

Sutton Road Area

13th December 2004

Location

The conservation area is situated to the south east of the town centre. It adjoins the south east boundary of the Abbey Foregate special character area (part of the Shrewsbury Town Centre Conservation Area) and includes part of three arterial roads, London Road, Wenlock Road and Sutton Road. Its special interest is derived from

1. Topography - the area occupies a flat ridge above the Rea Brook valley,
2. The quality and character of its buildings - these being an eclectic and often picturesque group of early to late 19th century dwellings many substantial in size.
3. The arcadian character derived from a large number of mature specimen trees particularly to the west facing bank of the mill race.
4. The contribution made by boundary walls and hedges.
5. The high survival of architectural features/details of interest.

Origins and Development

Much of the area was developed as a prosperous residential suburb on the outskirts of the town centre in the early/ mid 19th century. The Area is centred on the parish church of St Giles (listed Grade II*) built 1860-3 by local architect Samuel Pountney Smith. The building incorporates the substantial remains of the former church of a leper hospital dating from the 12th century and is by far the oldest building in the conservation area. The church is situated at the forked road junction of Sutton Road with Wenlock Road. The churchyard also has a pedestrian access to London Road and provides a focal point in the area.

Most of the area was laid out in the mid 19th century. The west boundary of Wenlock Road and Sutton Road is characterised by substantial villas and gentlemen's residences with large rear gardens extending down the steep slope to a boundary with the Mill Race in the valley below. There has been some redevelopment in the 1920's and 1930's to include residential developments at Woodlands Park, The White Horse public house and St Giles Road. London Road is more eclectic in character with some larger properties - The Cedars and 18 London Road interspersed with more modest mid/late terraced properties such as Beckbury Terrace.

Although there are some modern properties that fail to preserve the historic character of the area, the overall context is well defined and of a high standard.

Form and Layout

The area is linear in character and is centred on three converging roads. These extend to the south and south east, each is more or less straight and fronted by residential properties predominantly of the 19th century. The western periphery is defined by the large mature landscaped gardens of properties fronting Woodlands Park, Wenlock Road and Sutton Road. Many of these properties are substantial in size and date from the mid 19th century onwards and the rear gardens are prominent when viewed from Haycocks Way and Hazeldine Way.

The boundaries with Wenlock Road and Sutton Road are characterised by walls of stone or brick or mature hedges which limit views to the properties from the street. The middle/southern section is informed by a more eclectic mix of houses within the

wedge shaped tract of land. Many of these are picturesque in character and set within mature landscaped gardens. St Giles Road is small suburban development of circa 1920 laid out in a tight H shaped grid between Wenlock Road and London Road. London Road (the former Watling Street improved by Thomas Telford in the early 19th century) is more urban in character derived by the higher density and fewer trees.

Archaeological Significance

The potential for archaeological significance is limited to the vicinity of the former mill race to the western boundary and to St Giles Churchyard where there is a 10th century mediaeval cross, a scheduled ancient monument.

Architectural and Historic Qualities of the Area

As outlined above the principal character of the area is defined by the quality of its buildings dating from the mid 18th century onwards. Large villas of brick and stone occupy extensive mature garden plots on high ground to take advantage of the prospect over the Rea Brook valley. Of particular interest is No 20 Wenlock Road, Brooklands. This Grade II listed Italianate house of c1850 is ashlar faced under a welsh slate roof. Of particular interest is the central belvedere which can be seen from locations far beyond the site boundaries.

The prevailing materials are brick and slate although there are a number of properties where render has been used as a wall surface, in particular The Hollies, Nos 9 and 11 Sutton Road and The Peacock and White Horse public houses.

