks can be identified. The principal landmarks are :

Albury Edge and the Red House, the most substantial of the Paxton Watson houses.

Little Shaw of 1910 by Baillie Scott

Noddyshall and Noddyshall Cottage 17th century with additions of 1907 by Baillie Scott

Views in & Out

In terms of the Conservation Areas the principal views are along the Road. For the properties there are views out to the North Downs and the Weald.

Rhythm: plot size, unit size

The plots are spacious, with space between houses. The plot size, unit size and building line gradually increase to the east. There are relatively consistent sizes, in floor ceiling height, plot and mass, which again increase to the east.

Townscape analysis

The following is a perambulation around the Conservation Area giving a brief description of the buildings and layout, by identity area.

Scale, height, rhythm, form, layout & materials summary ;

The houses have spacious plots, high pitch tiled generally gabled roofs, occasionally half hipped or hipped and predominantly leaded light casements, mostly of multistock brick and tile hanging, occasionally with red brick or Merstham stone. The boundaries are mixed with low metre high walls, close boarded or palisade fences and evergreen hedges to frontages, closed metre fences where rear gardens to road frontages. Most tree species are native, with beech and hornbeam trees typical of area. Most of the houses were designed by Paxton Watson and have Venetian feature windows and catslide roofs.



Proceeding from the west the first two houses Middle Fell and Bartonbury 1911 by Paxton Watson are set back down the slope, with deer park front fences



A fairly cohesive group of arts and crafts houses follows ; Mill House 1909, Kingsdown 1910, Little Shaw 1910 (architect Baillie Scot ,the only one not by Paxton Watson) , Standish 1911, Pucklechurch 1911, Whitmore 1911, West Cross 1910, Lowood 1910 and Court Lodge. a



Beyond this the houses become more set back with spacious grounds. Rondels of 1909 by Paxton Watson is impressive with some original well made wrought iron gates.



Relf House is the Architect Malcolm Matts of 1923 followed by Clavadel of 1906 architect unknown.



Oakwood of 1903 is an impressive house by architect Paxton Watson, though in need of some care and attention.. Herons Wood of 1949 by Rockshaw resident and architect Sydney William Neighbour Is a very sympathetic addition .



Paton Watson's Albury Edge East & West of 1903 is one of the most substantial houses in the road. Orchard End being a lodge building of 1911.



Setback from the road at right angles, Noddyshall and Noddyshall Cottage are of 17th century date with addition by Bailie Scott 1907



The Mere 1905, is a typical pyramidal Paxton Watson house.



The Red House 1905 is a substantial Paxton Watson in his earlier style whilst the Georgian house of 1910 is part of the general movement of arts and crafts towards neo Georgian at that period.



The Garth & Garthside of 1911 demonstrates Paxton Watson's themes of catlides and venetian windows whilst Tanglewood of 1913 shows the Lutyen's influence of large chimneys.

Rockshaw Road Materials, Architectural Conventions & detail

Architectural Conventions

The Arts and Crafts buildings by Paxton Watson and others, are substantial properties, with handmade clay tiles, 49 degree roof pitches, large chimneystacks and individual compositions of form and massing. These buildings often have shared architectural forms, features and detailing. The built form is characterised by mostly leaded light casement windows. Despite being derived from vernacular cottage architecture, the ceiling heights are reasonably high. They are usually in substantial grounds. Gabled forms and catslide are common and elevations are often asymmetrical compositions.

Fenestration

Fenestration is predominantly leaded light casements, with Paxton Watson houses characterised by Venetian feature windows.

Materials & Detail

The properties are typified by the use of multistock brick, painted roughcast and tile hanging, with occasional use of red brick and Merstham stone. White painted joinery is typical of the area.

Materials



Multi stock brick and handmade clay plain tiles
West Cross 1910 architect Paxton Watson



Painted Roughcast Lowood 1910
architect Paxton Watson



Tile Hanging with no Winchester cut
Oakwood 1903 architect Paxton Watson



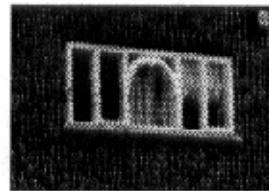
Merstham Stone
Noddyshall Cottage 17th century with addition by Bailie Scott 1907



Red Brick with close board fencing
The Red House 1905 architect Paxton Watson

Rockshaw Road Forms

Windows



Venetian Windows by architect Paxton Watson

These windows are a typical feature of Paxton Watson designs, his signature feature, The arched top oriel with side casements being his most typical design followed by the oriels and other variations

Building Forms



Typical gabled and catslide form,
Lowood 1910 architect Paxton Watson



Pyramidal Form, Solid dominant Solid to Void ratio, no bargeboards and no
Winchester cut Pucklechurch 1911 architect Paxton Watson



Gabled 49 degree roof pitch with kick to eaves
Oakwood 1903 architect Paxton Watson



