

Barnes Common 32

Designation

Conservation area designated:
07.09.1982

Conservation area extended:
14.06.1988
10.05.2002
24.04.2018

Location

OS Sheets: 2175, 2275, 2276

Barnes Common Conservation Area is situated in the south-east of Barnes adjoining Putney lower Common to the east and bounded to the south by the Upper Richmond Road. It surrounds Mill Hill (14) conservation area.

History and Development

The area has been used as common land for hundreds of years. A gate was introduced in the 16th century to keep livestock from Putney out after a dispute between Putney and Barnes commoners. The sparse development within the conservation area is mostly 18th and 19th centuries, the latter mainly in connection with the advent of the railway, Barnes Station being built in 1848. Rocks Lane was built in 1827 contemporary with the construction of Hammersmith Bridge, connecting Castelnau with Upper Richmond Road. The area between Church Road and the Common was formerly land which contained 4 large country houses and gardens, the majority of which belonged to Elm Grove House. This house contained extensive gardens, Beverley Brook, a cottage and two coach houses and extended from Church Road to Barnes Common. Elm Grove House was the first to be demolished, however its name was given to Elm Grove Road and sold off as a housing development in 1897. Nearby houses which also fronted Church Road were Hillersdon House which was demolished at the beginning of the 20th century and became Hillersdon Avenue and Glebe Road; and Priory House which was demolished and became Bracken Gardens just after the First World War. The roads which make up the estate of Edwardian terraces were designed by different architects, however many of the roads are broadly similar in design merit.

Character

The Common forms a series of spaces separated by road. Part is a site of special scientific interest and has shown evidence of ancient settlements. It contains a number of buildings of townscape merit, especially the early Victorian Barnes Station. Unlike other spaces that are Conservation Areas, such as Kew Green, the buildings facing onto it do not form a single space but form attractive areas of identity such as the Victorian gothic style of Scarth Road and the Edwardian arcadia of St. Mary's Grove.

The conservation area was extended to the north west to include a distinctive area of large red and yellow stock Victorian and Edwardian houses. Many of the buildings display decorative moulded detail and have elaborate entrance canopies. Most of the properties are of architectural merit, although some have been altered to a minor extent. The conservation area was further extended to include the southern end of Bellevue Road and Rectory Road. This is part of a coherent and distinctive group of ornate Edwardian buildings on tree-lined avenues, which relate strongly to the Common. An additional extension was added to include Woodlands Road. This is a group of impressive three storey semi-detached villas on a wide tree lined avenue with mature front gardens and low boundary walls. Also included is the Vine Road Recreation Ground, a well used, but isolated area of playing fields that relate strongly to the Common, once being part of the wasteland. Another Extension included a group of properties on Queen's Ride, Upper Richmond Road and Gipsy Lane. There is a group of modern houses on Queen's Ride that front the Common and lie behind a much older tall wall of stock brick with interesting arches, piers and capstones, including an old cattle trough. This may well be part of the wall of the old workhouse or the Manor House that once stood nearby. A number of surviving large detached Victorian houses on Upper Richmond Road also occupy this historic site. Neighbouring Gipsy Lane is a secluded corner of the Common with large Victorian detached villas fronting their own gravel road.

A further extension included the Beverly Brook and estate to the north of the brook. The brook flows between the rear gardens of Edwardian terraces and travels under a number of roads within the estate via decorative brick bridges which adds a positive influence to the character of the conservation area. The Edwardian dwellings of Rectory, Bellevue, Cardigan, Elm Grove and Meredyth Roads are largely similar in design and style and carry the ornate detailing from the dwellings fronting the common. However they are much simpler in design, with forward projecting bay windows and a smaller feature gable roof. Glebe Road is interesting as part of the road maintains the Edwardian styling found within the greater estate; however sections of the road have dwellings with an Arts and Crafts influence, including the introduction of pebbledash and decorative mock Tudor boarding. This change in detail and architectural style adds an interesting contrast in building style and techniques, albeit constructed at a similar time. Many of the Glebe Road dwellings are also identified as Buildings of Townscape Merit. The dwellings along Bracken Gardens are predominantly Arts and Crafts in style and constructed of London stock brick; however they feature unique detailing with small oriel windows and larger bay windows, some of which retain original stained glass and boundary treatments.

