

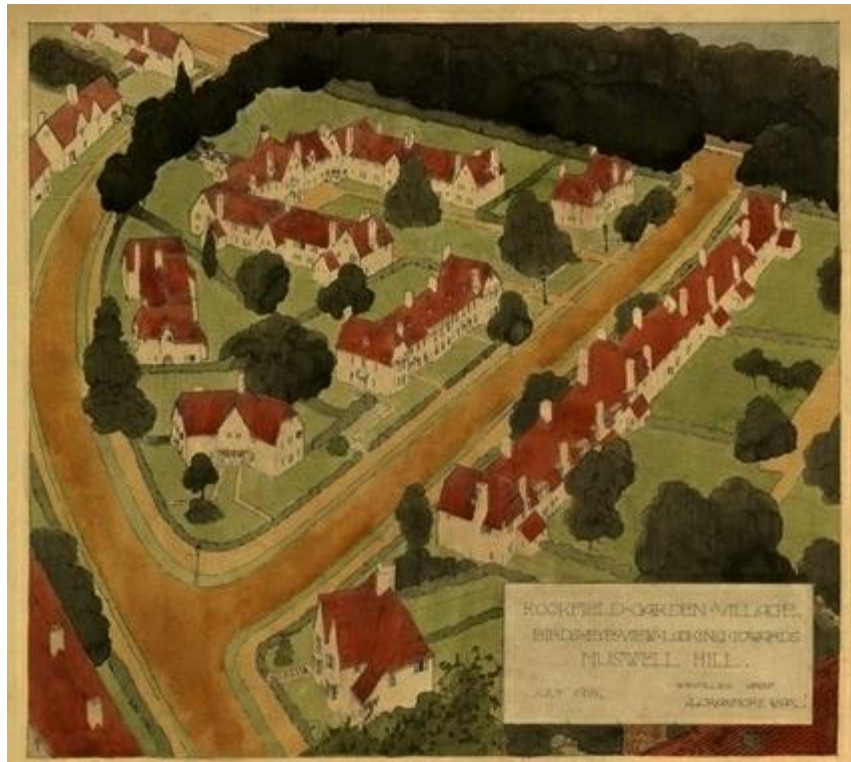
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Birds Eye View of Rookfield Garden Village 1915. W.B.Collins Architect

*The Grove Lawn Tennis Court Rookfield Garden Village
London Borough of Haringey*

**A Heritage Appraisal of the Site and the
Possible Impact of the Proposals**

February 2023

Introduction

This appraisal seeks to ascertain the heritage significance of Rookfield Garden Village and possible impact on that significance of the proposed development of the tennis court site.

Designations

The Rookfield Estate is designated as a conservation area. This recognises the area as being of special architectural or historic interest whose character and appearance it is desirable to conserve. The character and details of many of the houses are further protected by Article 4 Directions.



Rookfield Estate Conservation Area

History

The early 20th century development of Hornsey was fuelled by the expansion of London and the demand for housing the growing commuter workforce, transforming previously rural areas into suburban communities. It was this trend that encouraged W.J. Collins (1856-1939) to buy the Rookfield Estate in 1899 with a view to laying out and developing the area as new middle-class housing.

The informal Arts & Crafts inspired architecture of red brick and white joinery was inspired by the Garden City Movement of Ebenezer Howard who had begun developing Letchworth Garden City at the beginning of the 20th century. A similar development was begun at Hampstead Garden Suburb shortly afterwards. There is an important difference between Rookfield Garden Village and the planned philanthropic Letchworth and Hampstead Garden Suburb. Both these seminal developments were master planned, to include community facilities and open spaces. Although there are architectural similarities with Letchworth and Hampstead Suburb, Rookfield had no masterplan or planned facilities other than a gradual expansion of residential development. W.J.Collins is recorded as commenting;

I was not in a position to be philanthropic. It took several years to pay of the bank overdraft etc.

Rookfield expanded or stalled over a 30-year period according to market conditions.

Although W.J Collins instigated Rookfield, he left most of the development to his two sons, William and Herbert Collins over a long period of some 30 years (1901-1934). As a result, there is a pleasing variety of architectural treatment all set in the varied topography of the site. The character of Rookfield is derived from an organic accretion of development over time and not from a didactic master plan or desire to meet community needs.

The Tennis Courts



Ordnance Survey Map 1913

The Ordnance Survey map of 1913 shows the early development of Rookfield Garden Village. The Chine and Cascade Gardens are laid out but undeveloped. It was here that William and Herbert Collins decided to provide tennis courts on the edge of the initial layout of the village. However, an indication of the ad hoc nature of their decisions is shown by the fact that a major section of the tennis courts was sold off in 1934 to another builder/developer, who proceeded to build Nos. 57-69 Etheldene Avenue. This left a non-standard and undersized tennis court which has ultimately proved impossible to maintain as a self-supporting facility.



The modern Ordnance Survey map shows the much-reduced tennis court.

Heritage Significance

There can be no doubt that the village-like character of Rookfield with its varied Arts & Crafts architecture and mature well-tended gardens is of heritage significance as an example of early 20th century charming domestic suburban architecture. As such it well deserves the protection and recognition of conservation area designation and Article 4 Directions.

What it is not, however, is a planned Garden Suburb with houses and community facilities to proclaim the aims of Ebenezer Howard's Garden City movement. The fragment of neglected overgrown tennis courts do not form part of any town planning vision and now detract from the well-loved and characterful domestic architecture of the area.

It is therefore possible to develop the site for new houses of a sympathetic scale, design and materials as good neighbours for the existing suburban village. The proposed design of development is carefully judged to be sympathetic with Rookfield and would represent an enhancement of the area.

Conclusion

The truncated and neglected tennis courts need to be reused for a purpose sympathetic in terms of use and architecture. The proposed development would achieve this in an appropriate manner without disrupting any of Rookfield Village's essential characteristics.