Tall Chimneys, this design has chimneys more prominent than most in the road but chimney are significant to composition of elevations in road
Tanglewood 1913 architect Paxton Watson



Multi stock brick and less typical Half Hip Roof with Venetian Oriel
West Cross 1910 architect Paxton Watson

6) Greenery: Trees, Shrubs

The area is characterised by a number of native tree species of the downs. The native trees are Yew, Holly, Beech, and Hornbeam,

Boundary Treatment/ Enclosure: Walls & Hedges

The frontages are typified by low front boundaries, sometimes open, or close boarded, or brick wall, some palisade or evergreen hedge such as privet or hawthorn. Where rear gardens run alongside Rockshaw Road the boundary is usually a close boarded fence of 2 metres height.

7) Development Management & Statutory designations: Listed Buildings & Article 4 Directions

Controls operating in the Conservation Area

Designation of the Conservation Area

The original Conservation Area was designated by Borough Council in December 1990.

What is the Effect of Designation?

The principal differences from the normal form of planning control include:

- a) Control over demolition. Conservation Area Consent is required for demolition
- b) Greater control over works which would require planning permission. 'Permitted development' rights for dwellinghouses are also more controlled.
- c) Wider protection of trees. Six weeks notification to the Council will be necessary before the intended lopping, uprooting or felling of trees. (Trees less than 7.5 centimetres in diameter, at a height of 1.5 metres above the ground are exempt). (Works to trees the subject of a Tree Preservation Order will continue to need formal consent.)

When considering proposals requiring Planning Permission or Conservation Area Consent regard will be had to whether they 'preserve' or 'enhance' the special character of the area. It should be remembered, though, that designation is not intended to stop change but to better manage new development so that it does not harm the area and even brings improvements. There is no Article 4(2) Direction for Rockshaw Road at present.

Listing

There are a number of statutory and locally listed buildings in the area, which are set out in the appendices. Where planning permission is required for a locally listed building Policy Pc10 of the Local Plan and PPS5 would be a material consideration. There are also some local listed historic garden designations.

Development Management & Principles of Control

The area is largely one where the individual buildings mostly contribute to the character of the area and are desirable to retain. The general presumption therefore is in favour of retention, the only exception being some of the post war redevelopment.

The overall objective in terms of elevational treatment will be the encouragement of the reinstatement of original materials and detailing. This includes original window detail, plain clay tiles and well detailed boundary treatments and discouraging their replacement with inappropriate details such as aluminium and upvc windows of various forms, concrete tiles and alien boundary materials such as larchlap fencing.

Schedules and maps of the listed buildings, the Article 4 Direction and the local Historic Garden designations the control of permitted development are set out in the appendices.

8) Enhancement & Improvements

No extra funding is proposed for the enhancement of the Conservation Area but a number of the objectives can be achieved in part by the Development Management process.

The potential for enhancement include ;

1) Townscape elevational treatment

The need to encourage conservation or reinstatement of traditional detailing is important. The loss of traditional painted timber windows in some prominent locations is regrettable. There is no retrospective control so any improvements must be by persuasion or negotiation.

2) Setting

The opportunity for protection of the Road from intrusion from the ambient noise of transport networks will be encourage where it arises.

Resource Implications

Enhancement of the Conservation Area can be achieved in part by the Development Management process and encouragement to have respect for traditional forms, materials and detailing.

Review of boundaries

The boundary of the area was subject of review at the time of production of the appraisal and a revised boundary has been designated subject to confirmation after public consultation.

Other Statutory Authorities

Statutory authorities are not generally subject to control by the local planning authority, although the provision and maintenance of their services can have an impact on the conservation area. A copy of this Appraisal will be forwarded to the relevant service providers to highlight the need for sensitive treatment within the conservation area.

Responsibilities of Owners and Occupiers

This Appraisal has identified the buildings, open spaces and individual features that define the character of the conservation area. The siting and design of new development should be such that the appearance and character of the conservation area is preserved or enhanced, and this Appraisal will be used to assess whether development proposals achieve this aim.

It is hoped that residents and other occupiers will, through this Appraisal, be made aware of the contribution that they can make to the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area. This can be achieved through the retention of features such as chimneys and chimney pots, boundary walls and traditional windows, the use of appropriate materials in new build and repairs, and the general maintenance of properties and land. Alien materials such upvc windows and concrete tiles should not be used.

Statement of Consultation

The draft version of this Appraisal will be issued for public consultation. Letters will be sent to all residential and business premises in the conservation area. These will outline the purpose of conservation area designation and invite comments on the draft appraisal.

Copies of the Appraisal will be sent to English Heritage, Surrey County Council and Local Societies. Their comments are invited. A press release will be issued and the Appraisal was publicised in the local press. A public meeting will be held to consider the study. The responses made to the draft Appraisal will be considered and reported to the Council's Planning Committee