Barnes Common is recognised not only as Metropolitan Open land but also as a Local Nature reserve and as being of archaeological importance. Its 120 acres dominate the south of Barnes providing a rural setting to the village and a wealth of habitats with acid grassland, scrub, woodland, wetland and 'wasteland' vegetation. It is important in forming part of the green swathe of land that runs south from Barnes Elms Reservoirs to Richmond Park and beyond. Despite being dissected by roads and the railway, the Common has retained its overall character as an ancient managed open space. It has been able to accommodate a limited number of other uses such as sports grounds and Barnes Cemetery, which have remained visually subordinate to the Common because they have been contained in small pockets of land. Barnes Cemetery has been consumed by natural vegetation and now forms its own area of nature interest. It has a number of late C19th memorials, which together with the heavy undergrowth and mature trees create an evocative atmosphere of decay and seclusion.

Houses in the area are mostly situated along the western fringe with direct access to Barnes Common. Vine Road has the earliest of this development with substantial two storey Victorian villas set in mature grounds behind walls and hedges which provide a strong boundary line behind the grass verge to the road. These are occasionally interspersed with more modest later semi-detached brick Edwardian houses. Scarth Road contains an impressive row of three storey late Victorian houses. The group is distinctive in its array of roof forms, which includes half-hipped gables and plain eaves with dormers. The variety of ornament, which also extends to dressings and bay treatments, and the survival of many original chimneys, contribute to the character of the group. As with Vine Road the housing is separated from the road and Common by a deep grass verge. Behind this area are Beverley Road and Beverley Gardens, which form a separate group of large Victorian and Edwardian houses with slate roofs, decorative features and grand entrance porches. They are in yellow stock bricks with slate roofs. Cedars Road is dominated by terraced Victorian housing in brick with slate roofs and chimneys on the front roof slopes. There are a variety of decorative porch details and window dressings. The houses have small but well defined front gardens. The effect of this together with the enclosing nature of trees on both Barnes Green and the Common contribute to a secluded and peaceful character. Part of Ranelagh Avenue, with its distinctive group of three storey Edwardian town houses with rendered dressings, faces onto the Common. The houses are set within well-defined front gardens bounded by low stone and rendered walls and mature hedges. The effect is one of elegant formality in juxtaposition to the informal nature of the Common.

Problems and Pressures

- Development pressure which may harm the balance of the landscape-dominated setting, and the obstruction or spoiling of views, skylines and landmarks
- Loss of traditional architectural features and materials due to unsympathetic alterations
- Poor and disproportionate roof additions
- Loss of front garden space due to lightwells
- Use of poor quality products in building works such as UPVC, roofing felt and GRP products
- Loss of front boundary treatments and front gardens for car parking
- Lack of coordination and poor quality of street furniture and flooring
- Domination of traffic and poor pedestrian safety leading to clutter of signage and street furniture

Opportunity for Enhancement

- Improvement and protection of landscape setting
- Preservation, enhancement and reinstatement of architectural quality and unity
- Retain, reinstate and enhance front boundary treatments and discourage increase in the amount of hard surfacing in front gardens
- Increase planting to front gardens, seek to locate lightwells to the side and rear of properties rather than the front;
- Seek to encourage good quality and proportionate design and better quality materials that are sympathetic to the period and style of the dwelling
- Coordination of colour and design and improvement in quality of street furniture and flooring
- Improvement of highways conditions and pedestrian convenience, and rationalisation of existing signage and street furniture