Some houses include picturesque detailing such as No 2 Sutton Road, a large late 19th century brick residence with ornamental pierced fascia boards, Nos 11a and No15 Sutton Road, mellow red brick houses presenting double gabled roofs to the road, overhanging eaves with shaped expressed purlins, first floor bay windows and ornamental ironwork detailing, and No 30 Sutton Road, a white painted roughcast rendered house with a wide overhanging eaves and leaded light windows, The Peacock public house on Wenlock Road with its feature gothic arched gable window, and Nos36 and 38 London Road, a pair of substantial brick semi detached properties with gothic arched detailing to some windows.

Key unlisted buildings

Only St Giles Church and Brooklands on Wenlock Road are listed, although there are a number of impressive largely unaltered properties throughout the area that positively contribute to its special character. On Sutton Road These include No 2, a fine gentlemen's residence situated adjacent to the road behind a tall brick wall, 8, 10 and 14, Oadby Lodge, houses of varying size and status all of brick and most set behind mature brick walls screening them from Sutton Road. No 34 Wenlock Road forms an interesting group with No 1 Sutton Road being situated at the narrow wedge shaped northern boundary of Sutton Road.

At its junction with Wenlock Road, Sutton Road is characterised by the tall brick boundary walls to the road frontage on both sides. No3 Sutton Road, a rendered late 19th century house set behind a sandstone rubble wall, contrasts in character with the other properties on the eastern side of the road, all of which retain original windows and doors and appear to date from the late 19th century. These include 7, 11, 11a, 15, and 17 Sutton Road. No 24 Sutton Road is another large, late 19th century residence now converted to flats where the context has been diminished by a residential development in the former garden area leaving the house on a tight site with little in the way of soft landscaping. No 30 Sutton Road contributes to the group, and although smaller in scale, this detached, two storey cottage further contributes to the picturesque character of the area.

On Wenlock Road, the character is more informal, the road is wider and boundary features have less visual significance. The Peacock public house is a mid 19th century building set back from the road behind a tarmac forecourt. This two storey property has rendered elevations, sash windows and a gothic window that contributes to the picturesque character of the building. Also of interest are Nos 37, 38, 40, 41 and 11-27 (odds) which are early 20th century and suburban in character.

On London Road, there are larger houses, the Vines prominently situated opposite the White Horse a substantial brick house loosely italianate in style and now in use as offices, The Cedars set back from the road in a mature landscaped garden, a brick house with stone dressings. More modest is No 18 London Road, an eclectic Edwardian house, asymmetrical in composition of red brick with a slate roof and some tile hanging and the gothic semi-detached property Nos 36 and 38 with steeply pitched slate roofs and matching "gothic" trap house/garage. Also of interest is Beckbury Terrace, two-storey mid 19th century cottages with sash windows under a slate roof, set back from the road behind cottage gardens. Opposite is a slightly grander two storey brick terrace Nos 24-34 (evens) and to the north is Nos 27-33 a terrace of four brick properties with a higher status afforded by the taller floor to ceiling heights and rusticated render to the ground floor.

Significant Spaces

The character of the area is informed by two key spaces, the garden plots forming the escarpment overlooking the Rea Valley and The St Giles Churchyard.

The gardens to properties on Wenlock Road up to No 24 Sutton Road are large in size, fall steeply to the boundary with the Mill Race and are prominent when viewed from Haycocks Way and Hazeldine Way. The topography of the gardens is such that the mature landscaping with trees and shrubs extending down to the valley contribute significantly to the character of the area and the setting of the houses which are generally set back on the ridge. Where development has taken place further down the bank on land to the South, this has diminished the context of the area and the naturalised character of the valley sides.

The Churchyard to St Giles Church also contributes to the character and appearance of the area due to its central location and visual significance of its mature trees, which include a number of large yews.

Prevailing materials

The prevailing materials include mellow red brick for buildings and boundary walls, red sandstone for one or two buildings and boundary walls, buff stone dressings, slate is by far the most common roof material although several properties make use of plain tiles. Iron is used for some architectural details and railings. Painted timber is generally used for all external joinery.

Local Details

It is the picturesque qualities of many of the houses in this area that define its special interest. These are expressed in building forms, details such as ornate fascia boards and window details.