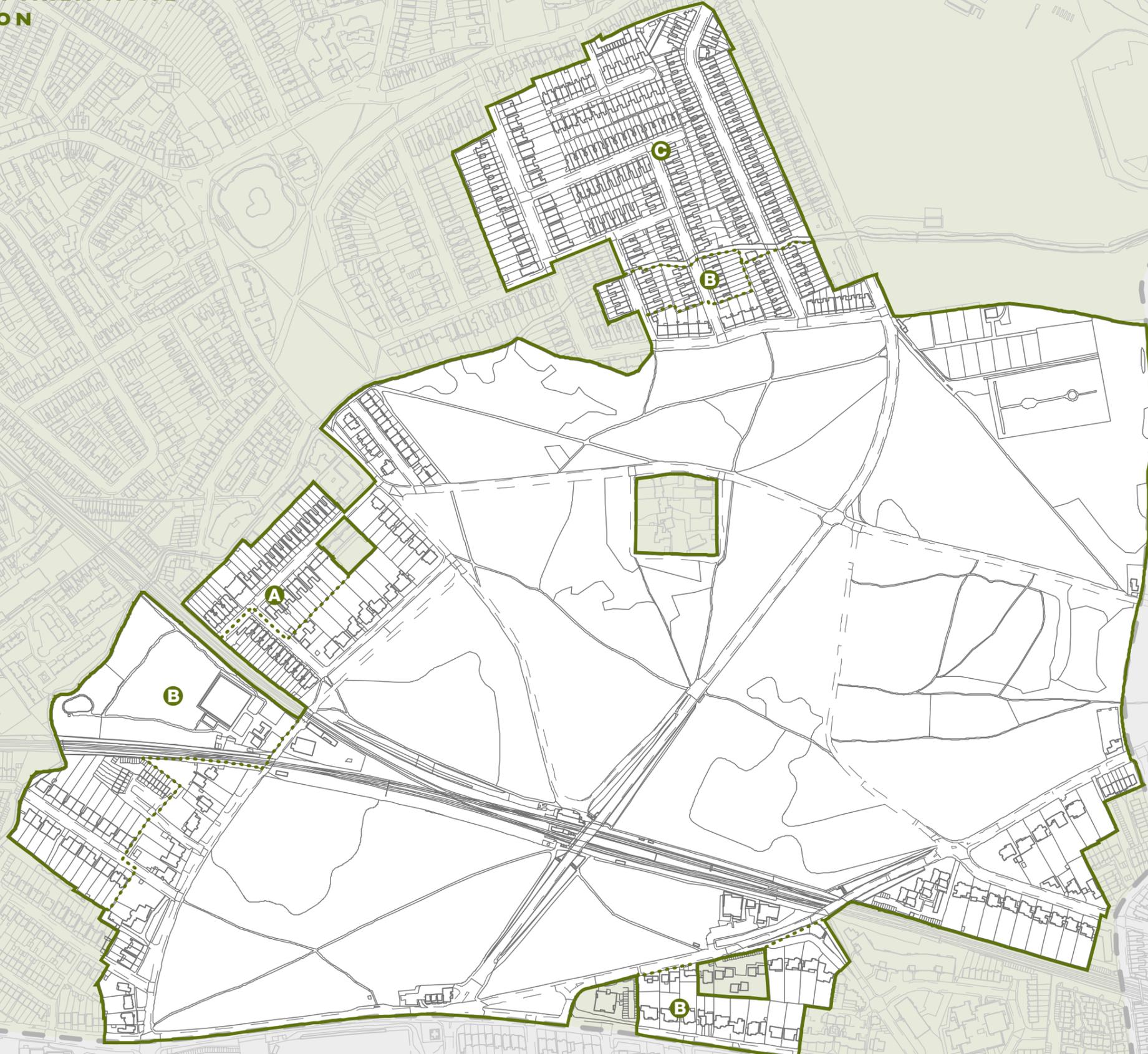
**CONSERVATION AREA No.32
BARNES COMMON**

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B 10.05.2002

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Scale: N.T.S.



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